

# Kidnapping suspect is arrested

FARMINGTON—A massive nation-wide search for the kidnapper of seven-year-old Susan Jaeger, a Farmington resident, culminated Friday with the arrest of a David G. Meirhofer.

Meirhofer, a 25 year old, Manhattan Montana resident was arrested by the Gallatin County, Montana sheriffs office and charged with the kidnapping and murder of Susan and a 19-year-old Montana resident, Sandra D. Smallegen.

The search for the kidnapper began on June 25, 1973, when Susan Jaeger was kidnapped from a tent at Headwaters State Park near Three Forks, Montana.

Following her kidnapping Farmington area residents and friends of the family raised a fund of approximately \$15,000, to be offered as reward for information about the kidnapper.

According to Neal Welch, Detroit FBI chief, the FBI assumed the investigative jurisdiction under the federal kidnapping statute.

The investigation intensified when Miss Smallegen, a Manhattan, Montana resident, was reported missing on February 9, 1974.

According to the Detroit FBI bureau, documents filed with District Court in Montana indicate that Meirhofer was arrested on the basis of numerous phone calls he made to the Jaeger residence which were from the purported kidnapper.

A bone which appears to be that of a young female child was found on Sept. 17, 1974 at a remote and unoccupied ranch northeast of Three Forks.

An automobile and bones identified as those of Miss Smallegen were found in the same location.

The arrest of Meirhofer was made under the supervision of Gallatin County Sheriff, L.D.W. Anderson.

# Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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## Robbery chase ends in shopping center

By DAN McCOSH

What appeared to be a carefully-planned bank robbery ended with a shootout in the Chatham Square Center parking lot in Farmington Hills Friday.

Hills police arrested an unidentified suspect and were still searching for three others believed to be involved.

Three armed men, wearing black wigs, gloves and face masks, held up the Bank of the Commonwealth at Middle Belt north of 10 Mile.

They escaped with a still undetermined amount of cash, according to Hills police reports. They headed north on Middle Belt as the alarm went out to the Hills police.

Their efforts to change clothes while driving away attracted the attention of a passing motorist, who said he preferred to remain unidentified until they were arrested.

"I saw all these arms flying around in the back seat while they tried to change clothes," he said.

"That looked suspicious, so I followed them and wrote down the license number."

While the motorist followed them to the Chatham Square center, Hills Patrolman George Bartoszek saw the suspect car turn, and pulled into the parking lot behind the stores.

When one of the men saw the patrol car, he shot once at Bartoszek, who pulled a shotgun from the squad car and returned the fire, blowing out the window of a parked car in the lot.

The suspect ran into the Sherwin-Williams paint store through the back door.

"We heard the noise outside, and this guy came running in the back door with a pistol and a suitcase," Jim Cullen working at the counter said.

He reacted by diving for the floor, along with another employee.

The noise also attracted the attention of Phil Goldman, at the Goldman Bagel store next door.

"I heard the shots, and I thought it was someone knocking at the back door. I opened it, and I saw this cop with a shotgun. I shut it right away."

Another witness said two men had apparently escaped in a second car, before the third had run into the police car behind the stores.

The fleeing gunman met still a third car in front of the stores, after running through the paint store.

Gary Leeber, manager of the Pants Place, was startled to see the man racing out the front with a gun.

"He came running out, and went over to another car," Leeber said.

"He threw the gun and suitcase into the car, and the girl driving took off."

"Then he ran into the mall."

The suspect apparently ditched a wig and coat he was wearing, and emerged from the mall and went into the drugstore next door.

When he came out, he was arrested by the Hills police.

The center was crowded with noon-time shoppers, but those on the far side of the center appeared unaware of what was going on.



### Aftermath

The chase which ended with one suspect captured (left), shook up shoppers in the Chatham Center at Middle Belt and 11 Mile Rd. Friday. Gunfire hit two car windows (below) as one suspected bank robber took a shot at a Hills patrolman and the police returned the fire. Left: Lt. Russell Conway interviews Gary Leeber, who saw some of the action. (Photos by Ralph Evert)



### Costs up, program reduced

By DIANE HUBEL

FARMINGTON—Like everyone else, in these days of inflation, the Farmington school district has been hit with rising costs and expenses.

Following the July millage election the school board made program cuts in several areas throughout the district.

However, despite these cuts, the preliminary operating budget for the

1974-75 school year still indicates that costs, even in areas where there have been cutbacks, have risen.

On Monday, Sept. 30, at 8 p.m., the school board will be conducting a public hearing on the operating budget

for the 1974-75 school year at Farmington-Sr. High school, 32000 Shawassee.

According to the preliminary budget the district is expected to take in over \$20 million.

This figure is approximately \$300,000 short of what the business manager said the district would need to maintain the level of education it attained last year.

It is \$1,600,000 short of what the school board had said it hoped to have, had the millage been passed in July.

SINCE THE JULY election the board and the business manager have been reviewing costs and expected revenues, and have developed a 33 page budget.

One of the major areas where the budget indicated increased costs, despite cut backs, is in personnel.

A major portion of the budget is devoted to salaries for teachers, administrators, office workers, and other employees in the district.

The teachers in the district did receive a contracted raise this year.

## School budget to have public hearing

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## Goodfellows seek volunteer help

FARMINGTON—Charity is more than good intentions for the Farmington Goodfellows.

With Christmas months away, Bill O'Connor, chairman of the 1974 Goodfellow drive, is making plans to be sure "no child is without a Christmas."

An organizational meeting is scheduled Oct. 1, at 8 p.m. in the Farmington city hall for volunteers interested in the group.

The Goodfellows incorporated last year as a non-profit organization. Although many service clubs have participated in the past, the Farmington Exchange Club was the prime mover.

"We hope as an independent group we will be able to attract broad community support," O'Connor said.

Anyone interested in working with the Goodfellows is invited.

The actual work is concentrated in the time before Christmas. The Oct. 1 session is a "get acquainted" meeting where goals and aspirations of the Goodfellows will be outlined, according to O'Connor.

Help to pack, sort and collect toys is needed, as well as volunteers to aid selling newspapers, do clerical work and answer telephones.

Contributions will also be needed this year.

Toys, and knitted caps, gloves and scarves are welcome. O'Connor hopes the early organization will help get these projects going in time for the holidays.

Mrs. Barbara Stevens, (474-1286) is acting as a clearing-house for information.

The Goodfellows will be working out of the Chamber of Commerce office.

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