

Police are warning about thefts

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The thief comes in the night, picking up the nearest rock, smashing a window and grabbing the nearest laptop computer.

Farmington Hills police have been tracking someone who has hit businesses in the 12 Mile/Haggerty area since February. Investigators are still trying to determine whether similar robberies in the area of Northwestern Highway are related, according to Assistant Police Chief Chuck Nebus.

In addition to the method of entry, Nebus said, the cases all have one important thing in common.

"The laptops have been left in plain view," he said. "Many are observable through windows."

The thief or thieves also move quickly. Nebus speculates because nothing but portable computers are ever taken, they may be traveling on foot.

"On several occasions, we've had officers respond within 60 seconds to

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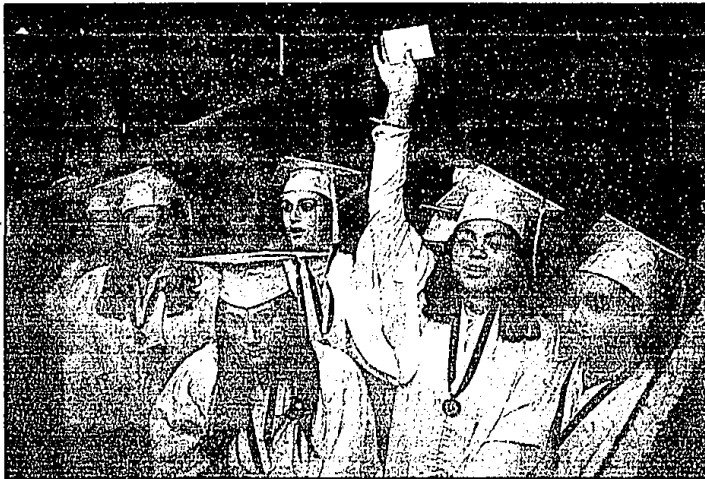
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Congratulations!



I'm done! Honor student Lisa Berenholz waves to her parents across the arena just before the start of graduation ceremonies.

STAFF PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH CARONCE

Rising stars

Actress gives grads advice for future

BY TIM SMITH
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Mindy "made it." But it wasn't without some soul searching about personal goals, both for her career and life.

That's what North Farmington High School alumnus Pam Dawber of *Mork and Mindy* television fame told North's Class of 2000 during June 4 commencement at Compuware Sports Arena in Plymouth Township.

Dawber, who graduated from

More on North's graduation, please turn to page A9

North in 1988, spoke after receiving the high school's first-ever Distinguished Alumni Award.

The actress recalled how she struggled as a high school student, until being "challenged" by a teacher to join a musical stage production during her senior year. She auditioned for the

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Definition: Pam Dawber accepts the Distinguished Alumni Award and gives graduates her thoughts.

Raccoons reported shot, beaten in Hills

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This is the way wildlife rehabilitator Denise Nitschman heard the story: Two Farmington Hills men, tired of raccoons wandering onto their property, set live traps in the woods behind their yards and captured seven adult animals. All were females who had recently given birth.

The men shot the seven in the traps, then went back into the woods a few days later after starvation had driven the babies out of their nests. They rounded up as many babies as they could find, brought them back to one man's home and beat them to death with a shovel.

If what Nitschman heard can be proven, criminal charges will be filed. The question for Department of Natural Resources officials is whether anyone will ever fear up.

"It is a criminal investigation at this time, but it's all hearsay. Unless someone in the group confesses, that is probably the only way we will get a conviction."

Lt. Linda Morgan
—Department of Natural Resources

"The bottom line is that it is not a confirmed complaint," said Lt. Linda Morgan of the DNR's Wildlife Division. "It is a criminal investigation at this time, but it's all hearsay. Unless someone in the group confesses, that is probably the only way we will get a conviction."

Nitschman believes no matter what happens, whoever perpetrated what

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STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEARLE

Injured: These two raccoons were reportedly beaten with a shovel.

School candidates differ on teacher conduct code

BY TIM SMITH
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Despite one parent's call for Farmington Public Schools to implement a teacher code of conduct, both candidates in the school board race defended the district's current method of handling disciplinary matters.

Uncontested incumbents Priscilla Brouillette and Gary Sheary, interviewed separately last month by the *Farmington Observer*, differed slightly on the subject. Brouillette at least would entertain the notion of exploring a more stringent teacher code of con-

duct, in the wake of the recent publicity involving the classroom behavior of a few Farmington High School teachers.

FHS parent Mark Morgener criticized the district for how it dealt with his complaints about the teachers. Morgener's complaints, lodged since September 1998 with high school and district administrators, revolved around the following:

- The use of profane language in the classroom.
- The showing of a video and recommendation of reading materials Morgener said were in poor taste, due to

profanity and content (with sexual and violent themes).

The teachers have been reprimanded by school officials, but Morgener is pushing for something that would be more specific in defining what is or isn't acceptable teacher behavior.

"I'm comfortable with exploring a teacher code of conduct," said Brouillette, who like Sharp is guaranteed election to a four-year term on Monday. "I think that we have conduct covered completely in our contract. It's very clear in our contract. But it might be a positive experience for the district to review the expectations and then

determine whether it makes sense to have a code of conduct."

Sharp said he isn't willing to explore the issue because the disciplining of teachers is clearly stated in the contract and governed by the Public Employees Relations Act, PERA.

"Our contract with the union, a four-year contract, cannot be changed without agreement of the association," said Sharp, a Bloomfield Hills attorney. "And it would be counterproductive to even try to do that."

"The contract sets forth reasons that

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