

# Classics draw novel critics

Capt. Ahab and a Farmington Hills library patron have the same fixation—they both want to get rid of *Moby Dick*.

The patron objected strenuously to Herman Melville's tale of Ahab's obsession with killing the great white whale. The reader wanted the book taken off the library shelves to spare readers its violence.

In Southfield, an obscure Russian novel excited the ire of another library patron who insisted the librarians reconsider keeping it on the shelves.

In both cases, librarians opted to ignore private protest and keep the books available to the public.

Those who oversee the volumes in the Southfield and Farmington public libraries profess to be hesitant about taking books out of circulation because of public pressure.

"People frequently seem to confuse their tastes with general tastes. One objective of the library is to make available the literature of the day even if one or more persons finds it distasteful," said Southfield's deputy city librarian Douglas Zyskowski.

"That doesn't mean the book doesn't have literary merit," he said.

A few years ago, Gordon Lewis, Farmington's chief librarian, was faced with a patron who found "The Merchant of Venice" distasteful.

THE READER found Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock to be anti-Semitic.

Librarians decided to keep the book on the shelf.

"All kinds of classics have been controversial. If you removed everything controversial you'll have nothing left in the collection," says Farmington Hills librarian June Lee.

"Sometimes one word or one sentence is objectionable and the reader won't consider anything else about the book," she adds.

In the Farmington libraries, public pressure has removed a book from the shelves. But, Mrs. Lee is quick to point out the discarded book was a gift to the library in the early days of the system. It was a book of Imericks.

Removal came after the library staff read and reconsidered it.

"There were some objectionable Imericks, as I remember," she said.

Each year, the Southfield library stocks its shelves with 10,000 volumes or 8,500 new titles. The Farmington libraries, covering Farmington and Farmington Hills, add 7,900 books to the shelves.

In selecting the new books, both libraries watch for a sense of balance in their collections, according to librarians.

"LIBRARIES SHOULD represent a cross-section of viewpoints in a collection. It should have balance," said Lewis.

Style, suitability in vocabulary, content and form as well as reputation of the author are used in the selection process, according to Lewis and Zyskowski.

Popular books as well as proven classics are fair game for the libraries' book buyers. Several years ago, the Southfield library featured "Naked Came the Stranger" on its shelves.

Both Southfield and Farmington libraries are offering the popular novel "Evergreen" to its readers this summer.

The Farmington system rents some popular books from publishers as a book in heavy demand book is on the shelves. When the book's appeal is ended, the volume is returned and the next best seller is shipped to the library.

Such popular romances as the Harlequin books are available at the library in answer to a demand, according to Mrs. Lee.

In Southfield, "The Joy of Sex" was added to the library's collection. But patrons were required to be more than 18 years old to check out the book, according to Zyskowski.

That's the extent to which either library would like to be responsible for guiding a child's reading. Both administrators would rather see parents determine suitable reading matter for their children.

PARENTS are the only ones who know for certain which values they want to instill in their children, both administrators said.

While both administrators deny attempts to censor the library's collection, Lewis applauds at least one method of sifting through certain books.

"Not all attempts at censorship are harmful. There is an attempt to develop literature for ethnic and social groups now," he said.

This movement tends to weed out books which deal in ethnic and social stereotypes, such as stories which portray mom going to fetch the groceries and dad leaving for the office.



Farmington Hills resident H. F. Schaefer (right), supplier representative for California Industrial Products, Inc., recently received a 1978 Ford Supplier "Better Idea" plaque from Lionel M. Chicoine, vice president of purchasing for Ford Motor Company's North American Automotive Operations. The plaque recognizes substantial cost savings to Ford through a "better idea" submitted by the firm and tested under actual manufacturing conditions.

## Obituaries

### ROBERT SPAULDING

Robert Alexander Spaulding, 31, of Farmington died Aug. 22. Services were Aug. 14 in the Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home. The Revs. Kevin P. O'Brien of Holy Family Church of Novi and Wilbur R. Schutze of St. Philip Episcopal Church of Rochester officiated at services. Entombment was in Accacia Park Mausoleum in Birmingham.

Surviving are wife Joyce; son Scott William; parents Roy and Mary Spaulding and Dorothy Saputo; and brother William. The family suggests contributions be made to the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

### BYRON SUTHERLAND

Byron Earl Sutherland, 51, of Livonia died Aug. 13. Services were Aug. 17 in the Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home with the Rev. William Frayer of the Nardin Park Methodist Church officiating. A memorial service was held under the auspices of the Lodge of Sorrows, Farmington Elks No. 1898. Burial was in Glen Eden Cemetery.

Surviving are wife Genevieve; mother Mary Mitchell; and children Tracy L., Jack E. and Karen S.

### ANNA WAGNER

Anna Helene Wagner, 78, of Farmington died Aug. 15. Services were Aug. 18 in Our Lady of Sorrows Church with Fr. Kean Cronin officiating. Prayers were said in the Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home, and burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Surviving are nephews William Wagner, Bud Keyser, James Wagner and Jack Wagner, and nieces Lois Keyser and Mary Cagnon.

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### Cities pass mutual aid

Under a new agreement, Farmington and Farmington Hills will automatically respond to some fires in certain sections of the adjoining cities.

The new pact, agreed to last Monday by the Farmington City Council, provides that Farmington's fire department will automatically help the Hills' department answer calls involving homes and businesses in the Farmington Road corridor, according to Farmington Fire Marshal Norman Maddison.

Farmington Hills agreed to the pact a few weeks ago. The agreement allows Farmington to automatically answer calls in a three-square-mile area of the Hills near the cities' borders.

Farmington will help Farmington Hills in fires that occur south of Nine Mile, north of Eight Mile and between Drake and Orchard Lake Road, according to Maddison.

In return, Farmington Hills will offer the same type of automatic response for fires in commercial buildings, schools and senior housing in Farmington.

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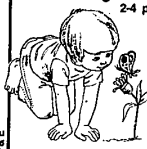
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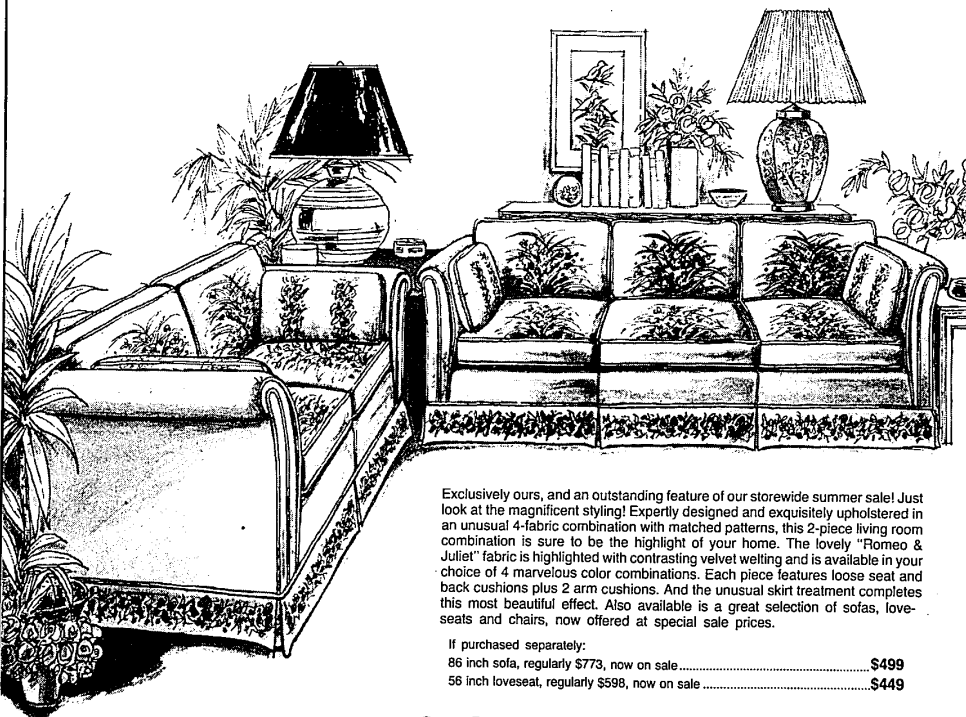
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