

There's no magic pill  
for good health, 1B



Rocks  
next, 1C

False alarms grab  
attention of city, 2A

# Farmington Observer

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## Group home bid spurs concern

**'They cannot place residents . . . until we have reviewed and evaluated a license for that adult foster care home.'**

— Michael Swajenen  
state consultant

By Joanne Maliszowski  
staff writer

Michigan Department of Mental Health officials cannot guarantee that residents of a proposed Farmington Hills group home for mentally ill people have never been on the wrong side of the law.

The six adult residents to be chosen for the proposed group home on Grayling, near Grand River and Middlebelt, are being treated in the

state's psychiatric system, not a criminal correctional system, said Phyllis Levine, supervisor of residential development at the Ypsilanti Regional Psychiatric Hospital.

"The residents have a history of psychiatric illness. They are not coming from a correctional facility," Levine said. "The people definitely are not coming from the forensics center. But we can't assure that at some time they have never

had contact with the criminal justice system."

Though state officials can't guarantee the residents' background, there isn't necessarily a correlation between criminal records and the type of illness for which they have been treated, Levine said.

"The law prevents using group homes as halfway or drug rehabilitation houses," said Michael Swajenen, a state Department of Social Services consultant for the proposed

group home on Grayling.

ANGRY GRAYLING homeowners expressed their opposition to the proposed group at a Farmington Hills City Council meeting in October.

Homeowner Walt Hayward said he was told that at least 30 percent of the residents to be chosen for the proposed Grayling facility have

Please turn to Page 4

## Farmington FOCUS

If you have a news item, feature story idea or an action picture with a Farmington area connection, send a note to our downtown office at 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

### SIGNALING the go-ahead

Farmington recently received the state contract to install the long-awaited pedestrian-activated traffic signal at Grove Street and Grand River, City Manager Robert Deadman said.

The city council is expected to review the state's request for payment of half, or \$19,000, for the light's installation at the next regular council meeting Monday, Dec. 15.

So when will it be installed? Farmington seniors are writing regularly to the state to push for the signal's installation.

### STEPPING down.

Timothy Ryan of Farmington Hills will retire as president of the Catholic Social Services of Wayne County Board of Directors Dec. 31.

"The agency and the Archdiocese of Detroit are deeply indebted to Tim for his outstanding performance over the years. He will be sorely missed," said Thomas Killeen, board chairman.

Ryan, a Boston native, has devoted most of his 35-year professional career to Catholic Social Services of Wayne County. He joined it in 1956 as a caseworker.

Ryan is the founder and a board member of the Catholic Service Directors of Michigan.

### SHE'S a winner.

Laura Work of Farmington Hills was crowned Miss Metro Detroit Talent-Senior Division by the North American Youth Festival Nov. 23 at the Southfield Civic Center.

A certified teacher in tap and jazz, she teaches in Livonia and Westland.

Because of a foot injury, she wasn't able to dance. But she turned to singing with a solo from "A Chorus Line" titled "Nothing."

### TRACKING the Masons.

C. Lawrence Ashmore of Farmington Hills was among 100 southeast Michigan Masons to receive Scottish Rite Freemasonry's 32nd degree Nov. 8 at the Detroit Masonic Temple.

### THE low bidder was Mike Savole Chevrolet.

The Southfield dealership will provide the city of Farmington with a replacement 4-wheel-drive pickup for \$12,273.

The truck, used in park maintenance and snow plowing, will also be equipped with an 8-foot snow plow. The city used bids taken through Oakland County.

### FOOTNOTES:

One year ago this week — Local officials were not surprised by the state Supreme Court ruling that upheld lower court decisions on placement of group homes for mentally retarded and mentally ill people in residential neighborhoods.

"I was not surprised. It was almost expected," Farmington Hills Mayor Jan Dolan said.

"What it tells me is that all we can do is make sure there is 1,500 feet between group homes and then there is no violation of the state law."

## Drugs, liquor and kids don't mix, she says

By Casey Huns  
staff writer

Betty Nicolay's caring and devotion overflow from family into community.

From her 2-year-old granddaughter, who calls her "Mama Nic" to students who find themselves in trouble, the Farmington Hills resident is concerned with the problems all children face while growing up.

Some have labelled her "the drug lady" because of her interest in teen drug and alcohol abuse — an issue she takes on the road for a variety of student and community lectures.

The problems many high school students face today, she said, have drugs or alcohol at their root. "The truant rate, breaking and entering — everything's interrelated," she said.

Nicolay helped to found the local group, Farmington Families in Action, of which she is past president and where her "heart really lies." She has devoted the past four years to educating students, their parents and the community about chemical addiction.

**WHY GET involved?** Because such a parent movement was needed in the Farmington area, Nicolay said. Despite the community inroads the group has made, the biggest problem she faces is denial of addiction problems.

"People say it's none of our business, but it is," she said. "It really does involve everyone."

Today Nicolay is vice chairwoman of Michigan Communities in Action, a network of local groups such as FFA throughout the state.

The statewide group is presently lobbying for a Michigan law simi-

people

**'We need to help our kids in a lot of areas. We live in a chemical society. If you reach just one person, you make it all worthwhile.'**

— Betty Nicolay  
Families in Action

lar to the host liability ordinance in Farmington Hills, which makes a private party's adult host criminally responsible when underage drinking occurs on the premises. Nicolay worked locally to help put the Hills ordinance on the books.

Alcohol is the most widely used drug and the one Nicolay and her group spend the most time talking about. "I'm not promoting prohibition," she said. "Alcohol is the drug of choice by society and is accepted by most people."

She tells students "we want you to have a good time" and also to remember you had a good time.

"I THINK that we've made progress," she said of her parent movement and drug education program. "We need to help our kids in a lot of areas. We live in a chemical society. If you reach just one person, you make it all worthwhile."

Nicolay was "overwhelmed" when she began looking at student problems several years ago.

Please turn to Page 8



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Farmington Hills resident Betty Nicolay talks to an adult education group at West Bloomfield High School about the disease of chemical addiction.

## Sewer system upgrade planned

By Joanne Maliszowski  
staff writer

Long-planned improvements to the deteriorating Evergreen-Farmington sewage system were rated second in priority to the much-publicized Super Sewer for federal financing.

Last week, the Super Sewer — improvements proposed for the North Huron-Stouge Valley Wastewater Control System — met its death when Wayne County officials failed to meet an application deadline for a matching grant under the federal Clean Water Act.

That leaves the \$44 million Evergreen-Farmington improvements standing alone at the top.

But Farmington Hills and Oakland County officials say the sewage improvements should remain unaffected by the Super Sewer's bad luck.

"I don't think it really affects it," Farmington Hills Public Services Director Thomas Biassell said.

Frank Naglich, county project engineer for the Evergreen-Farmington project, agrees.

Whether Evergreen-Farmington remains as second priority or is moved to first place makes little difference. "They (top two priorities) are both fundable. There is enough money to fund the projects."

The Evergreen-Farmington system has been relying on the previously participating Super Sewer communities — Wixom, Canton, Plymouth, Novi, Westland and Northville — for only one item to complete its list of proposed improvements.

**UNDEI PROPOSED** plans, the Super Sewer communities were excluded.

Please turn to Page 8

## No jobs will be lost because of fire

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

No layoffs are planned following a fire that caused at least \$1 million in damage to a Farmington Hills machine shop Wednesday night, company officers said.

"We're planning to be open for business Monday morning. I don't think anybody will be out of work," said Jim Zachman, controller for Forge Die & Tool Corp., 31800 Eight Mile, on Thursday afternoon.

Six of the forging die maker's 40 employees were at work when the fire broke out about 9 p.m., but no one was injured.

Sparks from an electronic discharge machine ignited an oil tank, causing the fire, according to Farmington Hills police and fire reports. The fire was ruled accidental, investigators said.

Major structural and equipment damage was limited to the eastern wing of the cement-block building. "Some machines in the center bay were damaged. But they're repairable," Zachman said.

There was smoke only in the building's western wing.

But there was standing water throughout the building. "And it could damage equipment if it stands for any length of time," Zachman said.

**THE COMPANY** may move some

of the bigger pieces of equipment to another of its manufacturing sites several doors to the west, Forge Precision Co. "We may do work there after reassessing our orders," Zachman said.

"There'll be a slight delay in existing orders and shipments, but because of the holidays there should be very little effect," he added.

Cleanup and repair crews were already at work Thursday morning.

The property was insured.

When Farmington Hills and Farmington firefighters arrived at Forge Die & Tool shortly after 9 p.m.

Please turn to Page 6



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Firefighters Jim Choyne (left), Jim Burke and Tom Ward train a water hose on the flames at Forge Die & Tool.

### what's inside

Crossword puzzle . . . 5C  
Entertainment . . . 4B  
On the agenda . . . 10A  
Police/fire calls . . . 11A  
Shopping cart . . . 5-7B  
Short takes . . . 3A  
Sports . . . 1-3C  
Suburban life . . . 1-3B  
Classifieds . . . Sec. C-D  
Index . . . 4C  
Automotive . . . 5D  
Real estate . . . 4C  
Employment . . . 10C  
News line . . . 477-5450  
Sports line . . . 591-2300  
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