

# Farmington Observer



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## THE WEEK AHEAD

**Pumpkin Patch:** It's open from noon to 7 p.m. today at Orchard United Methodist Church on Farmington Road.

### MONDAY

**Leaves alone:** The annual fall leaf pickup program in Farmington begins today for parts of the city.

**Consent:** At 7:30 p.m., the Farmington Hills City Council will consider a consent judgment for an office at 11 Mile/Orchard Lake, while historic preservation supporters try to stop part of the plan.

### TUESDAY

**School bonds:** The Farmington Board of Education will approve the sale of bonds for renovation projects at a special meeting at 6 p.m.

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## Gunman drops in bowling alley

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

A robber decided to go bowling for dollars, but he didn't bother bringing a ball or renting shoes - he brought a handgun.

Shortly after midnight Oct. 23, witnesses told police a man wearing a ski mask and holding a .357 caliber silver-plated handgun fell through the ceiling at Drakeshire Lanes on Grand River.

A female employee ran behind the counter to call police before the robber pointed a gun at her and ripped the phone out of the wall.

That prompted another employee to hand the masked perpetrator a cash drawer and tell him to take the money.

The robber ventured towards the bar area and also stole cash from the register while two employees fled and another hid behind pool tables. Another employee was cleaning lanes at the time of the incident.

The suspect left the building in an unknown direction with an undetermined amount of cash.

Farmington Hills police believe the suspect entered through a storage area and walk-in cooler before he climbed into a drop ceiling above the bar.

"We think he probably hid up there when they were open," said Tim Swanson, Hills police sergeant.

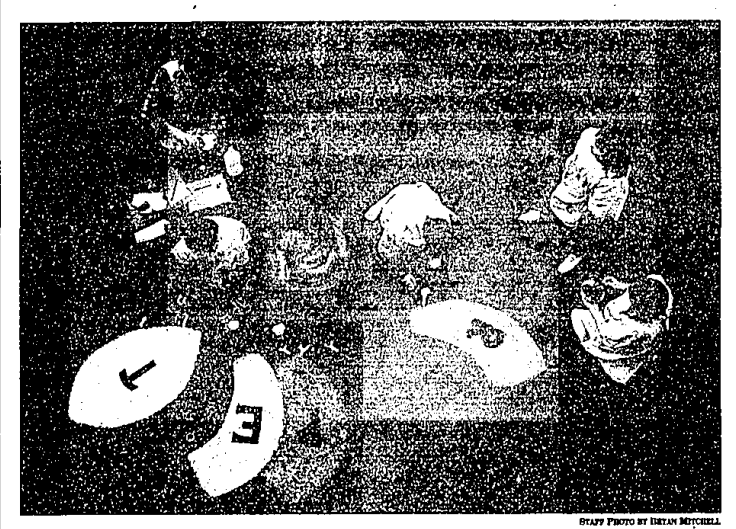
"I can only assume he came down a little quicker than he planned on or that he lost his footing."

Employees said they heard noise and saw dust coming from above. Another worker grabbed a flashlight to check where the noise was coming from when the ceiling mounted TV began to shake. The suspect fell through shortly after.

The robber had some idea of the building's layout, Swanson said.

"These are the avenues we're looking at," Swanson said.

The robber was described as a white male, 6 foot and 200 pounds. He wore a maroon shirt and white sneakers and a black ski mask.



They'll work it out here: Gill Elementary pupils put finishing touches on "Kagar the Safety Bug." The caterpillar will mark the spot for kids to peacefully work out playground disputes.

## Bugged kids

Creature helps kids make playground peace

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

Every time a Gill Elementary School pupil gets into a shoving match or argument on the playground, they'll have "Kagar the Safety Bug" to deal with.

Youngsters recently used acrylic paints to fill in the stenciled drawing of Kagar on asphalt near the Farmington district school's west end. Directing them was their art teacher, Stephanie Kessler.

"We outlined everything first in markers, and then used acrylic paints," Kessler said. "So hopefully it will last a while."

Kessler likes Kagar for more than artistic reasons.

"This little bug is real important in this school," she said. "Kids want things to be fair, to be right. They can look to the bug to help determine how to behave."

Kagar actually will mark the spot where conflict resolution will take place, said Carolyn Rittner, a teacher and student assistance program member at the school.

Rittner noted there are 54 youngsters in grades 3-5 who are trained as peer mediators to handle the playground disputes, by following a set of instructions. "If someone is not

taking turns on the swings, (student mediators say) 'Let's move to a quiet spot. That's what this has become.'"

In cases where the problem can't be solved, the peer mediators are instructed to locate a Gill staff member.

Kagar stands for "Kids at Gill are Respectful," a slogan coined last year by then-second grader Kalee Fox.

The design now adorning the parking lot was then created by Gill teacher Liz Walsh.

"I just started doodling and he kind of evolved," said Walsh. "Then we started thinking about what we

Please see BUQ, A4

## Halt developers, defend it in court, Kurzeja says

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Massie Kurzeja dispenses opinions like a gum ball machine: They're always something to chew on.

Whether they're sweet, sour or spit out altogether depends on who's the recipient.

Kurzeja has offered a few ideas during this Farmington Hills city council campaign - not all well-received by her incumbent opponents. The 36-year resident is one of four people seeking the three council seats in the Nov. 4 election.

For instance, she favors a moratorium on future development until there are enough roads to handle increased traffic. So did the others, except they wrestled with the legality of such a measure.

Not Kurzeja, who in as much said, what's another lawsuit?

"If our zoning is as good as they say it is, defend it," said Kurzeja later, who spent 10 years on the zoning board of appeals.

Among other of Kurzeja's non-sweetened nuggets:

■ On a possible Super Kmart on

**Name:** Massie Kurzeja  
**Age:** 36  
**Resident:** 36 years  
**Job:** data input/billing, Top Flight Avionics  
**Community:** Served 6 months on city council, 101/2 years on zoning board, Grand River Corridor Committee;  
**Family:** four sons.

Grand River: "It would totally destroy one of your better established neighborhoods. Even though it's old, it's well-established."

■ Orchard Lake-14 Mile possibly designated as a Downtown Development Authority: "That's laughable that would be the downtown. I don't know where my downtown is, but I don't believe it's 14 and Orchard Lake."

■ Need to widen roads for left-turn lanes: "Anybody that's on Middlebelt who wants to go into their subdivision would get down on their hands and knees and say, 'Please give me a left-turn lane.'"

■ City Manager Daniel Hobbs' job

Please see KURZEJA, A2

## Plop for Moo-sic

Harrison High School Band and Orchestra Boosters are conducting "Operation Cow Plop" to the raise money for their instrumental music programs. Based on a similar promotion during Farmington's 126th Anniversary a few years back, celebrity assayers will mark where the designated dairy dispenser leaves its chips 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 9, at Foundry Sports Park Soccer Field No. 1.

A grand prize of \$1,000 goes to the lucky deed holder whose spot gets plopped on by the cow. First offering. Second prize is \$500 and third place is \$250. Deeds are \$5 each.

If the cow is uptight and fails to perform his, ohm, duties, a drawing will take for the prizes at 4:30 p.m. Deeds will be sold at the park noon to 2

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

p.m. the day of the event. Call Leah Berger at 788-0382 for information.

### Dueling directors

It started with Steven Maltzman, chairman of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce. With the wrong plaque in hand, he presented the chamber's beautification award to Bob Rock of Thayer-Rock Funeral Home Thursday morning. Moments later Jacqueline Saito of the Farmington Beautification Commission caught the error. So,



Trophy holder: Bob Rock of Thayer-Rock Funeral Home shows off the Mayor's Trophy from the Keep Farmington Beautiful Awards Presentation.

## Beauty awards bestowed

BY DAVE VARGA  
STAFF WRITER

Thayer-Rock Funeral Home isn't getting older, it's getting better.

Check out pictures from 1971, said Farmington Mayor Pro Tem Mary Bush during the 29th annual Keep Farmington Beautiful Awards Presentation.

Now, she said, "It has more trees, more shrubs and more flowers."

While 100 businesses, churches, condominiums and gas stations were given plaques or certificates at a ceremony Thursday, Thayer-Rock and Focal Point Studio were singled out for special presentations.

The two downtown businesses were honored with the Mayor's Trophy

## Sorrows fence a 'safety issue'



BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

A growing dispute is putting the city of Farmington and Our Lady of Sorrows Parish on opposite sides of the fence.

The quarrel stems from Monday's indefinite tabling by the city council of Our Lady of Sorrows' request for a variance to the city's fence ordinance. The Catholic school and church wants a variance to install a 5-foot black, decorative rail aluminum fence around its proposed new athletic fields - mostly around the open end of the campus at Power-10 Mile roads.

"It seems like such an obvious request to make," the Rev. Walter Hurley said. "I'm quite taken back that there doesn't seem to be an awareness that there's even a safety issue."

Our Lady of Sorrows, established in Farmington in 1927, wants the \$80,000 fence put up as a safety precaution. About 850 children in grades K-8 attend the school during the week. But the city maintains that Monday's proposal was incomplete, with many unanswered questions.

"Variance requests in front yard setback areas are almost always denied," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff Friday. "They really need to show and prove the need."

Still steaming Thursday afternoon was Hurley. He was so miffed that, on Thursday morning, he skipped the city-sponsored beautification awards breakfast.

Hurley stressed his disappointment was more about what he thought was insensitivity among city officials to safety concerns than about the non-action itself.

"It just didn't seem right to participate in the breakfast until we can resolve that issue," Hurley said. "We've

Please see FENCE, A4

## Honors bestowed

Award and the Chamber of Commerce Award, respectively.

Bob Rock of Thayer-Rock, a 64-year business in town, accepted the top award, noting that back in 1971 he was graduating from high school but working on the grounds at the funeral home. He quipped that it was about that time they started winning beautification awards. Since then, the building has doubled in size.

"It's not just me, but my whole staff works hard. Taking care of a facility is very hard and I want to thank you for this award," Rock told the audience at the Botaford Inn.

City Manager Frank Lauhoff con-

Please see HONORS, A6

## Maltzman gave the award again, this time to the real winner - Focal Point Studio.

Next on the presentation list was the Mayor's Trophy Award and Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Bush: "Talk about someone stealing your thunder. I think it just happened," she joked.

Bush is close friends with Walter Sundquist of Heeny Sundquist Funeral Home, a former Mayor's Trophy winner and craftsman behind the plaques given to winners. Unfortunately, he couldn't make the ceremony, since he was snowed in while up north hunting.

Just as well, joked City Manager Frank Lauhoff: "We would have had dueling funeral home directors... and we wouldn't have gotten out until 10 o'clock."