

# Farmington Observer

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## Working out the bugs

### 'Slows' plague new post office

When the new Farmington Hills post office opened close to one month ago, the larger building with its improved trailer-dock area was supposed to help speed service in the area.

Instead many residents and businesspersons are finding that their mail arrives later than it did when the post office ran its operation from the building on Slocum in Farmington.

But Farmington area Postmaster Kenneth Harris argues that the situation wasn't caused by the new site, 12 Mile Road west of Orchard Lake Road.

Instead, the move from the outskirts of downtown Farmington to 12 Mile coincided with two new national postal programs which have thrown a few kinks into the business of setting into the 24,000-square-foot building.

As a fuel-saving measure, the post office has cut back on its deliveries of mail from centers where packages and letters are sorted, stamped and processed to local post offices.

Farmington and Farmington Hills mail is trucked from its processing center at the Royal Oak post office by Star Route Contractors.

The deliveries used to be made about every 1 1/2 hours between midnight and 6 a.m.

NOW, THE deliveries have been cut in half and the last load of mail arrives in a five-ton truck at 6 a.m., about one hour later than it once did.

That load of first-class mail must be sorted into delivery routes for the morning of its arrival. With the later delivery, the mail isn't ready for

carriers until between 7-7:30 a.m., Harris said.

"We must deliver it," he said. "We are committed to one-day delivery of first-class mail. We can't say we'll do that for tomorrow," he said.

"I can't pay carriers to come in earlier and sit and wait while the mail is sorted. That would be bad management."

Instead, the mail is arriving later and Harris is searching for solutions to the situation. He's asked postal authorities for extra personnel to handle the last-minute rush of mail. He doesn't foresee that request receiving any action for several months.

In the meantime, customers who are impatient upon receiving their mail early in the morning are advised that a post office box is one solution. Rental for the box depends upon the amount of mail the customer receives and the size of box required.

MAIL IS delivered to post office boxes by 8:30 a.m. if the address contains the box number. If it doesn't, mail is routed to a carrier who in turn routes the letter to the post office box later in the day.

Although the department doesn't guarantee a delivery time, "people become accustomed to receiving the mail at a certain time and they're out looking for it," Harris said.

Another delay in the mail service is a postal program cutting back the use of mail trucks as relay stations for carriers.

Until this month, carriers in Farmington and Farmington Hills would take a small truck to their

route, park it and deliver mail in a circular path until they returned to the truck. They then drove to another point in their route.

Under the new system, two carriers drive to their routes in one truck. The carrier with a route which can be done totally on foot is dropped off. Deliveries are routed so the carrier ends up at a relay station when the mailbag becomes empty. A new load of mail is taken from the khaki-colored metal box and the carrier continues the route.

If a route consists in part of a rural-delivery section which requires a truck, then the carrier is expected to walk that section of the route that has sidewalks.

FARMINGTON is one of the last areas in the country converting to the system, Harris said.

The new building does contain some advantages for customers and postal employees.

The enclosed dock includes space for heavy mail customers such as industries and firms which use their own vans and small trucks to pick up their mail.

The larger docks offer more room for the department's own trucks to maneuver, Harris said.

In the post office's Slocum Street building, truck drivers often had a difficult time guiding their vehicles into the limited space. Drivers of larger trucks needed to park parallel to the docks.

The Slocum Street building, still operating as a post station offering mailing service and stamps to customers, had the disadvantage of



Post office employee Anita Guzik (above) sorts the mail at the new postal facility on 12 Mile (below). (Staff photos by Randy Borst)

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## Vocational education advocate honored for service

By MARY GNIEWEK

Earl D. Baumunk of Farmington will be honored as one of the champions of vocational education tomorrow by the Farmington Rotary which will present him with an award for outstanding community service.

Baumunk, who directs the vocational and career education department in the Farmington Public Schools, will receive the award at the Farmington Elks Club.

"I'm delighted that an organization is willing to recognize vocational education, a curriculum that doesn't get much recognition," Baumunk said.

Baumunk, who isn't a member of the Rotary, is the second recipient of the annual award.

"Earl helped us initiate a cooperative service program for the school system that is one of the best in the state," said Leon Serdynski, Rotary member and senior vice president of Metropolitan National Bank of Farmington.

Baumunk came to the Farmington school district as an industrial arts teacher in 1958 and was named first

director of vocational education when that department was formed.

From its beginning, the department has expanded to include this year:

- 43 state-approved vocational programs.
- Two programs for disadvantaged youth service.

• A career-guidance program established for grades six to 12.

• 40 representatives from business and industry and 2,300 high-school students.

"I HAVE EXCELLENT help and support from the staff," Baumunk says modestly. "I depend on the cooperation of the school administration for success."

Baumunk worked in the building-construction trade while attending Iowa State University. His philosophy, and that of Farmington's vocational program, is that every student, whether college bound or not, should have a salable job skill.

Concern about an 8 percent high school dropout rate in the late 1950s provided the stimulus for the establishment of Farmington's vocational education department.

Baumunk served on the committee which developed the cooperative work/study program and was later named diversified occupations supervisor.

"The community was very receptive," he recalls. "We began with 37 applicants and no jobs. We had to go door

to door to retail stores, local businesses, and tool and die shops."

The demand on both ends — students and employers — increased rapidly. By 1964, jobs were found for all of the ever-increasing number of applicants.

The curriculum grew to include applicants and no jobs. We had to go door

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## Negotiations stall at Arnold Drugs

No progress was reported as the first negotiating session between the striking workers at Arnold Drug stores and representatives of Borman's Inc., which owns the chain, ended last Tuesday.

Ron Brown, chief negotiator for Local No. 876 of the Retail Store Employees Union, an affiliate of the AFL/CIO, claimed the company's offer was unchanged from their first proposal.

"They made no movement whatever," Brown said. "We were hopeful the company was willing to talk, but

other two offer the same package.

"CUNNINGHAM'S NEGOTIATED first this year. They ratified their contract in June, with a 50 cent increase the first year, 30 cents the next two years and COLA in the second and third year."

"For some reason, Arnold and Revo are balking at that agreement. Revo is offering the money but not the COLA."

Brown, who represents 350 Arnold workers in eight southeastern Michigan counties, a total of 24 stores, said he had "no knowledge of what the company's intentions are." Over 500 workers, mostly cashiers, are taking part in the four-week old strike at the 34 Arnold stores statewide.

Brown thinks the strike is having a devastating effect on the drug store chain's business.

"Absolutely (it's affecting business). From what we can find out, we've cut them down 70 percent."

No new negotiating sessions are scheduled at present.

Spokesmen for Borman's have refused to comment on negotiations. The company is asking for a wage and benefit freeze until January 1982, Brown said.

The union is proposing a 50 cent per hour increase the first year and 30 cents per hour the following two years, with COLA (Cost of Living Allowance) raises the second and third years.

"Historically, the drug industry has let either Cunningham's or Revo negotiate first," Brown explained. "Then the



Earl Baumunk, honored for his work in the vocational program, contemplates the past accomplishments and future endeavors. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

## Hard luck couple's future brightens

By BILL CASPER

One month ago, Wallace and Janeen Boyd were homeless, jobless and collecting cans and bottles for the deposit money to buy food for themselves and their four children.

Today, their future looks somewhat brighter.

Although life for the Boyds will remain a struggle — until at least one of them lands a steady job — they at least have found a home, thanks in part to the generosity of some Observer & Ec-

centric readers and the Redford Goodfellows. The couple used more than \$200 in contributions made by readers in Redford, Southfield and Farmington to pay a storage bill to retrieve their possessions and get some temporary relief. And next week the young couple will be moving to a government-subsidized apartment complex in Canton Township, which will ease their present situation, said Mrs. Boyd.

During the past few months, the Boyds, originally from Farmington, have been living with relatives in Redford Township. Wallace's cousin, who works as a waitress, is the only member of the household with a steady job.

LIVING WITH relatives, however difficult, did provide some temporary relief for the Boyd family and was an improvement over their previous accommodations — sleeping in their car and campgrounds after they lost their Southfield home because they were unable to meet the rent payments.

"Things are still tight for us financially, but they're beginning to improve," said Mrs. Boyd. "I'm finally receiving financial aid, food stamps and Medicaid through the Social Services department."

Mrs. Boyd said that donations from private individuals helped her to get the financial aid.

She was unable to get such assistance previously because her children's birth certificates were looked in storage and the Social Services department required the birth certificates for her children before aid could be processed.

"We've received about \$200 in contributions from people and I used part of the money to pay the \$80 storage bill to get the birth certificates so I could get the financial assistance," Mrs. Boyd said. "We also received help from the Redford Township Goodfellows, who

took me shopping with my children to buy their clothes and shoes. That was a tremendous help. One woman even brought us \$2.80 worth of returnable bottles."

"Their kindness has helped us to begin to turn bad times into better times, and we're all grateful."

"GETTING OUR own place to stay is a big help and what we really need now is for Wally or I to get a steady job. Wally is still working off-and-on through a temporary job service, but we've had no luck finding anything permanent," she said.

"The Observer article did result in one job interview for Wally and the employer said he'd get back to us, but we haven't heard from him yet," she added.

Mrs. Boyd said Wallace still has not been able to get any unemployment because his previous employer can't be located for him to fill out the necessary paper work. She said the employer moved out of the state in search of more work.

But the Boyds are thankful for their good fortune of late and are a little more optimistic about exchanging day-to-day living for a steady job and a worthwhile future.

## Grove memorial for Jason Kott

Friends, neighbors, and relatives of Dr. & Mrs. David Kott, whose eldest son Jason lost his life in an accident at Adat Shalom Synagogue on Sept. 16, are establishing a grove with a minimum of 1,000 trees in Israel in his memory.

He was a sixth grade student at Warner Middle School in Farmington Hills and attended Hebrew school at Adat Shalom.

Information about contributing to the grove in memory of Jason Kott is available by phoning the Jewish National Fund office, 557-6644. The office is at 27308 Southfield.

### what's inside

