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Peck bankruptcy won't stop project

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills auto dealer Roger Peck, a senior citizen housing proponent, claims his proposed 900-unit senior citizens housing complex is still afloat despite his dealership's filing for bankruptcy under Chapter 11.

"That (bankruptcy) was a defense mechanism to keep the banks off our backs," said Peck, owner of Roger Peck Chevrolet.

The proposed HUD-funded senior citizen complex would be on an 8.7-acre site owned by Peck. The land fronts Nine Mile and Tuck south of Grand River. According to Peck's proposal, he would lease the property to the Farmington Hills Non-Profit Housing Corp., the tax-exempt sponsor/mortgagor required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The non-profit housing corporation will designate either Peck or a specialized firm to manage the development.

"EVERYTHING IS GO if we get federal funding," said Joan Dudley, one of the corporation's directors.

With a rezoning request approved, and the architectural plans and construction bids in hand, Peck said, the remaining -- and most important -- step is to meet HUD's June 30 application deadline for federal money to build the senior citizen complex. Although Peck has yet to see the ar-

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auto dealer

chitect's proposed budget for development of the complex, the total package would cost in the millions, he said.

But while plans are moving ahead for requesting federal money, a rift in the seven-member housing corporation's board of directors surfaced last week. The Farmington Hills City Council received a letter requesting \$140,000 in Community Development Block Grant money to pay for improvements near the proposed housing complex. Such improvements could be paving of Tuck Road. City administrators said they would study the request.

THE LETTER REQUESTING block grant money prompted the resignation of housing corporation secretary Masie Kurzeja of Farmington Hills. Although written by Gerald Tattersall, the auto dealership's general manager, the letter bears Kurzeja's signature.

"I had no knowledge of this letter or its content and was never consulted in this matter; furthermore, neither Mr. Tattersall nor Mr. Peck have

ever had my permission to sign my name to anything and did so this time without my knowledge or consent," Kurzeja indicated in her resignation letter.

But last Friday, Peck said Tattersall indicated he had called Kurzeja and read her the letter.

"There weren't any shenanigans here," Peck said. It is a common business practice to sign letters for other members of a board of directors or trustees, he said. "Tattersall just didn't initial the letter (when he signed Kurzeja's name)."

"SHE (KURZEJA) IS a good gal. She just didn't understand this program."

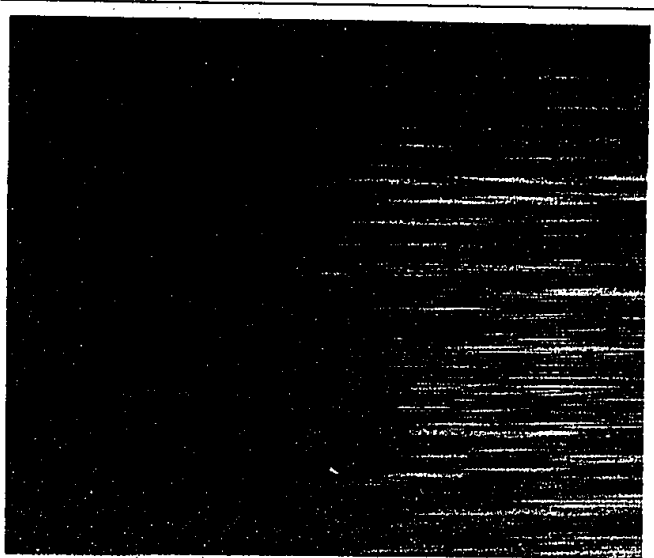
Although unsure whether Kurzeja would be replaced on the housing corporation, Peck indicated a smaller group of people is easier to work with.

"It's up to them (the housing corporation)," Peck said. "The hard thing to do with seven people is to get them together at one time."

Although some corporation directors think the rift is based on misunderstanding and a lack of communication within the organization, no one thinks the problem will affect the proposed housing center's progress.

In fact, Peck has accumulated more than 300 names of person wanting to

Please turn to Page 7



A swan is always beautiful, but Atlee S. Hart had shooting this swan in silhouette against ripples the vision to make it even more breathtaking by reflecting an orange sunset.

Start shooting prize photos

By Monte Nagler
special writer

You're outdoors, the weather's great, and the next three months are the best time of year to take color slides of nature close to home. Even an amateur who takes his time and plans his work carefully can do wonders.

Save your best shots for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers' 1983 color slide contest on "Nature in the Suburbs."

We all can learn a lesson from this photo by Atlee S. Hart, a four-year resident of Farmington Hills. When not managing Signals and Systems, his electronics manufacturing firm in Troy, he demonstrates his flair at photography. Hart, who has been taking pictures for four years, even does his own color printing.

EARLIER THIS year, his photograph of a silhouetted swan was featured in the readers' photo issue of Michigan Natural Resources magazine.

On Little Traverse Bay last summer, Hart waited for the descending sun to reach just the right position to backlight the swan and to paint the water a splendid orange.

On his Nikon camera, Hart used a 300 mm lens coupled with a teleconverter to produce 600 mm of focal length. That brought in the swan close and compressed the water's ripples into a dramatic backdrop.

A steady tripod helped Hart capture the serene scene on his favorite film, Kodachrome 25.

"Photographically," he said, "I'm technically well versed. Now it's time to develop my artistic vision. Out of the scene -- into the art."

From this combination of technique and vision, it seems he's well on his way.

AMATEUR photographers who live in the Observer & Eccentric delivery area are eligible to enter color slides in the "Nature in the Suburbs" contest. Winning photo will be published Labor Day weekend in full color in your hometown newspaper.

Watch for details on how to enter in two weeks. Meanwhile, load up your camera with film, plan your shots carefully, and be on the lookout at all times for that picture with impact.

It adds up! Dunckel math whizzes shine

By Tom Beer
staff writer

For five Farmington-area youngsters, success in school comes by the numbers.

The students, all sixth-graders at O.E. Dunckel Middle School in Farmington Hills, figured their way to a high score in a recent statewide mathematics competition.

"The youngsters were required to complete a 40-problem math test in 30 minutes," said Jerry Kaplan, who coordinates activities for gifted children in the Farmington School District.

"The test required basic arithmetic skills, and the students had to use creative thinking in problem solving."

One question read: "A black jack year is a year where the sum of the digits is 21. 1983 is a black jack year, for example. How many black jack years are there between 1900 and 2000?"

The five highest scores in the class were totaled and became the school's score. Dunckel amassed 187 points out of a possible 200 to tie for third place with West Bloomfield's Orchard Lake Middle School in the Oakland County standings.

Birmingham's Country Day School finished first in the county with 170 points, and Oxford was second with 159. In the statewide ranking, Dunckel and Orchard Lake were tied for 13th.

Dunckel's top five students and their scores were: Greenberg (34 of 40), James Sung (33), Owen Traub and Joey Crow (31 each) and Tom Sramet (30).

League, a group of teachers, the voluntary test is given each year to middle schoolers (grades six through eight) throughout the state.

"Kids, especially bright ones enjoy the competitive nature of learning," Kaplan said. "They really get stimulated when they can compete against kids they don't know. They like to see how they stack up."

Some, but not all, of the Dunckel students fall into the "gifted child" category, according to Kaplan.

"It's just a general class, which happens to have a lot of bright students,"

he said. "Some have been identified as gifted, others are just very good math students."

Country Day finishing first in the competition didn't surprise Kaplan.

"It's a private school with a lot of bright kids in it," he said.

Kaplan said he was pleased, but not surprised, with the Farmington showing. "We have a very bright population," he said.

No calculators or slide rules could be used on the test. . . . Just pencils and a lot of scratch paper," Kaplan said.

what's inside

- Community Calendar . . . 8B
- Inside Angles . . . 3A
- Oral Quarrel . . . 6A
- Shopping Cart . . . Section B
- Sports . . . Section C
- Suburban Life . . . 5B
- Newsline . . . 477-5450
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Hills woman wins award

A business success story

By Jackie Klein
staff writer

When Adeline Laforet graduated from high school 30 years ago, she and other young women were advised to pursue a career in nursing or teaching or to get married, have kids and stay home.

But women in the past two decades have opted for a wide variety of alternatives which Laforet refers to as "the burden of choice."

A registered nurse who owns three health care corporations in Southfield, Laforet recently returned from Washington where she received a National Women in Business Advocate of the Year award from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Laforet, 48, a Farmington Hills resident, is founder and sole owner of the Health Care Professionals, Pro-Care One Inc., PCO Associates Inc. and Laforet Enterprises.

Laforet's own experience mirrors

that of many women who balance a career against the demands of raising a family or pursuing higher education. She manages to do it all successfully.

Seated in her attractive Southfield office, which she decorated herself, Laforet talked about women entrepreneurs.

"WOMEN TODAY have a total identity and many no longer believe it's ideal to just stay home and have kids. More than 50 percent of women in the nation are working and 25 percent of all businesses in the country are owned by women.

"Entrepreneurism is a natural discovery for females. Clothing oneself in credibility, setting goals and having a good business plan diminishes sexism. Women are starting business five times faster than men and are more willing to be visible owners."

Women have the same problems that



Adeline Laforet

Please turn to Page 7



Blood drive

Kathy Huta, a Farmington High School student, treats herself to some refreshments after donating a pint of her blood to the Red Cross during a

drive held at the school last Friday. See page 3 for a story and more photographs.

RANDY BORSI/staff photographer