



Farmington Observer

Volume 97 Number 25

Thursday, January 2, 1986

Farmington, Michigan

48 Pages

Twenty-five cents

Farmington Focus

If you have a news item or an idea for a feature story or an action picture with a Farmington area connection, send a note to our downtown office at 332C3 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

HELP save lives, give blood. American Red Cross Blood Services Southeastern Michigan Region Bloodmobile will visit Farmington Hills three times in January.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Jan. 6, it will be at the Holiday Inn, 38123 10 Mile. Call Shirley Samp for an appointment, 477-1911.

From 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 16, and Friday, Jan. 31, it will be at the Botsford General Hospital Administration and Education Building, 28050 Grand River. For an appointment, call Beverly Weiss, 471-8651.

Blood generally can be donated by any healthy person between 17 and 70 who weighs at least 110 pounds. The process, including the donation and refreshments, takes less than an hour and can save up to four lives.

"Donating blood is simple, safe and risk-free. There is absolutely no risk to the donor of contracting any infectious disease. A new, sterile needle is used for each donor, then discarded," Red Cross spokeswoman Toni Wilson said.

ATTENTION, all Farmington-area seniors. You can take part in the Oakland Livingstone Human Service Agency discount program. Discounts from 4 to 40 percent are offered by local merchants on a variety of items, including hair care, prescription drugs and eyeglasses. Pictures to be laminated into plastic identification cards will be taken from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Jan. 17 at the Farmington Hills Senior Center at Mercy Center, 28800 11 Mile.

THEY'RE degree winners. Two Farmington Hills residents earned doctorates from Wayne State University in Detroit Dec. 12. Ingrid Grossberg works as a clinical social worker. Monisha Nayer plans to work in clinical psychology.

ON THE honor roll. Paula Gervasi and Maureen O'Conner, both from Farmington Hills, were named to the fall dean's list at Northwood Institute, Midland.

NEW recruits graduate. The Farmington Hills Recruit School graduated 22 new firefighters in 1985, including 14 from Farmington Hills and two from Farmington.

New Farmington Hills firefighters are Craig Bowles, Mark Ellis, Christine Gebhard, Martin Knorp, Michael MacKinnon, Gerald Miles, Joseph Myers, Denis Nicole, Gary Olaszewski, Leo Panoschek, David Rammage, Allan Ruprecht, Ronald Sili and Jon Unruh. New Farmington Department of Public Safety firefighters are Paul Beale and Ron Meyers.

FOOTNOTES: Did you know the Farmington Hills Historical Commission wrote a booklet tracing the Farmington area's evolution beginning with the Ice Age? The 67-page, paperback booklet is entitled, "Farmington: An Original Entity, The Natural History of Farmington." It was published in 1976.

Man charged with murdering wife

By Joanne Maliszewski and Bob Sklar staff writers

A 38-year-old man is charged with premeditated murder in the shooting death of his 24-year-old wife Dec. 28 in their Farmington Hills apartment. After allegedly shooting his wife of one month with a .44-caliber magnum revolver, John Allen Vermeulen shot himself twice in the chest, Sgt. Dennis Rochford of the Farmington Hills Police Department said.

Vermeulen was reported in stable condition under police watch Tuesday in Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills, Detective Gary Brandemuhl said.

At bedside Tuesday, District Judge Michael Hand of Farmington arraigned Vermeulen on a felony charge of first-

degree murder. Conviction would bring a maximum penalty of life in prison. Vermeulen also was arraigned on a charge of possessing a firearm in the commission of a felony. Conviction carries a mandatory two-year prison term.

INNOCENT PLEAS were entered in Vermeulen's behalf. Hand ordered Vermeulen held without bond pending a preliminary examination in 47th District Court. Vermeulen was remanded to the custody of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department.

Although a preliminary exam is required within 12 days of arraignment, the defense attorney could seek waiver of that requirement, or Hand could order a waiver, depending on Vermeulen's condition, the judge said.

Vermeulen's wife, Urine Lewis, 24,

died of a gunshot wound to the chest, the Oakland County Medical Examiner ruled following an autopsy Saturday morning.

Although police are not sure what happened between Lewis and her husband before the shootings, Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said Lewis left Vermeulen Dec. 17 and they apparently planned to file for divorce Dec. 26.

Vermeulen appeared "to have been depressed about the pending divorce," Sgt. Rochford said.

The shootings took place in the living room of the couple's two-bedroom apartment on Verdant Drive in the Muirwood Apartments and Terraces.

WHEN POLICE entered the apartment, they found Vermeulen conscious. He made "incriminating statements about himself," Chief Dwyer said.

The suspected murder weapon was registered to Vermeulen. The bullet that killed Lewis traveled through her upper body through the living room wall into a bedroom, Rochford said. He

said there "aren't too many handguns more powerful."

Police were called to Muirwood about 3:50 p.m. Dec. 28 after a younger sister became concerned when she arrived at Lewis' apartment for a 2 p.m. lunch date, but got no answer to repeated telephone calls and knocks on the door. A maintenance worker unlocked the door for her, Rochford said.

Services for Lewis, as well as burial, will be in Dallas. Thayer Rock Funeral Home in Farmington handled local arrangements.

Police complex going up slowly

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Poor weather conditions and a problem with a subcontractor has slowed construction on Farmington Hills' \$2.5 million police facility.

But the project's general contractor is revising the construction schedule with hopes that the building can be completed by July 1986. Originally, the targeted completion date was June 1985.

"He's hoping to make up as much time as he can," City Manager William Costick said. "If (general contractor) will be putting together a new schedule. But a lot depends on the weather this winter."

Although general contractor A.J. Anderson Construction Co. of Mount Clemens is expected to complete a revised construction schedule in two weeks, plans include completing the foundations by the end of January, putting up steel beams in February and completing masonry work and roof by March, said Thomas Biasell, Department of Public Services director.

"By March or the first of April, you should see a building growing there," Biasell said.

CONSTRUCTION ON the two-story, 35,000-square-foot building began in early August.

The first step was reconstruction of the driveways on the south side of the building and construction of a new parking lot. "Where we built the building is where our parking lot used to

'By March or the first of April, you should see a building growing there.'

— Thomas Biasell
DPS director

be," Costick said.

About 100 new parking spaces have been added to the city complex, for a total 300 spaces. Storm drains, a water main and a large, deep sanitary sewer along 11 Mile also were installed.

Work was slowed because of rainy weather in October and most of November. While excavating the site, workers came across an artesian well that required water be pumped out of the area. "It was nothing that should have caused a delay. It was handled easily," Costick said. But excess rain-fall only added to the already muddy site conditions.

Also adding to the delay was a problem with one of the subcontractors responsible for site work. "In my opinion, he didn't work in an organized fashion. It caused delays. There was a reluctance to put a full commitment on the job," Costick said. The subcontractor has since been replaced.

WHEN COMPLETE, the new facility will provide ample room for police.

Please turn to Page 7



FUCK SMITH/staff photographer

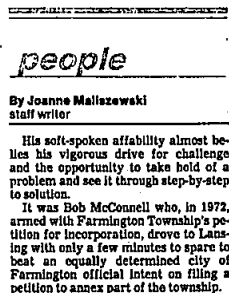
On the trails

The snow that started to fall before Christmas hasn't let up. Brian Kitz (above), a Farmington Hills resident who's a senior at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Ind., took advantage of his winter break to work out on the

cross-country ski trails at Glen Oaks County Park in Farmington Hills. The 1980 Birmingham Brother Rice High School graduate is majoring in engineering and philosophy. For more winter pictures, see Page 3A.

Community force

Bob McConnell: soft-spoken, but a leader



BOB MCCONNELL

people

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

His soft-spoken affability almost belies his vigorous drive for change and the opportunity to take hold of a problem and see it through step-by-step to solution.

It was Bob McConnell who, in 1972, armed with Farmington Township's petition for incorporation, drove to Lansing with only a few minutes to spare to beat an equally determined city of Farmington official intent on filing a petition to annex part of the township.

It was McConnell who was among the early group of movers and shakers that saw the need to reorganize growing Farmington Township as a city to meet the community's needs.

It was McConnell who, as the township's last supervisor, pushed to form the Industrial Tax Commission as a means of creating a strong tax base for the young city's continued growth.

It was McConnell who saw what Farmington Township could become as a city and worked toward that goal.



BOB MCCONNELL



BOB MCCONNELL



BOB MCCONNELL

"ONCE THERE'S a challenge and a problem to be solved, the job's not done until it's finished," McConnell said. "It takes leadership and dedication to keep things moving. You don't falter from your stated objective."

And from all appearances, that's exactly how McConnell manages life. Born and raised in Ireland and armed with an education in textile en-

gineering and chemistry, McConnell bid his homeland goodbye for a future in the United States.

"The future was in the United States and Canada," he said. "The linen industry was dying and the polymer chemistry was growing. And Dupont Chemicals was here."

A burgeoning career wasn't the only future McConnell found in the United

States. "I came all the way to Detroit and married a Scottish woman," he said.

McConnell travels back and forth to Ireland but it's generally for business. Yet the ties to his homeland are maintained by his sons who often travel to Ireland and England.

Please turn to Page 2

what's inside

Around Farmington	2B
Business	1D
Cable connection	6B
Club circuit	5B
Classifieds	Secs. D, E
Crossword	6E
Entertainment	5-6C
Opinion	8A
Police/fire calls	6A
Recreation news	7B
Sports	1-4C
Travel	10C
Suburban life	1-5B
YMCA highlights	7A
News line	477-5450
Sports line	591-2300
Home delivery	591-0500
Classified line	591-0900



OAKLAND COUNTY
644-1070
ROCHESTER
852-3222
WAYNE COUNTY
591-0900

Use your MasterCard or Visa