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The Observer

OF FARMINGTON

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VOL. 2-NO. 11 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1965 33425 Grand River, Farmington Paul M. Chandler, Founder

Suffers 'Convulsions'

High School Dropout Is Accused Of Slaying Eighty-Year-Old Widow

Working around the clock, they questioned everyone on Pearl Street. One story didn't add up. So Monday night, Michigan State and Farmington Township police went out to get William David Sleeper. They found the tall, blond, good looking 17-year-old, with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Sleeper, at the Thayer Funeral Home, 35083 Grand River. They were paying their last respects to their next door neighbor, 80-year-old Mrs. Ethel Van Wicklin.

From the funeral home, William was taken to State Police Headquarters in Detroit, and accused of slaying Mrs. Van Wicklin. At about midnight, Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Jack Bain took a statement from the young man. He was charged with first degree murder, and spent the rest of the night in the Farmington Township Jail. He was arraigned before Justice of the Peace Byron Walter Tuesday morning.

Represented by Attorney

Michael J. Hand, he stood mute. Examination was set for Oct. 22 at 9 a.m. Judge Walter will then decide whether to bind him over for prosecution. Sleeper lives at 20819 Pearl Street, across the street from Mrs. Van Wicklin at 20809 Pearl. They have been friends for years. The young man has often done chores for her.

According to Prosecutor Bain, Sleeper admits he knocked on her door at about 2:30 or 3 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 16. "We talked for a few minutes. Then I don't know what happened. I know I ran out the back door, and went home."

What happened inside the house, according to the Police, is that Sleeper climbed in the face, neck and chest at least 10 times, with a letter opener. They believe robbery was his motive. He has been unemployed since August or when he severely injured his back. His father is a laborer.

Mrs. Van Wicklin's body, clad in pajamas, was found by her

Street were incredulous and shocked that anyone would harm her.

Everett Denny, of 20808 Pearl, across the street from the slain woman, knew her for the last 12 years. He describes her as having been nice, and friendly, but self reliant. "She kept to herself a lot," he says. "She seemed to have a number of hobbies, including painting."

The residents of Pearl

She also worked on occasion, despite her advanced age, and her pension.

Sleeper had dropped out of Clarenceville High School in the ninth grade, and gone into the Navy.

He was discharged in May, after four months service, according to Prosecutor Bain. "He suffered from convulsions, and this caused his discharge," his

mother says he had "blackouts" in service.

A four man team conducted the investigation: Michigan State Police Detectives Ken Taylor and Darrell Wellman, State Trooper Francis Mallett, and Farmington Township Detective Russ Conway.

Sleeper was calm when picked up at the funeral home.

On two previous occasions, the officers had indicated to him that they were suspicious of his story. Later, however, he broke down and cried several times.

While not pre-judging the case, Chief Prosecutor S. Jerome Bronson, expressed the opinion that "It dramatizes a thing we have been trying to point out to people in this County: that the majority of all criminal violations are committed by people in the age group between 17 and 21."

"Knowing that this is a fact, society must initiate new programs, and create new agencies to handle these growing problems. Present law-enforcement agencies cannot cope with them."

Big Rec Program Underway in City

The Farmington City Recreation Department opened its Adult Fall recreation program Monday, Oct. 18.

Residents of the city are registered in good number to the Department's call for those seeking healthful exercise, fun, and relaxation.

The program was set up by the City Council and the City Manager on a test basis to determine whether residents of such "evenings out." The program is to initially run for ten weeks.

The Department intends to expand the program throughout the winter and spring if attendance is good and warrants such a move. Participation in the program thus far has the Department busy making plans for such an extension.

Residents are reminded that they may register for the separate ladies, men's, and children's gymnasium portions of the program at any time throughout the duration of the program. Attendance at each and every gym session is not necessary and there is no registration fee.

Those interested in learning bridge or established players who seek master points are reminded that an opportunity is provided each Monday evening from 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. The fee for bridge players is \$1 per evening.

Residents who enjoy the intricacies of swinging their partners to country music will no longer have to travel far and wide to other parts of the State of Michigan. This form of entertainment is as near to them as Farmington Junior High School as are all the adult portions of the program.

Registration for square dances will be closed at the third session of the group. The fee is \$10 per couple on Monday nights. Classes meet from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Boys and girls between the ages of eight and 12 can enjoy gymnasium activities every Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Cloverdale elementary school. The men's gym program meets on Tuesday and the women on Thursday. Starting time for each is 8 p.m. and lasts until 10 p.m.

Woman Charged With Performing Illegal Operation

A Farmington woman is free on \$1,000 bond today after being arraigned before Redford Township Justice of the Peace James L. Ryan on charges of performing an abortion on a 16-year-old girl.

Irma Laura Gann, who lives at 21184 Flinders in Farmington, stood mute at her arraignment Monday, and a plea of not guilty was entered for her by the judge. Examination in the case has been set for Nov. 16.

Mrs. Gann is accused of accepting \$500 for performing the illegal operation on a 16-year-old Farmington Township girl who was three months pregnant on Sept. 25. The girl became ill following the operation and was rushed to a Detroit hospital for treatment, after telling her mother about the operation, according to police records.

The girl's mother reported the incident to police, who contacted a number of witnesses to the incident, allegedly performed in the home of Mrs. Kathleen Mae Bates, 15988 Winston. Mrs. Bates turned over to police the equipment used in the illegal operation, police said.

Police reports showed that the girl's 20-year-old boy friend, who admitted his involvement in the case, paid \$250 for the operation and that the girl paid the additional \$50.

Michael Hand To Fill Term

Farmington's new Municipal Judge is Michael J. Hand. He was chosen unanimously by City Council Monday night to fill the unexpired term of the late Sylvester Pheny, Hand has been Associate Judge till now.

There will be an election for the unexpired term of Judge Pheny in April 1966.



MURDER SITE, 20809 Pearl Street is an unlikely looking place for a murder. It is rustic and unloved and heavily wooded. It is lower-middle class. But it is neat and well-kept. Eighty-year-old Ethel Van Wicklin, who was stabbed to death in her home over the weekend used to hire neighborhood youngsters to keep her lawn in shape. A camera man for Channel 2 is shown taking a picture of the home. Pictured next door is the Sleeper home.

F'ton Farm Bureau Elects '65 Officers

The annual election meeting of West Farmington Farm Bureau was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Lapham 24550 Haggerty Road, Farmington.

A total of 23 persons were present—this representing a total of 14 families and one guest. The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Louis Gilson, who presided over the meeting. Reports were made by Minute Man, Wallace Williams, and Women's Delegate, Grace Rexin. Discussion Leader, Wendell Brown led the group in the discussion of the month, entitled, "The Farm Program—Onward and Leftward."

Approval was made to donate \$2 toward an "Organ Fund" which is being gathered by the Oakland County Farm Bureau men for the men's department of the Oakland County Health Center.

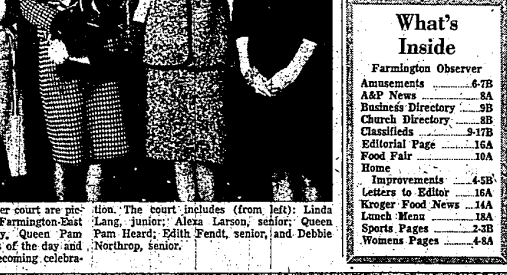
It was reported that Mr. and Mrs. Russell Gaston were involved in an automobile accident recently. It is hoped that both have a speedy recovery.

The results of the election of officers for the 1965-66 year were as follows:

Chairman, Louis Gilson; Vice Chairman, Otto Rexin; Secretary-Treasurer, Mary Heinz; Discussion Leader, Wendell Brown; Ass. Discussion Leader, Wallace Williams; Package Reporter, Wendell Green; Committee Man, Garret Rexin; Recreation Leader, Mary Green.

City To Receive Planning Funds

The City of Farmington has been approved for Urban Planning Assistance. It will cover two-thirds of the cost of publication and presentation of the proposed Master Plan.



HOMECOMING QUEEN and her court are pictured during halilume of the Farmington-East Lang, junior; Alexa Larson, senior; Queen Detroit football game Friday, Queen Pam Hearst; Edith Fendt, senior, and Debbie Northrop, senior.

Residents Burned Up Over Trash Burning

Sue Pell, a petite young lady who lives at 32831 Meadowlark, carried a heavy looking cardboard box out in front of her house on Monday night. She neatly spread a strip of polyethylene on the floor. Then she dumped the contents of the box onto the strip.

What came out were the charred remains of some steel shavings, oily rags, pressurized cans (explosive), apples, beverage cans, etc.

These she said were typical remnants of the burning that goes on at the rear of her home every day.

Meadowlark lies back in the Farmington industrial park. According to city manager John Dinan there is nothing in the Farmington City Code that prevents open burning.

But Mrs. Pell, and many other residents of the area, maintain that the code prohibits it—at least the type that is now going on. Among the items they believe should be banned is the open burning of metals, plastics, and pressurized cans. But this type of burning they say goes on all the time.

The Farmington Meadows Association had on two previous occasions this year complained to the City Council about the "noxious fumes, dust and fly ash, and embers from these fires" which has resulted in irritation of nose and throat membranes of various homeowners, and actually resulted in a feeling of nausea on the part of the people affected.

But Mrs. Pell's presentation Monday night had an impact far stronger than words. It was her original intent to leave the mess on the floor, but such times as the fire of Mrs. Pell's was killed, Mary Ellen Stark, sitting next to him, was seriously injured. Stark's car collided with a 1961 Oldsmobile, driven by 39-year-old Donald M. Dewar, of Farmington. Dewar was also seriously injured. His car suffered fire damage to its front and top. The accident took place on 10 Mile Road, at Creekside, in Farmington Township, about 2 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 17. Both cars were heading east on 10 Mile. According to the Township Police, Stark failed to signal, and Dewar was going too fast.



THE TWISTED WRECKAGE of a 1962 Volkswagen is examined by Farmington Township Auxiliary Police Bud Reume. The driver of the car, 20-year-old James F. Stark, 25345 Brookview, was killed. Mary Ellen Stark, sitting next to him, was seriously injured. Stark's car collided with a 1961 Oldsmobile, driven by 39-year-old Donald M. Dewar, of Farmington. Dewar was also seriously injured. His car suffered fire damage to its front and top. The accident took place on 10 Mile Road, at Creekside, in Farmington Township, about 2 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 17. Both cars were heading east on 10 Mile. According to the Township Police, Stark failed to signal, and Dewar was going too fast.

On New School

School Board Awards Half Million on Bids

By JOY STINSON

Bids for construction of the new Fairview Elementary School were opened at a special meeting of the Farmington Board of Education last Wednesday evening. The school was recommended by the architect, Linn Smith, contracts totaling \$317,310 were awarded to the lowest bidder. These firms were Carl W. Luoma Co., general construction, \$345,000; Jack King Co., mechanical work, \$125,780; and Lewis & Hickman, electrical work, \$46,540. These were base bids only. Alternates will not be received until Oct. 25.

This was the second time bids had been taken for the school. Original bids taken in early September were approximately \$70,000 over the established budget of \$480,000.

By re-advertising for bids under the architect's new several changes in the specifications.

The Board of Education was able to reduce the combined bids from \$550,250 to \$517,310. In the revised plans, function and capacity of the building has remained unchanged with no sacrifice in quality, the administration says.

Successful low bidding general and mechanical contractors were the same who bid lowest in the original bidding. Only the electrical work changed.

In other business, the Board of Education approved bus transportation for all children attending Fairview School who live east of Middlebelt Road.

A delegation of parents, most living in Flamingo Trailer Park, who protested at the Oct. 11 Board of Education meeting about their children having to cross Middlebelt, again were present to hear the decision.

At the Oct. 11 meeting action was deferred until a safety committee could study traffic conditions along the crossing.

The committee, composed of Mrs. Barbara Brown, Vernon Fisher and Byron Oliver observed a traffic count average of 12 cars a minute on Middlebelt between 8:10 and 8:30 a.m. For the remainder of the school year, the Board of Education decided to utilize available space on the bus in order to assure the safety of the children. The decision will be reviewed again next year.

Also at this special Board of Education preliminary plans for the district's fourth junior high school were reviewed. No action was taken on the site location, but plans were made for the architect to meet with the educational specifications committee composed of members of the teaching staff.

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