

Miss Farmington  
pageant help eyed, 1B



WLBW tops  
North, 1D

Deal creates Drake  
access road, 2A

# Farmington Observer

Volume 100 Number 43

Thursday, March 2, 1989

Farmington, Michigan

80 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

## farmington FOCUS

To write the Observer: 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024. To call: news line, 477-5450; sports line, 591-2312; home delivery, 591-0500; classified ads, 591-0900; display ads, 591-2300; fax line, 477-9722.

**T**HANKS TO the Michigan State Police, Karl Kreft of Farmington Hills fulfilled his dream of riding in a helicopter Feb. 16.

The 11-year-old died a week later. Deaf and mentally retarded, he suffered from a terminal kidney disorder.

When the Make A Wish Foundation heard about his dream, it contacted Oakland County Circuit Court deputy Jack Watkins, who hooked up with the state police.

"This is an uncommon request for us, but Karl is an exceptional young man," said Col. R.T. Davis, state police director.

Karl rode the department's Bell 222, the same model used on TV's "Air Wolf." The 30-minute ride to downtown Detroit began on the Farmington Hills Police Department's front lawn.

"It was great. He just sat there and soaked it up. He loved it," said Karl's mom, Cathy.

"He has always been the kind of kid who always wants to hug you," said Karl's dad, Ken. "He has given us a whole lot more than he has taken."

## Quote of the week

"A citizens grand jury could pierce the veil of secrecy. It's a tremendous investigative tool."

— Prosecutor Richard Thompson, about the gang-related drug war (see story this page).

## what's inside

Around Farmington . . . 5B  
Business . . . Sec. C  
Cable connection . . . 8B  
Classifieds . . . Secs. C, E-H  
Index . . . . . 9G  
Auto . . . . . Sec. C  
Real estate . . . Secs. E-G  
Employment . . . Secs. C, G-H  
Creative living . . . Sec. E  
Crossword puzzle . . . 2F  
Entertainment . . . 5-8C  
Obituaries . . . . . 10A  
Opinion . . . . . 12A  
Points of view . . . 13A  
Police/tira calls . . . 8A  
Recreation news . . . 9C  
Sports . . . . . Sec. D  
Suburban life . . . Sec. B

**We make it EASY**

So easy to place an ad—just pick up the phone. We'll do the rest!

**591-0900**

Use Your MasterCard or Visa

## Lead in child killings discounted

By Alice Collins  
staff writer

Top officials of the special police task force that investigated the 1976-77 Oakland County child killings don't consider the former Warren man killed in an 1981 traffic crash in Wyoming a prime suspect in the slayings.

Kellin G. Tobin, Birmingham's police chief at the time the four children were killed and now Southfield public safety director, discounts Berkeley police detectives' conclusions that there is ample evidence to

link David Norberg with the death of Kristine Mihelich of Berkley, one of the victims.

"There's no credence to Berkley's claims," Tobin said Tuesday after a highly-promoted TV news show pointed to Norberg as a suspect in the unsolved murders that for years spread fear throughout Oakland County.

Berkley Detective Sgt. Ray Anger said Wednesday that his department considers Norberg "a good suspect that requires more investigation."

"We didn't go public with this, Channel 4 did," Anger continued.

"We issued a simple three-paragraph statement Tuesday after they forced us into it. They told us they had been working on a story and planned to go with it whether we liked it or not."

Jerry Tobias, another task force leader and still close to the investigation, said he respects the dedication of Berkley detectives who have worked hard on the case. "What they have is interesting," he said, "but without other substantiating data, it's nothing."

Farmington Hills police Sgt. John Hedrick served full-time on the task

force for five months in 1977.

When he saw the news Tuesday, "that got my adrenalin pumping. I thought this could be it, it could be the lead we've been waiting for."

Although close to the original investigation, "that story yesterday hit me cold. I hadn't heard anything about it until I saw the news," Hedrick said Wednesday.

**THE KEY** to Berkley's case is a small cross with the name "Kristine" etched on it that was found among Norberg's possessions after his death. Berkley police believe the

cross may have belonged to Kristine Mihelich and that she was wearing it when she was abducted in Berkley Jan. 2, 1977.

Other officers from the task force point out that Norberg had a sister named Kristine, but she reportedly denies that the cross is hers.

Norberg was one of the 20,000 tips of possible suspects turned in to a police task force during the peak of the investigations. He and his wife were interviewed as part of the follow-up. Tobias said Norberg "was

Please turn to Page 6

## Mayor backs city attorney in tree dispute

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Despite disagreement from others, Farmington Hills Mayor Terry Sever says he's satisfied with city attorney Harold Larson's explanation of cutting trees on six acres off 12 Mile, east of Halsted, before the city's new tree ordinance went into effect.

"I certainly believe Mr. Larson's willingness to get the facts in the open," Sever said Monday, following a public reading of the attorney's promised letter of explanation.

After visiting the acreage, where Larson said 19 of hundreds of trees were cut, Sever said he feels the city attorney did not ravage the land in violation of the city's new tree ordinance.

Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi also came to Larson's defense, stating that the tree cutting was not illegal and that dying or diseased trees are exempt under the new ordinance.

"It was unfortunate it was so close to the ordinance going into effect. Let's not try to make this out to be the same as wasting an entire area. It's a little different situation," Vagnozzi said.

Councilman Ben Marks, who publicized the tree cutting at the Feb. 20 council meeting, said Larson should have waited until the tree ordinance became effective, Feb. 13.

**OTHERS ALSO** were perturbed. "The thing that is exasperating to me is the spirit of the law was vio-

Please turn to Page 4

## Grand jury idea to study drugs gets chiefs' OK

By Joanne Maliszewski  
and Tim Richard  
staff writers

Farmington and Farmington Hills police chiefs support prosecutor Richard Thompson's suggestion that a citizens grand jury be appointed to investigate "the drug war" in Oakland County.

"The prosecutor is looking at any means to fight the drug problems. I would endorse any means of making that work," said Frank Lauboff, Farmington Department of Public Safety director.

Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer echoed similar sentiments. "I feel that in those investigations where you've exhausted all traditional means of getting to the hierarchy of a drug empire, a grand jury would help."

Thompson, in his second month as prosecutor, told the county Board of Commissioners last week, "There is a drug war going on between various gangs that started in Detroit and is

seeping into Oakland County. "A citizens grand jury could pierce the veil of secrecy," he said. "It's a tremendous investigative tool. It's a method of compelling people to come in and testify."

"A CITIZENS grand jury would have more authority to subpoena and ask questions. The police can ask, but we cannot force people to talk," Lauboff said.

Such a panel could charge those who refuse to testify with contempt and change them with perjury if they lie, Thompson added.

"This is primarily where a citizens grand jury has more authority," Lauboff said.

In addition to subpoenaing witnesses to gather information, Dwyer said, a citizens grand jury also can offer immunity. "They also would review evidence that was secured, prepared by local enforcement agencies," he said.

Please turn to Page 6



DILL DRESLER/staff photographer

Darlene Feldman of Farmington Hills and Ron Stasinski of Canton distribute blankets in some of Detroit's poorest areas.

## Under covers Pair offer blankets, helping hand

Even police know the Blanket Lady, 4A

Homeless given helping hand, 1B

By Diane Galt  
staff writer

"Once they know, they can make a choice."

Darlene Feldman of Farmington Hills talks about the plight of street people as she and Ron Stasinski of Canton turn out a sidewalk in downtown Detroit.

They ride by a group of men standing outside a party store and Feldman continues in a slight southern twang: "They can ignore it, or they can say, 'I can help.'"

It's about 8 p.m. in late February. The streets are empty as the

couple search for anyone who might need the warmth of a blanket.

"If you were painting a picture this would be a perfect depiction of anger," says Feldman describing the scenery.

Stasinski, 40, stops the car in the heart of the Cass corridor, opens the trunk and Feldman fills her arms with blankets.

Less than a minute passes before a man walks by, hesitates, returns and asks if she's giving anything away. Feldman, 38, hands him a blanket, he thanks her a few times and walks away.

**THE EMPTY** street begins to fill. Feldman thinks it's because the first man spread the word.

Two teenagers approach. "See how they're walking?" Feldman says before they reach her.

They decline the blankets she of-

fers, pick out others and leave without a word.

"They'll probably sell the blankets and use the money for drugs, she says."

"Maybe a woman with three kids will end up with it," Feldman says, adding that no matter what happens in the meantime, the blankets will land in the hands of street people. One clue, she says, is that bag holders use drugs and attach carriers are dealers.

There's good and bad in everything — including street people, Feldman says. So, she and Stasinski use their instincts a lot to keep from becoming "chop suey."

A TALL, large man races up to Feldman and pants: "I'm not too late, am I?"

Please turn to Page 4

## Assessments up nearly 10 percent

By Casey Hane  
staff writer

Overall property tax assessments are expected to increase nearly 10 percent in Farmington this year, with some downtown commercial properties receiving increases of 30-40 percent.

According to city assessor John Sallor, assessment notices reflecting the changes were sent to both residential and commercial property owners Feb. 21.

Due to new construction, apartment assessments show nearly a 9

Assessment review board sets sessions, 6A

percent increase this year, while industrial assessments will increase 15.65 percent. Condominiums show an 11.82 percent increase, according to Sallor's preliminary figures.

Residential assessments are expected to increase about 9.3 percent, mostly due to market value adjustments, while the average commercial property owner will see a 9.16 percent increase on the average.

BUT IN the downtown area, com-

mercial properties are averaging a 13 percent increase in assessments, Sallor said, because of effects downtown improvements are having on sales. One building on the north side of Grand River recently sold for \$200,000, up nearly \$100,000 from a few years ago, he said.

"Just because the downtown is being fixed up — that's not the rea-

Please turn to Page 6

**In the downtown area, commercial properties are averaging a 13 percent increase in assessments because of effects downtown improvements are having on sales.**



John Sallor  
city assessor