

# Natural setting called 'a labor of love'

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Mike, 39, is a Farmington Hills resident who took over Harrison's business, formerly Harrison Enterprises. Mike and wife, Joni, have two children, Geoffrey, 15, and Colleen, 12.

Dan, 37, recently settled next door to his childhood home when he and wife, Deanne, bought a two-acre property down the road from Harrison. Spring in a wildlife sanctuary

might have been the theme when Harrison and Dan gave a tour of the property on a warm afternoon. Trillium, violets and bloodroot bloomed alongside the path, and bullfrogs popped into the water.

Harrison pointed out some of 23 different fully grown tree species on the property. Willows grow abundantly — he has counted 64 — but there are also many ash and wild cherry trees.

There are also about 30 maple trees. "We'll have a sugar bush soon

there are so many of them," he said. Harrison taps the trees and said he makes about 50 gallons of syrup annually from the sweet sap.

He gives demonstrations of the maple syrup-making process to school children. He recently received a letter from a girls Brownies group thanking him. "It was the cutest letter. That's the sort of thing that makes it all worthwhile." They were so appreciative.

HARRISON ALSO planted 100 evergreens 30 years ago, which have multiplied, and he now sells them to developers and Christmas tree buyers.

Tacoons, ducks, muskrats, fish, crabs, opossum, the occasional deer, and a few years ago, a den of foxes, also find refuge on his property.

The property is easy to maintain, said Harrison, because he treats it as a wilderness. "I try to maintain it like a state campground," he said. "That's about the way I like it."

"All it takes is some vigilance," he said, removing a log from the water beginning to cause a dam. "If you leave it, it will build up."

"This was a good place to grow up," said Dan, remembering war games, skating rinks created on the stream, and toboggan runs on the hills. Dan insists that his father used to toboggan down the hill standing on his head. "We thought every Dad could do that," he said, laughing.

HARRISON STUDIED forestry at Michigan State University. Later, he joined the sales department at Plymouth Motors.

At age 43, Harrison started his own business, selling items such as pens and lighters imprinted with advertising. "It worked out real well," he said.

Harrison retired eight years ago when Mike took over the business. "The pressure's off. Now, it's just projects that I do," he said. "A place like this, you never run out of projects. You can always come up with something."

For instance, he still chops wood, keeping a two-year supply for his wood burning stove. He also enjoys traveling in his motor home — "That way, you don't need reservations."

This year, he plans a trip up north and perhaps to the Smokies. He

frequently takes along his Irish setter, Josh.

A few years ago, he and Dan took the motor home on a two-month trip to Alaska, where they went backpacking, camping and canoeing. "It was really delightful," Harrison said. "In fact, I'd like to do it again."

THE TRIP was one of many Harrison has taken in traveling extensively through the United States over the years. He has been to every state but Hawaii. "My wife, and I travelled all over the country and enjoyed it."

Of his wife, who passed away 10 years ago, Harrison said many in the community remember her for years of involvement in church and community activities. "She knew more people. She just touched so many lives," he said.

Harrison meets daily with fellow members of "Conroy's Cue College," for a game of pool. With member "old-timers" ranging in age from 76 to 84, he says, "It's almost like a living history."

Harrison is co-founder of the 150-member Farmington Community Center Men's Club, which holds monthly meetings with speakers. He has been the center's "volunteer of the month."

Harrison has watched the Farmington community grow from a small town to an urban area. And he feels it's important that properties such as his survive in their natural state.

As he put it: "There's just not that many open places around anymore."

# Sister of murder victim testifies

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Farmington and was postponed until today at the defense attorney's request.

VERMEULEN IS charged with one count of first-degree murder, which carries a maximum penalty of life in prison and one count of possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony, which carries a mandatory two-year prison term upon conviction.

Vermeulen allegedly used a .44-caliber magnum revolver, registered to himself, to shoot Lewis and himself. The gun had three spent rounds when it was discovered, according to Police Chief William Dwyer.

Vermeulen was taken to Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills, where he remained in

intensive care under police custody for several days. A Botsford resident physician who treated Vermeulen while he was in the intensive care unit testified the defendant's heart, lungs and blood pressure were constantly monitored and he remained on morphine for pain.

"I think that initially, it was hard to say for certain (whether he would live), then he stabilized," the doctor testified.

An attorney for the hospital pleaded the doctor/patient privilege against answering any questions about conversations between the doctor and Vermeulen.

HAND ARRIGNED the bedridden Vermeulen at the hospital Dec. 31. Innocent pleas were entered on his behalf and he was ordered held without bond pending his

preliminary examination. He remains in the custody of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department.

Also testifying was Gregory Glowacki, a Mulrwood maintenance person and Farmington Hills firefighter, who was first to enter the apartment where Lewis and Vermeulen were found shot. Vermeulen said, "I shot myself," as he laid on the floor, and that the gun "could be under her," according to Glowacki's testimony. Vermeulen also asked Glowacki and other fire officials present "not to leave."

Urmie Lewis visited her sister in Texas shortly after she married Vermeulen last November; and invited her sister to visit Michigan for the Christmas holiday. According to testimony from Rexhepi, Lewis talked of leaving her husband for

weeks, and, in fact, did move the furniture into storage 10-11 days before her death.

"She said she was planning to leave him," Rexhepi said. "She was very depressed and crying a lot. She said everytime she tried to tell him, he wouldn't listen to her."

Rexhepi and Lewis spent Christmas Eve at the Bargainell Inn in Farmington Hills, where Lewis reportedly moved after leaving Vermeulen. On Dec. 28, the day of Lewis' death, Rexhepi drove back and forth several times, between the motel and apartment in search of her sister. She finally contacted the Mulrwood manager, who called her back at the inn at 2:50 p.m. to advise her the police were on the scene at Mulrwood.

# State Police will conduct checkpoints

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about the program's effectiveness.

But Dwyer also maintains that the department's use of an "alcohol enforcement concept" has been successful in holding the line on drunk driving.

"Either with other law enforcement agencies or in using several of our own officers, the team is deployed at critical times in target locations to seek out and arrest violators," Dwyer wrote in a letter to Col. Gerald Hough, director of the Michigan State Police.

"The use of the PBT (Preliminary Breathalyzer Test) has made testing much easier once the stop has been made. These practices have been quite successful, efficient, and have taken advantage of the unity of neighboring agencies."

ALTHOUGH LAHOFF supports the use of sobriety checklines, he believes they are not cost-effective measures for local police departments. Public safety officers would have to be taken off local duties to participate in the checkpoints.

Like the local agencies, officials at the Michigan State Police Northville Post also have not been contacted about participating in the program.

"Right now, we have had no word from Lansing as far as our part in the sobriety checkpoints," said Lt. William Tomczyk, Northville Post commander. If officials at State Police

headquarters decide to conduct the checkpoints along the areas patrolled by the Northville Post (1-626, 1-275 and 1-36), Tomczyk said he assumes he will be contacted with plenty of time to plan.

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