

# Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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## TORNADO

### Storm, bomb threats strike Farmington

By RON GARDENIK

While Farmington and Farmington Hills public safety departments united in rescue and cleanup efforts in the West Bloomfield area following Saturday night's tornado, both departments also began investigating four bomb threats delivered to local merchants the same evening.

The tornado swept through the northeast corner of the Orchard Lake and Maple roads intersection in West Bloomfield Township shortly after 7:15 Saturday evening.

As of Sunday morning, one girl, Kiley Weaver, 16, of Bloomfield Township, was reported dead, and more than 100 persons were treated in local hospitals for tornado-related injuries.

Officials on the scene reported more than 80 homes and buildings damaged during the brief tornado touchdown.

The National Weather Service reported a funnel cloud on radar early Saturday evening over the Farmington area.

AFTER THE SIGHTING, a tornado ripped through a northern section of Farmington Hills near Fourteen Mile Road between Drake and Halsted Roads.

Farmington Hills officials said the twist destroyed a house and garage and damaged several other homes.

But compared to West Bloomfield, police said, local damage was minor and without injuries.

The City of Farmington was unaffected

by the tornado, and no damage was reported.

BEFORE THE Farmington and Hills departments were called to assist in the West Bloomfield disaster, Farmington responded to two bomb threats.

Around 8:25 p.m. Saturday, the K mart, at Grand River and Halsted Roads, and Brendan's Pub, 3408 Grand River, received calls from a female saying bombs would explode in their establishments at 8 p.m. if \$50,000 weren't paid.

Farmington Hills police were notified by Holiday Inn of Farmington, 30125 Ten Mile, that the hotel had received a bomb threat.

Farmington called in all off-duty regulars and available reserves in an effort to close off the bomb-threatened areas.

Customers were evacuated from the buildings and officers sealed off the parking lots.

After a careful search, no bombs were found at any of the three locations.

SHORTLY AFTER midnight, a fourth bomb threat was reported to the Farmington Public Safety Department, this time by Danish Inn, 32365 Grand River.

The restaurant was closed and checked, but police found no bombs.

Both Farmington and the Hills departments are investigating the bomb threats, but their major work over the weekend was on the tornado-torn northern section of Farmington Hills and the bordering section a mile north in West Bloomfield.

Farmington Public Safety officers and reserves were returned from the bomb threat runs when they received word of the West Bloomfield tornado.

The department responded with more than 40 men, who were on the scene about one hour after the tornado struck.

MORE THAN 30 Farmington Hills volunteer firemen and about 20 police officers joined several hundred other police and firemen from surrounding communities in rescue operations.

The Salvation Army responded with food and coffee for the rescue teams and the Red Cross arrived early Sunday to assist families affected by the tornado.

Capt. Russell Conway of the Hills Detective Bureau, with other Hills and Farmington officers, helped West Bloomfield police set up a mobile command post at the Orchard Shopping Mall, which was hit by the tornado.

FROM THERE, more than 100 police reserves and firemen worked through the night to set up roadblocks to prevent looting from entering the damaged subdivision. A square mile was sealed off by police.

Two Detroit police helicopters were called in to assist the night watch.

The tornado headed northwesterly across the area, apparently jumping over several sections of Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield while wiping out others, said a command officer on the scene.

Detroit Edison Co. and Consumers Power Co. repair crews were called in to

shut off power in the downed electrical lines that littered the community.

THREE GASOLINE stations two blocks two major shopping malls, several office buildings and dozens of homes were listed as destroyed by the twister.

Cars, including the one in which the girl was killed at the Orchard Lake and Maple Road intersection, were scattered around the area.

Families whose homes were destroyed stayed with relatives, neighbors or in St. Mary's Academy and a local middle school.

While the City of Farmington's initial rescue crew was returning from the disaster area, the 18 men loaded on the department's fire truck responded along with Hills firemen, to a house fire around 8:30 p.m. Saturday.

Damage estimates weren't available early Sunday morning, but several police officers said the blaze gutted the home of Kurt Wendel, 34065 Rhineland in Farmington Hills.



Assistant Chief Donn Achtenberg of the Farmington Hills Fire Department takes a break during last week's tornado rescue work. To see more of the story through pictures, turn to page 3-A. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)



Searching through the rubble of their home are these residents, who saw their home destroyed suddenly Saturday night. (Staff photo)

## Special unit slashes at Hills crime statistic

By RON GARDENIK

While major crimes increased 18 per cent in Farmington Hills during 1975, implementation of a special undercover unit reduced burglaries in high crime areas last year.

In presenting Farmington Hills Public Safety Department's annual operations report to the city council last week, Director Ronald Holko pointed out, "This small increase in crime is encouraging to our department's expanded efforts to reduce crime in the community."

The Hills Investigation Bureau, which plays a key role in reducing crime in the city, "has maintained one of the highest crime clearance rates in Oakland County," Holko said in the report.

Working more than 1,800 overtime hours, the detective bureau cleared more than 30 per cent of its cases during 1975.

The Special Patrol Operational Team (SPOT), a plain clothes undercover unit,

saturated high crime areas in the city, making 131 arrests and maintaining a 90 per cent clearance rate.

ONLY IN its first year of operation, Holko says SPOT's presence in the community helped reduce the increase in breaking and entering crimes reported in the city during the past several years.

Working on information supplied by SPOT, 167 burglaries were cleared by the Investigation Division's follow-ups.

The juvenile division handled 845 cases and made 300 juvenile arrests during 1975.

In the crime report, Holko said that "homicides and attempted murder are usually rare" in a community such as Farmington Hills, but unfortunately they do occur.

The department handled six murder cases last year and three were solved, including the George Oulter case.

Oulter was convicted of murdering an 11-year-old girl and was sentenced to the

longest prison terms ever given in Oakland County.

There were six rapes or attempted rapes reported during 1975. This is up two over the year before and only one case was solved in 1975.

Reported aggravated assaults increased 146 per cent from 1974's figure of 40. There were 145 assaults last year and the public safety department managed to clear 12.

Only a small increase was recorded in the robbery category of major crimes for Farmington Hills, the report notes.

Forty-nine robberies were investigated this year as compared to 42 in 1974. There were six more armed robberies this year than the previous year.

The crime wrap-up revealed that burglaries increased 1974 figures with 700 logged in 1975, up 73 from 1974.

Only 368 burglary cases were closed during 1975 as police continue investigating all unsolved crimes.

Larcenies, the most reported major crime, increased this year with 1,862 cases reported to Hills police. Nearly 600 cases were cleared as the January figure rose 13 per cent from previous year level.

Most sex-related offenses reported declined last year. Nearly half of these crimes were cleared by the police department.

During the entire year, 1,881 persons were arrested in Farmington Hills, Holko reported.

Of this number, 429 were adults and 452 were juveniles. The department received disposition reports from 88 of those arrested.

Detectors cleared 83.8 per cent of all motor vehicle law violations. Forty-one violations were recorded and 41 of those were cleared in 1975.

Open alarms, those set off by vandals or burglars, numbered 1,278 during the past year, up 4.6 per cent from 1974's 1,234 figure.

TOTAL MONETARY value placed on property stolen during burglary was estimated at \$278,897 for all residential and business establishments.

Holko reported that 420 homes, 200 businesses and 230 other unlisted entries were reported, bringing the year's total to 851 burglaries.

More than 40 per cent of all motor vehicle thefts were cleared by the public safety department.

Vehicles stolen numbered 330 for 1975—a 1.3 per cent increase over 1974—and 137 cases were closed.

## Listen and share How you can help a friend

By CORINNE ABATT

Volunteers from the Farmington area are needed if the PLUS program, started by Farmington Youth Assistance is to be successful.

PLUS, which stands for people listening, understanding and sharing, is patterned after the nationally known Big Brother and Big Sister programs.

Deb Knighton of Farmington, a freshman at Oakland Community College, and a committee of four have been working on the program since last December.

"The volunteer will have a one-to-one relationship with a child who needs an adult to turn to," she said. "It will be more a friendship thing than a counseling situation. It's supposed to be a fun thing."

Miss Knighton said the youngsters in need of an adult friend range in age from nine to 15.

"We'd like to have about eight men volunteers. We have a lot of boys who need a friend and one girl who doesn't have a father," she added.

Members of the PLUS committee—Jerry Kaufman, Taylor School District counselor and part-time Farmington Area Advisory Council (FAAC) staffer, Brenda Crowley and Lois Derksen, both of FAAC—plan to have an orientation meeting for volunteers the first week in April.

This will be followed by three evening training sessions covering what is expected of them and what they may expect in return, values clarification and communication skills.

Miss Knighton said Peg Bishop will lead the values clarification session, and Rev. Stanley Rical will discuss communication skills.

Once youngsters and adults are matched and introduced, there will be monthly meetings for volunteers to discuss problems and exchange experiences.

Miss Knighton said, "Ralph Strahan of the Oakland County Youth Assistance Com-



Deb Knighton is asking for volunteer adults to befriend troubled youngsters. (Staff photo)

Young a counselor at FAAC have volunteered.

She said adults of any age, from late teens to senior citizens are welcome as volunteers. Those interested may call her at home evenings, 474-4008, or the Farmington Youth Assistance office, 475-3000 during the day.

One of the things expected of the volunteers will be to have some contact with the youngster each week—a call and a hamburger dinner at the volunteer's home, a show or just conversation over coffee.

Most of these kids need an adult to turn to, Miss Knighton says.

Sometimes their parents both work and don't have time for them. Sometimes their problems are drug-related. It is supposed to be a prevention-type program. We hope the volunteers will stay with us for a year, but that would depend on a number of things."

The career which Miss Knighton has in mind fits nicely with her volunteer work. She is working on either a major or minor in psychology at OCC and hopes to complete her bachelor's work in early childhood education.

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### BACHELOR PARTY

One of the Observer & Eccentric's bachelors tells what it's like to go to that American-only ritual, the bachelor party. Whether or not you've been to one, you'll find Craig Pecher's column enlightening and light-hearted.