

# War pen pals meet at last

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Before she met Burdock, Darish said, "It was like writing to a person with no face."  
"I did it to support him," Darish said.

THE FACT that Burdock is good-looking and up being an added bonus, Darish said.  
"He's got this magnetism," said Darish, a homemaker. "He's a very warm person. He doesn't take anything for granted."

Burdock, a 1986 graduate of Redford Union High School, was married to wife Jennifer just three months when he was sent to Saudi Arabia on Aug. 11.

A belated wedding reception for 250 was held April 12 in St. Valentine's Church Hall in Redford. Favours were topped with bright yellow ribbons. The outside of Burdock's boyhood home is festooned with yellow ribbons.

Ironically, Darish is a former Redford resident who seven years ago moved away from her long-time home on Marion Street, five blocks away from the Burdock residence on Lyndon.

Darish hosted the young Burdock couple and mom, Candy Cubba, with a dinner April 9 in her Farmington Hills home.

Burdock enlisted in the Army in September 1986. He's re-enlisted until Feb. 14, 1994. He served on the front lines in the Gulf War as a mechanic on trucks, tanks and rockets.

The Army won't be his career, through, he said. He hopes to work eventually as an electrician.

BEING BUSY on the front lines during Operation Desert Storm, Burdock wasn't always privy to everything being written about the war.

Burdock also wrote to a 29-year-old man who was in drug rehabilitation. Burdock happened to pick up one of the voluminous letters addressed anonymously "To Any Soldier" which Americans mailed en masse to the Persian Gulf.

Burdock wrote the man back encouraging him to "hang in there," Burdock said.

Apparently, mail is backlogged, according to both Darish and Burdock. A March 1 letter written by Burdock, didn't reach Darish's hands until a day after Burdock returned home to Redford, Darish said, and he didn't receive any of her packages, she said. "That really upsets me," she added.

Although Darish wrote every week, Burdock said he's only received three letters.

"Her letters are really good," Burdock said. "It's really something when somebody cares that much about you and they know nothing about you. Coming home to welcome you at the airport, all the ribbons you see around the tree, it's a good feeling inside."

His sister, Shawn, complained that he didn't receive any of the cash she sent him. She sent him 11 letters.

"There was such a backlog, Burdock said. "The mail couldn't go through. You had so much supplies coming in for combat. Mail turned into a last priority deal."

DARISH HAD written consistently to Burdock, but she never



SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Barbara Darish (left) and Jerry and Jennifer Burdock get acquainted at the Redford Township home of Jerry Burdock's parents.

heard from him. Friends had begun to tease her that he was a figment of her imagination.

She proved them wrong. "I got 100 percent of my support for what I was doing for Jerry and for the troops from my son, Keith Cole, 26, Darish said.

"He really backed me up. He was so proud, the buttons popped off his shirt. He started to get big companies to get donations. What we heard was that the guys over there were really dying for AA batteries."

Batteries were valued for Walkman headsets, flashlights and Nintendo Game Boys, Burdock said.

"One company gave us oodles and oodles of AA batteries," Darish said. "Another company gave us boxes to ship the stuff. They were people my husband, William, did business with."

Burdock returned Saturday to Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, N.C. What does he plan to do next now that the war is over?  
"Prepare for the next one," Burdock said.

# 30 and out for Potter at FHS

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FHS Principal Jerry Potter leaving after 30 years

"You used to have a three-legged stool with the staff, administration and students," he said. "Now you have a solid chair, with a fourth leg being the parents and the strong back of a board of education. That's a significant change."

BUT STUDENTS of the 1960s are not much different than those of the 1980s and '90s, even though the education system is, he said. "The kids are still teenagers, they're respectable. I don't think they've changed that much."

Many graduates still approach Potter and say hello, and some of his current students are the sons and daughters of previous students.

Where Potter does see a change is in the growing multi-cultural diversity of the Farmington community, which has had an impact on the schools and should continue to be addressed, he said.

Potter leaves the district on a high note.

This year he is a finalist in the Outstanding High School Principal of the Year awards given by the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals.

In addition to his work in the schools, he has also stayed active in coaching and refereeing soccer.

spending time helping with the Farmington Founders Festival in the 1970s and was active in the Farmington Area Jaycees for several years.

He's not only proud of his 30 years of career achievements, but also of his family including his daughter, son and wife, Nancy, who he said has been his pillar of support for all these years.

"My cup is so full, it's full of experiences," he said. "I'm proud of it."

# Parks tax backers rev up campaign

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The justification for a longer levy period came about because the city has been low in parks in the past, Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said. "We're actually catching up," Vagnozzi said.

Horne said acquisition of land is a must now. "All of us are aware of the development in Farmington Hills," Horner said. "The small parcels of undeveloped property that we have left in this community are rapidly disappearing."

According to parks officials, a homeowner with a \$90,000 home will pay \$22 per year; with a \$120,000 home, \$30 a year; with a \$150,000, \$37.50; and with a \$200 home, \$50.

SUPPORTERS of the tax say that its passage will allow the city to:

- Acquire and develop additional land for parks and youth baseball, soccer and other family recreation activities.
- Begin a bike route system to link Heritage and Pioneer parks as well as establish bike routes in several neighborhoods.
- Lease or build a facility with dedicated space to expand senior adult services and to provide cultural programs.
- Continue the city's program to upgrade and renovate existing sites for youth athletics.
- Develop access, parking, nature trails, etc. on the newly acquired Peltz/MDOT property.
- Acquire a roving recreation trailer to bring summer fun centers into neighborhoods.
- Provide vehicles for expanded transportation opportunities for senior adult programs and services.
- Explore expansion of San Marino from a nine-hole to 18-hole golf course.
- Lease or contract for a facility as well as develop programs to address teenage recreational needs.

But Horner and his Say Yes To Parks committee is not resting on past laurels generated by the one-half mill, five-year levy which recently expired.

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## on the agenda

Below are highlights from the agendas of government meetings this week. All meetings are open to the public.

**Farmington Hills City Council Council Chambers**  
31555 11 Mile  
7:30 p.m., Monday, April 15

Three public hearings are scheduled, including:

- consideration of cost hearing for Karen Court Improvements. Later in the meeting, the council will consider bid awards for Karen Court paving.
- consideration of determination of special assessment district for road improvement for Glen Orchards subdivision.
- consideration of determination of special assessment district for road rehabilitation for Colony Park subdivisions.

Under unfinished business, the council will consider resolutions to establish fees for liquor license reviews and to repeal 1990 Public Act 159 giving local authority back to municipalities for school building construction.

The council will also consider a resolution endorsing the Oakland County Road Commission master

right-of-way plan.

**Farmington City Council Council Chambers**  
23600 Liberty  
Monday, April 15  
7:30 p.m. — Special Meeting  
8 p.m. — Regular Meeting

During the special meeting, the council will interview a candidate for the city's historical-commission and discuss plans for Mayor Exchange Day with Clawson.

On the regular agenda are various petitions and communications, reports on the progress of House Bill 4122 and Drake Park renovation, approval of contractor payment for the city's sewer improvement project, and the city manager's recommended budget for 1991-92.

Council members are expected to make appointments to the city's board of canvassers, historical commission and the Farmington Area Commission on Aging.

**Farmington Board of Education Farmington High School**  
33000 Shilwassee  
Tuesday, April 16  
7 p.m. — Volunteer Reception

8 p.m. — Regular Meeting  
The reception honors all members of the community who volunteered their services to the district in the past year.

On the regular agenda is the district's initial budget presentation, approval of the teacher lay-off list for the 1991-92 school year and approval of curriculum and textbooks for language arts and social studies.

**Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Commission Council Chambers**  
31555 11 Mile  
7:30 p.m., Weds., April 17

Commissioners are expected to discuss:

- Heritage Park arboretum consultant recommendation,
- Pioneer Park comfort building,
- Day Camp activity building and
- Harrison High School lighting repair project.

Also to be considered are correspondence from Hagen Hedfield regarding land acquisition and preservation of Peltz/MDOT property, and a letter and contribution from Richard Headlee.

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