

# Farmington Observer

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## THE WEEK AHEAD

### MONDAY

**Business:** The Farmington Hills City Council begins the evening at 5:30 p.m. with a study session, followed by a regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. The meetings, which are open to the public, are in the council chambers at city hall, 31555 11 Mile.

### TUESDAY

**Double whammy:** The Farmington City Council moves its meetings to tonight at 8 in honor of Martin Luther King's birthday Monday. The meeting is at 8 p.m. at city hall, 23600 Liberty Street. Meanwhile, the Farmington Board of Education will also meet at 7:30 p.m. at the Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas.

### WEEKEND

**Fun:** Plan to visit Mary Ellen the Clown at the Civic Theater at 1-p.m. Saturday.

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## Murder for hire heads to trial

■ According to a taped conversation, a Hills woman was given options for eliminating the father of one of her children.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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A taped conversation between an undercover police officer posing as a hit man and a Farmington Hills woman explicitly details a made to order murder.

On the profanity-strewn tape played during Paula Marie Kuchciak's preliminary examination in 44th District Court, a hit man named "Ice" gives her a menu of options. She is asked if she wants the person mugged up, his legs broken or simply killed.

"I want him gone, like never found again," says Kuchciak to the undercover officer, an Oakland County Sheriff detective sergeant.

On Friday, Kuchciak, 33, was bound over to Oakland County Circuit Court on the solicitation for murder charge. She remains in Oakland County Jail in lieu of \$250,000 cash bond.

Authorities believe Kuchciak wanted the father of her 3-year-old son killed as a result of a custody dispute and possibly to collect on the man's \$5 million life insurance policy where the son is a beneficiary.

The intended victim, Michael D'Annibelle, has custody of the boy. He testified during the hearing, but declined to comment afterward.

An informant, an acquaintance of Kuchciak, told police that she was looking for a hit man to kill D'Annibelle with whom she had an eight-year relationship. Farmington Hills and Royal Oak police and sheriff's deputies set up an undercover meeting.

Detective Sgt. Terrance Mekoaski said Kuchciak contacted him after he left a message at her Farmington Hills home with his pager number to help her "with her problem." The pair met in a parking lot outside a Royal Oak

Please see HIRE, A5

## Thank you



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEARLE

**Saving:** During a special visit Thursday, Farmington Public Safety Officer Jim Madigan holds 5-week-old Courtney Pagnello as her mom, Susan, looks on. Madigan responded to an emergency call on Jan. 4 and performed mouth-to-mouth breathing on the infant, saving her life.

## Lifesaver

### Officer Jim breathes life into baby

BY TIM SMITH  
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Susan and Andy Pagnello still believe in heroes, especially one named "Officer Jim."

They believe because their baby daughter Courtney's life was saved by the miraculous, quick actions of veteran Farmington Public Safety Officer Jim Madigan. The 28-day-old girl was gasping and turning blue when Madigan arrived to perform mouth-to-mouth breathing and save the day. Courtney now is doing "really good" with the whole ordeal caused by a cyst in her windpipe, which was later removed.

"We wouldn't have a daughter without Officer Jim," said Susan Pagnello, recalling the near-tragic episode of Monday afternoon, Jan. 4.

■ "I'm really not ashamed to admit it. It was a real tearful experience. The mom was praying, I could hear her words ... I certainly didn't want the baby to die in my arms."

Officer Jim Madigan  
—Farmington Public Safety

"He did save her life."

Even a 25-year police veteran such as Madigan couldn't help but feel emotional about how he was able to keep the baby alive and rush her to Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills.

"I'm really not ashamed to admit

it," said Madigan last week. "It was a real tearful experience. The mom was praying, I could hear her words ... I certainly didn't want the baby to die in my arms."

Call answered

Madigan answered a 911 call from Andy Pagnello, placed shortly after 2:30 p.m. Jan. 4 from a funeral home near Grand River-Farmington. The Pagnellos were driving from their home in White Lake Township to a doctor's office in Farmington, where Andy had an appointment. Courtney and their 3 1/2-year-old son, Skylar, were sitting in the back seat of the green Jimmy, in separate car seats.

"We just passed our destination when Courtney started crying," her mom said. "She started sounding like

Please see SAVE, A4

## Handyman gives area seniors a helping hand



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEARLE

**Clearing:** Sean O'Reilly clears snow from the approach to Farmington senior citizen Laura Weiss' driveway.

BY TIM SMITH  
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"It's a stupendous act of mercy," said 84-year-old Farmington resident Laura Weiss, looking through her living room window at the bundled-up guy chipping concrete-hard snow from her driveway's approach.

Failing away with his shovel and spade to remove the natural barrier was handyman Sean O'Reilly of Farmington. He was referred by the city to help out elderly residents who simply can't do the grueling job themselves.

It is a problem for senior citizens all over Farmington, from Ely Court to Wilmarth, left stuck at home because of large deposits of snow dumped into their approaches by street-clearing plows.

"I have heart failure and a hip with the socket just about gone," said Weiss, a Livesthorne resident who has missed two doctor's appointments because of the problem. "I'm not going to test fate and try to shovel."

Weiss called the Farmington Department of Public Services to inquire about clearing the driveway. "I'm not angry. I want't upset."

Soon, she was given the number to O'Reilly's general contractor business, Restoration Plus, (248-426-0666), and she arranged his Friday visit. "He's not charging too much," Weiss said.

According to O'Reilly, he isn't "in the snow-removal business." But John Konecal, of Farmington's DPS, asked him if he'd help older residents who need their driveways cleared, for a nominal fee.

"If it's just cleaning up where the plow comes along, and leaves snow that's real hard in the approach, I'm being relatively cheap," said O'Reilly, estimating he's done seven or eight jobs for seniors already.

The problem is like being caught between a rock and a snow drift, Konecal said. Although driveway approaches are

■ "If it's just cleaning up where the plow comes along, and leaves snow that's real hard in the approach, I'm being relatively cheap."

Sean O'Reilly  
—Handyman

part of public property, they are maintained by residents. And, the city's top priority is keeping streets plowed.

When plows do their work, extra snow inevitably spills over into the approaches. Frustration sets in for many residents of all ages, because they find their approaches blocked after having shoveled them out previously.

"We've had upwards of 15-25 calls about people's disenchantment with the plowing of roads and subsequent mounding of snow in the approach area," Konecal said.

He did say he could sympathize with the plight of senior citizens, especially those with health ailments and those without relatives to assist them.

"There's merit and concern to their (the elderly) side of it," Konecal said.

Meanwhile, O'Reilly doesn't mind having a change-of-pace from usual jobs, and he gets the bonus of "doing something decent" for others.

"The elderly can't do the shoveling themselves," said O'Reilly, who brings shovels and a snow blower to do the work. "It's a nice break. It gets me out of the shop."

O'Reilly, laboring on Weiss' approach, smiled and added that "it's a workout, though. Some of this stuff you have to chip away at it like crazy."

## Programs planned for King salute

A resolution proclaiming Jan. 18-24 as Martin Luther King Jr. Week was approved by the Farmington City Council during a recent meeting.

Meanwhile, Farmington city offices will be closed on King's birthday Monday. Due to the national holiday, the council, which usually meets the first and third Monday of each month, will hold its next session at 8 p.m. Tuesday.

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According to the city resolution, merely paying homage to King isn't enough.

"Citizens are urged to volunteer for community service to help alleviate such conditions as hunger, homelessness, illiteracy and to fight drugs, crime and violence in all forms," stated the resolution. "All people should recognize Dr. King's efforts to promote civil rights and nonviolent resistance to injustice."

Farmington Hills City Hall will be open on King's birthday. In Farmington Public Schools, a variety of programs and activities are scheduled.

