



Once the frame work is finished by Rick Kowall, (right) the stained glass window (above) will be restored to its original place. The task of replacing the frame and window will take about four hours, according to Kowall. The stained glass, hand-forged 76 years ago, was removed from its frame and will receive new leading. Its new frame will be made by tracing the old one which has succumbed to dry rot. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

Old World craftsmanship resurrects stained glass

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

In a world dominated by mass production and consumer demands for faster service, the Kowall family seems curiously out of step.

Instead of emphasizing speed in their workshop, the Farmington Hills family prides itself on its patience and attention to individualized projects.

It's their attitude toward their work that allows them to take on such assignments as repairing the 76-year-old stained glass window that is the pride of Salem United Church of Christ in Farmington.

Church members spent three years searching for someone to repair the window, which was afflicted with dry rot that caused some of the panes to become loose.

"They just fainted for me on the phone when I told them we do that sort of thing, all the time," said Rick Kowall, 21, who is working on the project.

The 10-foot wide, 7-foot high stained glass is now in several pieces in the Kowall workshop. The frame, hand-made 76 years ago, will be discarded after it is used as a pattern for its replacement.

The old wooden frame has inspired some amazement in Kowall. "It's all cut out of one piece of wood. They didn't have the proper adhesive or machinery to build it to last," he said.

"IT HELD UP pretty good considering it had a southern exposure," Sun was a problem for the antique

window. Although the sunlight helped the colored glass to shine in the morning, it managed to help dry rot set in and slowly erode the sugar pine.

About 15 years ago, the stained glass was propped up with iron braces, Kowall estimated. At that time, the stained glass was attached to the bars with wires.

Kowall plans on keeping the bars to brace the windows. But he also intends to keep the framework as near to the original as possible.

To copy the intricate rounded edges of the frame, Kowall is using electric tools that were unavailable to the window's original makers.

"I can imagine the time it took in 1902 to do this. It's all hand made. They didn't have an electric router in those days," he said.

The router will help Kowall make grooves in the frame so the glass will be secure.

The one-piece framework will be replaced by a frame cut into several pieces. A waterproof adhesive will keep the sections of the new frame together.

ONCE THE FRAME IS finished, Kowall intends to replace it using the method the church's original builders employed. The frame should fit into the wall without nails to secure it. A glue will be used to keep the frame in its place.

Before that's accomplished the church's stained glass window will be released. The lead which holds the panels together was a victim of nature. Water and the natural acid

produced by wood eroded the lead until the strips hung weakly onto the glass.

"When I'm finished with the window I shouldn't be able to even stick a paper between the glass and the wood. Otherwise water will get into it again and in 75 years they'll be having the same problem all over again," said Kowall.

The glass is hand forged, he said. "You can tell by the fuzzy marks in the glass," he said. "They don't do that any more."

One key element to the restoration work is patience, according to Kowall. Time is needed to follow the pattern of the rotting frame and create a new one. Patience is needed to apply the lead strips to the stained glass window and restore it to its original condition.

These qualities are becoming rare and affecting the woodworking business, according to Kowall.

"PEOPLE DON'T WANT to spend that much time at one job any more," he said.

Kowall spends enough time in the family's Waterford woodworking shop. The stained glass window will take him about 65 hours to restore. It will take another four hours to replace the window in the church building.

Besides time, the independent shop owner is faced with investing a large amount of money in the necessary machinery. An expenditure of \$2,000-\$4,000 is common when buying the necessary machinery. The Kowalls

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THE INSIDE * ANGLE

NANCY TOLWIN, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Tolwin of Farmington Hills, was selected as a student representative to the advertising and marketing conference scheduled for this week in Chicago. Ms. Tolwin, a pre-law business major at Michigan State University, is a member of the Delta Gamma sorority and has worked as a legislative intern under several legislators including State Rep. Wilbur Brotherton (R-Farmington) and former State Sen. Daniel Cooper (D-15th District). As a member of the Student Government cabinet involved in legislative relations, Ms. Tolwin also represented MSU at the Congressional hearings on college tuition breaks for middle-income families last spring. A 1975 graduate of North Farmington High, Ms. Tolwin is employed with the Farmington Hills Department of Parks and Recreation as a tennis instructor this summer.

THE NEW Farmington post office will be designed by the architectural firm of Louis G. Redstone Associates, Inc. of Livonia. The contract award of \$58,072 was announced this week. Construction on the post office located on Twelve Mile west of Orchard Lake Road is expected to be completed next year.

THE PUBLIC hearing on the City of Farmington's senior citizen housing brought out some hard-liners a few weeks ago. When the overflow crowd forced a move from City Hall to the Farmington High auditorium, a few walkers were left stranded. One elderly gentleman was approached by a group of persons in the parking lot who were polling potential riders about their views on the proposed elderly housing complex. The elderly gentleman was denied a ride when he said he favored the proposed complex. "We aren't giving rides to — lovers," he was told.

THE FARMINGTON Hills Library was a grant winner recently. About \$142,000 in grants for blind and physically handicapped persons were made to eight branch libraries, including the Hills branch.

IT MAY NOT be the big time but the board of directors of Douglas & Lomason Co. in Farmington Hills declared a regular quarterly dividend of 15 cents a share to its shareholders recently. The firm manufactures automotive parts and other industrial products.

JANET M. WOCHASKI, a junior at General Motors Institute in Flint, was named to the dean's list for the spring semester. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Wochaski of Farmington Hills, Ms. Wochaski is a cooperative student with Cadillac Motor Car division who alternates classroom schedules with work experience.

"GIVE ME SOME men who are stout-hearted men," is how the song goes, but the Red

Cross isn't sexist. The group is looking for volunteers who are willing to deliver blood from the Red Cross Bloomfield Hills Donor Center to local hospitals on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. As the sole supplier of blood in Wayne, Oakland, Washtenaw and St. Clair counties, Red Cross relies heavily on its volunteer work force to insure the smooth operation of its blood service. Volunteers can call Eleanor Miller at 333-3075 if they're willing to lend a wheel. The Red Cross also is looking for blood donors to meet the need of 950-1,000 units of blood per day. The bloodmobile will be located at the Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday over Labor Day weekend. Call 333-4111 to make an appointment to donate. From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sept. 11, the bloodmobile will be on hand at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills. Call 476-7600 to make an appointment.

TWO YOUNG women from Farmington Hills saw their hard work rewarded recently. Victoria Anna Kimler, daughter of Victor and Ann Kimler of 2551 Mingelwood Court, and Lynn Marie Korby, daughter of Lawrence and Margaret Korby of 22051 Montclair, each were awarded \$650 transfer scholarships from Eastern Michigan University. Both students graduated from Oakland Community College and will use their scholarships for residence hall costs at EMU. Ms. Kimler graduated from Harrison High School where she was president of the German Club, tutored biology, earned a creative writing award and was a member of the National Honor Society and Phi Beta Kappa. At OCC, she was awarded a faculty merit scholarship and an honor scholar award, as well as being recognized by the dean's list. Ms. Korby graduated from Farmington High, where she served as president of the Exchange Club and received a departmental award in foreign languages. She was a member of the National Honor Society and worked as a volunteer with mentally impaired persons. Ms. Korby plans to major in special education at EMU, while Ms. Kimler will be applying her education in biology or psychology.

NORTH FARMINGTON high grad Jeffery Vincent Geraci, 17, son of Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Geraci of 31160 Sturbridge in Farmington Hills, entered the U.S. Air Force. Upon graduation from six weeks' basic training, he will receive technical training in the mechanical aptitude area and be assigned to an Air Force duty station.

DEADLINE

Material submitted for *The Inside Angle* (22170 W. Nine Mile, Southfield 48034) should be typewritten and include the name and phone number of the sender. Items must be received at least one week before publication. Photographs cannot be used for this column. All materials received become the property of the Farmington Observer. Call 332-5400 for additional information or to phone in a news tip.



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