

## A story of faith

# How Mormon bishop aided in building church

When the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, West Bloomfield ward, opens its new building next spring, it will be the accomplishment of the members and the ward's bishop Jerry Johnston.

Since converting to the Mormon faith

while a freshman at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Johnston has devoted his life to his religion.

"I felt it held the answer for me to problems I'd encounter," he said of his religion.

## Cops investigating robberies in city

Farmington Police are investigating two robberies and two break-ins which have occurred in the city in the past three weeks.

Three suspects are being sought in the May 30th beating/robbery of a 26-year-old Farmington man.

The victim, Ronald Armstrong, was approached by the suspects while walking down Grand River after his car ran out of gas. Three black males in a white Chevrolet Nova stopped and asked if Armstrong needed assistance. When he declined their offer, the trio jumped out of their car and attacked Armstrong. They beat him on the head and legs while one of the attackers took his wallet which contained \$10.

The suspects got back in the Nova, made a u-turn and proceeded east on Grand River. Armstrong was discovered by police huddled in the downtown Burger King parking lot. He was treated and released from Bolsoford General Hospital.

Armstrong, a karate student, believes he may have broken some ribs of one of the suspects who he kicked during the altercation.

A LONE GUNMAN robbed the \$9 Mile-Grand River party store of 100 on June 2. According to police, a 6-foot tall black male lingered inside the store until all other patrons left. After paying for a soft drink and using the pay telephone, the suspect asked the cashier for a lottery ticket then pulled out a silver revolver. The suspect threatened the cashier by saying he would "blow his brains out" if he didn't turn over the money in the cash drawer.

The suspect escaped on foot.

In another incident, a brother-sister team cleaning the Farmington A & W drive-in chased two suspects they saw leave the Farmington Radio and TV shop, 30780 Grand River, at 5:45 a.m. on June 7.

The suspects, driving a dark orange Plymouth, left the scene through an alley with an RCA television valued at \$25 in the trunk.

Karen Harmer, 23, of Detroit and her brother, Mark Harmer, 25, of Farmington Hills chased the duo in separate cars to the Southfield Freeway and 8 Mile Road in Detroit, losing the vehicle at that point.

The Harmers gave Farmington police a description of the occupants of the car as well as the vehicle's license plate number. They described the two as a black man, 6 feet tall with medium length hair, accompanied by a black female, 5 feet 4 inches, with long frizzy hair.

The license number was traced to a westside Detroit residence, but police were unable to find the suspect car.

Police said the suspects used their car to knock in the back door of the store. No other merchandise was reported missing.

SIX FEMALE "gypsy-types," most in their 50s but one in her 30s, are being sought in the \$1,815 break-in at T.J. Maxx, 33049 Grand River, on June 8.

The six women entered the discount clothing store at 4:30 p.m., made their way to the back office area where one asked office manager Michael Yendick to use the restroom.

While Yendick was showing the woman to the locked bathroom, the rest of the group clamored around store employee Nancy Wilczynski — leaving the cash office unattended. The suspects regrouped and left the store before the employees noticed that the cash office door had been pried open and cash removed from an unlocked safe.

Police are still investigating the four crimes.

## Dunes crusader fights

(Continued from Page 1A)

"One thing for sure, some day we're going to have to quit robbing the future to pay for the present."

"If we considered these things years ago we may not have been in so much trouble today. We've had poor management of our resources," he said.

As the appeals process seems to loom beyond the DNR's announcement of its decision, Wells added, "We may be just buying time for a lot of these areas."

## Free rides offered

(Continued from Page 1A)

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Like many young men who belong to the Mormon church, Johnston spent two years doing missionary work in South America. He was 21-years-old when he left for South America, older than most of the young men who volunteer for mission work in the church.

"I was older than most but I had belonged to the church for only two years," said Johnston. Upon his return, he finished his education at Brigham Young University in Utah.

He chose to become a certified public accountant and set up his own firm to allow himself a flexible schedule in which to serve the church.

NOW IN HIS 20th year of church membership, he has served in various church positions and has been bishop of the West Bloomfield ward for the past 3 1/2 years.

During that time, the growth of the ward has warranted the construction of the new church building on 13 Mile,

west of Farmington Road in Farmington Hills.

His tenure as bishop is reaching the point where he is certain he will be replaced after the church building is completed.

Usually with the building of a new church the same administration is kept to prevent confusion that would result from construction details and records changing hands in mid-project. The bishop's tenure in the Mormon church usually lasts from 3-5 years, according to Johnston.

The new building, designed in colonial style to blend into the existing neighborhood will have 70 percent of its construction costs paid for by the church's headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. The remaining 30 percent is paid by the congregation which is expected to tithe 10 percent of its individual income to the church.

The new church building will incorporate 16,000 square feet and will cost

more than \$1 million upon completion according to Johnston.

Each ward of the church contains a membership between 300 to 600 persons.

"WE WANT to keep people involved in the church. We don't want to become too big and lose the personal touch," Johnston explained.

He knows regular church goes by name and each is encouraged to contribute time and energy to the church.

Each Sunday a different member is encouraged to deliver the sermon. Men and women members are encouraged to speak.

The church has come under fire for its formal opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment and for the excommunication of Sonia Johnston, a member who actively worked in support of the amendment.

"The Equal Rights Amendment is detrimental to its espoused purpose," said Johnston, who isn't any relation to Ms. Johnston.

"It's detrimental to family life. We don't use the church as a public forum. Some members are active in their opposition to ERA. The church is in opposition to its wording," he said.

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