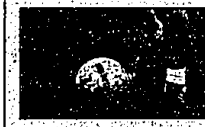


Art to cover you
from head to toe, 1D



Soccer
outlook, 1C

Officer keeps watch
on the city, 3A

Farmington Observer

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MAYOR Richard Tupper says it's no secret the newly developed city of Farmington, just 2.6 square miles, is surrounded by hotspots for growth like Farmington, Livonia and Novi.

"One of the things that we know we have to do to keep up with changing times is to know what's going on around us," he said in remarks at the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce State of the Cities breakfast March 17. "So we have been forced to help the Downtown Development Authority and to help planners making decisions for the future realize what's going on in the areas around us."

ROAD upgrading. Farmington Hills is dedicating \$87,000 in tri-party road money to the realignment, paving and installation of traffic signals at 14 Mile at Drake and 14 Mile at Halsted. Tri-party money represents financing from Oakland County, the road commission and the city council.

Memory lane

25 years ago:

- Farmington Township Police charged 32 people with four different felony counts in the largest single criminal case ever in the township. The charges are breaking and entering, buying and selling stolen property, malicious destruction of property and uttering and publishing.
- Farmington Township has set a public hearing for its 1984-85 operating budget of \$478,863.
- Farmington Enterprise, March 28, 1984

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HEALTH & FITNESS

ON PAGES 4 & 5C
IN TODAY'S PAPER

Man beaten, robbed in home

A resident of a northeast Farmington Hills neighborhood was beaten, cut and robbed of about \$1,000 by a gunman who pretended to be delivering flowers Wednesday.

The gunman threatened to kill the 48-year-old man at least twice. He also cut the man's neck and fingers and repeatedly hit him on the side of the head with a long-barreled rifle, police said.

"We have no idea what led the assailant to this particular house," said Farmington Hills police Inspector Ernest Miller. "We have no prime suspects."

"We're checking with other police agencies to see if they've had similar occurrences."

"We're looking for leads on possible suspects," he added.

After initial treatment from medics, the resident of Chatsworth — a short dead-end street near 14 Mile and Inkster Road — drove himself to Henry Ford Hospital in West Bloomfield for further treatment.

POLICE GAVE the following account of what happened:

Answering a knock on the front door at 2:45 p.m., the resident was greeted by a man who appeared to be delivering flowers.

After he was let inside, the stranger pulled a

rifle from under his jacket and dropped the flowers in the foyer.

He then knocked the man down and ordered him to lie face down as his hands were handcuffed behind his back. The gunman took about \$1,000 from the man's wallet but demanded more money.

When told no more money was in the house, the gunman again hit the man. The gunman then helped the man up and led him around the house in search of money.

Upstairs, the gunman ransacked a bedroom, knocked the man down, pulled a knife and cut his fingers while demanding more money.

After ransacking other rooms and putting

the knife to the man's neck, the gunman forced him into the basement. There, he bound the man with duct tape.

The gunman then ordered the man to lie under a glass-top table he shattered with his rifle. The gunman then searched for money and left. After 20 minutes, the victim went upstairs, freed his hands and called police.

The gunman was described as white and about 25-27 years old, 5 feet 6 inches tall and 135 pounds. He had straight, medium-length, brown hair, a mustache and a thin build. He was wearing a gray cotton jacket. He drove a late-model gray Oldsmobile.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Halsted resident Bernard Ludwig stands near a tree, once standing on Farmington Hills city property owned by the Grace Presbyterian church. The photo was taken from the church east of Halsted. The tree, some of which has property been sawed, knocked down another large tree

Resident challenges cutting down of trees

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Halsted resident Bernard Ludwig challenges city attorney Harold Larson's explanation for removing trees on his six vacant acres on 12 Mile, east of Halsted, just before the city's tree protection ordinance took effect.

In a letter to the Farmington Hills City Council in late February, Larson said he felt he followed the spirit of the new ordinance when he had 19 landmark trees removed from his vacant acreage.

Though the issue appeared to be

put to rest in late February, Ludwig resurrected it last week, expressing continued concern and disagreement with Larson's explanation.

The 13-year Halsted resident disagrees with Larson's contention that he removed only 19 landmark trees, which were according to the city attorney, entering "the late portion of their life cycle because they were stressed or dying as evidenced by the cores."

Ludwig, whose property abuts Larson's acreage, said the trees were not diseased, decaying or dying. Trees in that condition, he said, were left behind by logger R.D.

Woods of Brighton, who cut the trees for the city attorney.

"I stand behind my letter to the city council," Larson said Friday. Both Woods and the contractor who cleaned up the site confirmed Larson's contention that the trees cut were not in best of health. "They said the trees were even worse than they perceived," Larson added.

DESPITE THE cuttings, hundreds of trees remain on the acreage, including evergreens, which he planted himself, Larson said in February.

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Hills man is found guilty of killing wife

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

Uncertainty over Jon Vermeulen's future ended Thursday when a jury of seven men and five women found him guilty of first-degree murder in the death of his second wife — a conviction that automatically sentences the 41-year-old former Farmington Hills resident to life in prison without parole.

Vermeulen was tried in Oakland County Circuit Court for the Dec. 26, 1985, shooting and killing of Urine "Rena" Lewis Vermeulen, 24, a woman he had bigamously married the month before.

While awaiting trial, Vermeulen was held in the Oakland County Jail without bail 39 months at the Michigan Supreme Court ruled on whether his first wife, Sharon Vermeulen, could testify against her then-husband of 21 years.

A week before the shooting, Vermeulen threatened to kill Lewis if she ever left him, according to circuit court records. Vermeulen maintains that he would kill himself if Lewis ever left him.

During deliberations, jurors twice cast unanimous votes of guilty — once shortly after adjourning to con-

sider the case and a second time after reconsidering the evidence, according to jury foreman Larry Cavalloro of Birmingham. The jury deliberated parts of Wednesday and Thursday.

Cavalloro, who described the trial as an "intense" personal experience, said two points convicted Vermeulen: the time of Lewis' death and the path of the bullet that killed her. "It couldn't have happened the way he (Vermeulen) said. We re-enacted it and the trajectory of the bullet just wasn't right," Cavalloro said.

"I GREW UP on a farm. My brothers and father hunted," said juror Millie Burns, a Troy travel agent. Burns likened the shot that killed Lewis to "the perfect deer-hunting kill."

The .44 Magnum bullet crossed through Lewis' chest from right to left, piercing the heart and both lungs, according to testimony by the Oakland County medical examiner, who estimated Lewis died at 6 a.m. the day after Christmas 1985.

Vermeulen, a former Army weapons expert and Green Beret in Vietnam, who also shot himself twice,

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Schools release attorney's report

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The Farmington Board of Education overruled district administrators, waived attorney-client privilege and granted general release of a legal report relating to bond issues last week.

The report supports the district's position that it cannot use operating funds to build a new school. The report was used in two recent bond campaigns. On Jan. 31, voters approved \$7.3 million in bonds for a

new westside elementary school. The board's decision came a week after it first agreed to publicly discuss the request for release from economists with Farmington Hills-based Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. of America.

"Frankly, we're very confused why this is a confidential piece," Alexander Hamilton economist Joel

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New exam date is set in drowning

By Carolyn Demarco
staff writer

A new preliminary examination date has been set for Anthony Joseph Bonelli, the Farmington Hills youth charged in the March 15 drowning death of his girlfriend.

Bonelli, 17, will appear at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18, before Judge Gus Cicelli in 48th District Court, Bloomfield Township, in a hearing for Cicelli to determine if there is enough evidence for a trial. He is being held without bond at the Oakland County Jail.

At a brief hearing Thursday before District Judge Edward Avadenski, Bonelli gave up his right to an examination of charges within 12 days of arraignment. He was arraigned March 18 and pleaded innocent. Attorney James Andary of Detroit, who was entered as

legal counsel for the defendant Thursday, requested the delay to study the case.

Bonelli was charged with open murder in the drowning death of Kristina Marie Fracchia, 17, of Farmington Hills. County drain commission workers found her fully clothed body floating near the north shore of Orchard Lake in the city of Orchard Lake Villages on March 17.

BONELLI WAS arrested later that night when he came into the Orchard Lake police station for an interview at the request of police officers.

West Bloomfield police said they videotaped Bonelli that night as he recreated events from the night Fracchia died. Oakland

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DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Defense counsel James Andary (left) and Howard Wittenberg stand before the judge with their client, Anthony Bonelli, during a brief appearance in 48th District Court Thursday.