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HELPING hand.

The Salvation Army Corps of Farmington Hills brought in a record amount through its holiday kettle fund-raising campaign.

This year's take was \$70,131, more than \$10,000 above the corps' goal, said Lt. Jonathan Rieh, corps officer.

"The people of this area never let you down. They respond when there is a need," Rieh said.

The Farmington Hills corps serves Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Novi and Livonia.

HONORED citizen.

Detroit philanthropist and financier Max Fisher, a Farmington Hills resident, was among 30 Americans who received Presidential Citizens Medals Jan. 18 during a private ceremony at the White House with President Reagan.

Fisher, 80, has long been a fund-raiser for the Republican Party. The medals represent "outstanding service to their country and fellow citizens."

Quote of the week

There was nothing indicative of persons being set up for an assassination attempt. — no evidence, no information, no weapons, just nothing.

— Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer, in light of public concern about the seizure of tracking and transmission equipment (see story this page).

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Observer & Eccentric classified ads

Monday & Thursday



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Challenging the pros

Professional athletes competed against student athletes at East Middle School last Thursday as part of a Pro Challenge. Above, the East tug of war team included, front from left, David Gloetzer and Sean Smith, and, back from left, Robbie Rothenberg and Jeff Cielo — all eighth graders. Between competition, athletes pitched anti-drug messages. For the story, please see Page 3A.

Surveillance gear seized; FBI called in

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

Police said it had all the earmarks of a drug deal. A TV report prompted concern about a possible conspiracy to kill.

But after four days of surveillance at two Farmington Hills hotels over the New Year's holiday, police seized sophisticated tracking and transmission equipment — not drugs, money or weapons.

The FBI is probing the backgrounds of the three men linked by police to the \$15,000 worth of equipment. But no one has been charged with a crime.

"Two of the men spoke very little English," said Sgt. Charles Nebus, Farmington Hills Police Department Detective Section supervisor. "All they would say was that they were from Israel."

"The third man mentioned he had

lived in different parts of the world, including Israel, but now lived in California."

On Monday, Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer got two calls from Detroit-area residents who heard about the incident on a television news report and were concerned they possibly were targets of an assassination conspiracy.

Dwyer wouldn't identify the callers' cultural ties. But he assured them "we didn't feel these people were involved in any sort of plot to assassinate anyone."

"There was nothing indicative of persons being set up for an assassination attempt, nothing to lead us to believe the men were involved in a plot to kill anyone — no evidence, no information, no weapons, just nothing."

But "there's no question in our

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Planner won't seek new term

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

A Farmington Hills planning commissioner cleared of any conflict of interest in a rezoning matter late last year is not seeking reappointment, nor will he be reappointed, to a second three-year term.

"I have written a letter asking not to be reappointed," said Vincent Valvona, whose term expires Feb. 1.

Valvona did not attend the planning commission meeting Jan. 19 because he plan to attend the study session Jan. 26. He said he did not wish to elaborate.

A November city attorney's report confirmed Valvona's contention it was not a conflict of interest when

he voted on rezoning issues for the new Carrington Place Apartments for Seniors, in which he later became a financial partner. The apartments are on the northeast corner of Drake and Freedom.

Despite his decision not to seek reappointment to the planning commission, Valvona will remain on the city's building authority, to which he was originally appointed in February 1985.

Mayor Terry Sever denied he removed Valvona from the planning commission. "I had a conversation with Vince and we had a discussion about the city, what was best for the city, the things I wanted to do and

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U.S. grant plan to upgrade Hills housing

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

For the first time in its history, the Farmington Hills federal Community Development Block Grant program will rehabilitate rental housing in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

"We haven't designed the program yet. But we would have to look at, does the house have violations? We'll look not at the income of the owner but of the renter. So we would be able to benefit low- and moderate-income who are renters," said Richard Lampi, community development coordinator.

The new rental program, required by the

federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, is among the issues to be discussed at a scheduled public hearing on CDBG money at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, at city hall, 21555 11 Mile.

In 1989-90, the city expects to receive an estimated \$309,000 from HUD, a 4 percent increase from last year.

In addition to the \$309,000 from HUD, the city expects at least \$30,000 in repayment of loans to homeowners through the housing rehabilitation program, for a block grant total of \$339,000.

The total is distributed between the housing rehabilitation program (\$197,000, including the \$30,000 loan repayment), capital improve-

ments (\$100,000) and administration (\$42,000).

THE HOUSING rehabilitation program total includes \$10,000 for the new rental housing program. Though he is still planning the program, Lampi said the renter's income information will be required as well as an agreement with the landlord that rent will not be increased when repairs are made.

"This will broaden our program a little bit more. There's a lot of unknowns out there. But this is going to upgrade the housing stock in Farmington Hills," Lampi said.

Under the housing rehabilitation program, eligible low- and moderate-income homeowners may receive grants, deferred loans and

low-interest loans to improve their houses.

From June to November 1988, 11 housing projects were completed at a cost of approximately \$74,000. Seventeen other housing projects are in various stages of completion, at a cost of approximately \$126,000, Lampi said.

The city will also use 30 percent or \$100,000 of the CDBG money for capital improvements in low- and moderate-income areas. Potential projects for 1989-90 include paving and drainage on Robinson and Parker; paving and drainage in Regal Orchards; drainage on Handli; and storm system work on Grayling.

The suggested projects are expected to have more definite cost estimates and possible priority listing by the scheduled public hearing.

Bond vote is elementary in Tuesday's school ballot

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

Farmington Public Schools voters will be asked a second time Tuesday, Jan. 31, for money to build an elementary school on the district's fast-growing west side.

In a special election, voters will be asked to approve a \$7.3 million bond issue to build a 600-student elementary school, develop and improve the school site and equip the school's playground.

Next week's bond proposal is the district's second effort to design, build and open a school, on 11 Mile east of Haled, by fall 1990.

Last September, voters rejected a \$27.25 million bond issue for a west side elementary school and early childhood center and for safety improvements in each of the district's school buildings.

POLLS WILL be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday. The four voting precincts are different than those in which voters cast ballots for city elections. Absentee ballots are available through Monday.

Special office hours have been scheduled for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday this week only to accept absentee

voter ballot requests at the Schulman Administrative Center, 32500 Shilawasse, Farmington.

As of Tuesday, the district had received more than 250 absentee voter ballot requests. The staff was still counting.

"This is just far and above what we've ever had," said Pamela O'Malley, district representative. "We don't know what this means."

SCHOOL OFFICIALS have cited the need for a new school because of increased enrollment at the early elementary level, overcrowding at several elementary schools, lack of an elementary school on the district's west side and long bus rides from west to east.

Because of retiring bonds, approval would not raise the district's debt retirement levy beyond the current 1.3 mills. With approval, the total debt retirement cost to a taxpayer whose home is valued at \$150,000 would be no more than \$90 annually.

Though school officials aren't venturing a guess about the election's outcome, the bond issue has received support from some parts of the community.

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Farmington Public Schools voting precincts

