

## Hills couple drops \$10M lawsuit



**Torn between the heroism of East Coast firefighters and police and their own allegations of harassment and abuse of power, Mark and Teresa Gordanier have withdrawn a lawsuit against the city, fire and police departments.**

By KEVIN BROWN  
STAFF WRITER  
kbrown@oc.hometown.com

A \$10 million suit against the City of Farmington Hills filed by a resident who alleged mistreatment by police, fire and city officials has been withdrawn.

"It's not a good time to be criticizing the police and the fire department,"

said Mark Gordanier, referring to the Sept. 11 tragedy and the outpouring of respect for firefighters and police officers.

Last week, he dropped the U.S. District Court suit filed in January.

"We thought long and hard about it over the last month. We're just torn between what's going on out there and the uphill battle we have against

Farmington Hills and their police and fire department," he said.

The withdrawal of the suit was announced at the regular Farmington Hills city council meeting Monday. "I'm glad that it's been withdrawn and dismissed," said City Manager Steve Brock.

In filing the suit earlier this year, Gordanier criticized "the incestuous relationships" at city hall.

His dissatisfaction with the city government began when he was questioned by firefighters after a 1998 fire at his house, which his attorney said was caused by a wiring short in a power mower. Later, Gordanier

charged police did not adequately investigate a break-in at his house, among other incidents. Further, the state equalized value of his house was doubled after it was restored. The SEV was reduced when he complained to the tax tribunal.

"I'm still very disappointed the poor behavior of the police department continues. The council and mayor in my opinion are afraid of Chief (William) Dwyer," Gordanier charged.

To illustrate, he pointed to a recent complaint made by another resident that police tried to charge him with a

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### IN THE PAPER TODAY



**Officers: Sandra Jaffa and Rusty Rosman in the Sinai Guild's new office. Sinai Guild: For almost 50 years, this group has dedicated itself to raising money and finding volunteers for various medical causes. The guild has a new home in Farmington Hills. See HomeTown Life / C-1.**

**Tree House trouble: The Meinke family is likely headed for court again over their urban garden and cement planters. / A6**

### OPINION

**Let the games begin: A heated mayoral race spurs local politics. / A8**

**McNamara speaks: Wayne county's exec shares his take on developments at the airport. / A9**

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### Peace in our time



Peacemakers: Peer Mediators Erin Cahill, Anna Karana, Dana Harper, Anne-Marie Pop, Lucy Fricker and Lorraine Zoma pose with the school's peace flag, which flies in front of Wood Creek.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLER

## Lifesavers

### Wood Creek's goal is peaceful solutions

By SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oc.hometown.com

Taking responsibility for actions and using studied solutions is fundamental in the Lifesaver Peace Program at Wood Creek Elementary.

"We have a very diverse population," said Principal Berna Ravitz. "We are probably 73 percent ethnic and linguistic minority with 34 different languages including English. When you have such a diverse background, you have the possibility of conflict, because people see things from different perspectives."

There's a positive side, though. "It makes for increased opportunities for understanding," said Polly Meyers

Bachrouche, coordinator of the Student Assistance Program. As a counselor, she helped facilitate the program.

Ravitz, who's been principal at Wood Creek Elementary for six years, was trained in conflict resolution at the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at Wayne State University in Detroit.

She also has experience at Greenfield Union, a school at Seven Mile Road and Woodward in Detroit, which had a conflict resolution program. "It was a successful program," Ravitz said. "Kids just never fought."

The day after the Sept. 11 tragedy

Please see PEACE, A4



## Awards honor city's beauty

By SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oc.hometown.com

Farmington Mayor Bill Hartsock and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Carleigh Finharty revealed the two highest Farmington Beautification awards at an Oct. 2 ceremony held at the Gov. Warner Mansion.

Dr. Jeffrey Zanetti, a dentist at

31904 Grand River, was honored by Hartsock, while Shelley Raymond, owner of Baker Street Draperies, received Finharty's nod on behalf of the Chamber.

"It's always been my dream to be my own boss and have my own office," Zanetti said. "I want to thank the people of Farmington. This is my dream come true."

Raymond moved her custom drapery shop from its nine-year location on Grand River to Oakland Street this year. She faced some opposition from residents when she requested that the property be rezoned from residential to commercial.

"I was surprised and honored," Raymond said of the award. "The city rezoning was a grueling process. The city was very professional."

Please see BEAUTY, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLER

Honorees: Farmington Mayor Bill Hartsock (right) presents the Mayor's Trophy to Jeffrey, Leslie, Alex and Margaux Zanetti. Left, Baker Street Draperies won the Chamber award.

## Bombings put school trips on hold

■ Citing safety concerns, Farmington Public Schools has suspended all school-sponsored field trips inside and outside the country, in the wake of Sunday's overseas attacks.

By SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oc.hometown.com

Farmington School Superintendent Bob Maxfield announced Tuesday that he was canceling all school-sponsored field trips inside and outside of the country, in the wake of overseas bombings initiated Sunday.

About a dozen trips could be affected, Maxfield said.

"We had wanted in the worst way to be able to say we would do business as we had continued to do it, that with precautions, all of our activities would go on," Maxfield said. "It was a deci-

Please see TRIPS, A6

## GRIP 2001: Somebody needs you

■ Guest speaker Larry Bell urged parents and students alike to speak up, connect with one another and remember their community's most important asset is respect.

By SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oc.hometown.com

Somebody needs you.

That's the message Larry Bell, a national motivational speaker and former teacher, brought to a group of about 50 who showed up for an evening session of GRIP 2001 on Oct. 3.

GRIP stands for Generations Responding to Issues and Problems.

"Unity in the community," was Bell's mantra for about an hour at the Costick Activities Center on 11 Mile Road in Farmington Hills. He led an interactive exercise by instructing each

Please see GRIP, A2