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# Farmington Observer

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## Lifelong resident of Hills, 79, dies

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

Clyde J. Graham, a lifelong Farmington Hills resident who was compiling his thoughts in hopes of writing a book about the history of the once-bustling village of North Farmington, died Sunday after becoming ill at church.

The long-time farmer, who later worked in heating and cooling maintenance, was 79.

Graham died Sunday morning at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills after being stricken during services at Orchard United Methodist Church, across the street from his family home, a familiar white farmhouse on Farmington Road, south of 14 Mile.

Graham, who saw suburban sprout where farms once stood, hoped to write a book about the crossroads village of North Farmington, centered at 14 Mile and Farmington Road, by tapping memories of his boyhood there.

"His culture was based on the ground, the land, the soil and nature. He was a gentle, loving, loving reminder of where we all came from — and he'll be sorely, sorely missed," the Rev. Paul F. Blomquist said Monday.

GRAHAM WAS a charter member of Orchard United Methodist Church. The Graham family originally owned the land where the church now is.

"He was one of the genuinely friendly people in the church, beloved by young and old alike," Blomquist said. "It didn't matter who the pastor was, what new families had come. Everybody belonged. He was always supportive of the church."

Graham had a special way of relating to kids. "He was a great grandfather and father figure to the church," Blomquist said. "His life ended right where he would have chosen it to — at church."

In February, Graham told the Observer he hoped his book would offer details about life on the farm, tales of the old Nichols School and insights into generations of North Farmington families buried in historic North Farmington Cemetery. Clyde was the son of Myrtle and John Graham. His grandparents, Irish immigrants John and Ellen Graham, settled in Farmington Township in the 1860s. The family farm, today one acre, once spanned 377 acres.

IN 1850, the village of North Farmington boasted a post office, a blacksmith shop, general stores, 10 homes and a cheese factory. It was a collecting point for milk from nearby farms.

Rural free delivery doomed the post office. Better transportation killed local commerce. By 1930, the village was a ghost town — until new development came in the 1960s. Graham, despite fond memories of simpler times, accepted the change and welcomed newcomers to the area.

At 79, Graham was still active. He particularly enjoyed gardening, bowling and golfing.

In addition to his wife, Beth, of 52 years, Graham is survived by two daughters, Susan Burgoyne and Pamela Cardinal; two sisters, Wilma Songer and Thelma Miller; and four grandchildren. A third daughter, Linda Doran, died last year.

The body will lie in state 10-11 a.m. Wednesday, May 29, at Orchard United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road. Services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday, with the Rev. Paul F. Blomquist officiating.

Visitation will be 1-5 and 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, May 28, at the Heene-Sundquist Funeral Home, 23720 Farmington Road in Farmington.



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

## A prom for seniors

The prom scene isn't just for high school students anymore. The Greenery (formerly Oak Hill Nursing Home) in Farmington held its second annual prom for seniors recently, and Richard and Anne Pisarski (above in

prom regalia) were king and queen. They also were celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary. About 100 people attended the event, which featured dancing to live music.

## City to drain Green Hills street 'lake'

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Lakefront property in Farmington Hills?

"This is my Soley Lake," said Mary Soley, who lives on Crescent Court in the Green Hills subdivision, south of Nine Mile between Gill and Halsted.

Soley and her neighbors who live on the cul-de-sac say they live with what they call a lake in front of their houses nine months a year. Actually, it's a large puddle that doesn't often go away.

"Lake Crescent Court," neighbor Jill Jordan calls the water in the cul-de-sac. "We make jokes about it now."

THE "NEIGHBORS" jokes about their "lake" don't mask their frustration over the water that freezes in the winter and makes life on the cul-de-sac difficult and dangerous.

The neighbors are equally annoyed because they feel city staff have long ignored their problem and their complaints.

"We leave our phone numbers. We leave our names. They never call us back. And I'm home every day."

Soley said. "I don't know if it's just a low spot. If we wash our car or water the grass or if it rains, it just collects. All I want is a drain put in."

And a drain is what the neighbors will get within two or three weeks, according to Dan Rooney, Farmington Hills public works supervisor.

"We're as anxious as anyone to resolve the problem. We have been aware of the situation for some time," Rooney said. "I don't want to be confrontational but I take exception to the comments that we haven't responded."

But residents recount many incidents involving the standing water, such as when, last year, a car traveling into the cul-de-sac hit the rutted ice and landed in Soley's front yard.

"In winter it's ankle-deep. It freezes over and we get tire ruts. It's hazardous," Soley said.

Soley's next-door neighbor, Anita Sanford, told of a little girl who fell off her bike while riding through the puddle that gathers predominantly in front of the Soley home. "She was soaked," Sanford said.

Jordan tells of kids with their two-wheel bikes who like riding through

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## Hills warns stores of upcoming 'sting'

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills package liquor dealers and stores licensed to sell beer and wine will get two letters to accompany high school prom and graduation season.

The first will be from police Chief William Dwyer forewarning liquor licensees that the department's ninth undercover liquor law enforcement operation will be soon.

The second letter will be from the Farmington Hills City Council. The

letter, which will be sent certified mail, will put licensees on notice that action will be taken against any violators nabbed in the undercover crackdown.

"I cannot accept any excuses at this point in time," councilman Terry Sever. "I'm hoping success will show we have absolutely no violations this time."

In this first planned effort of the year, the crackdown will be aimed at the city's 35 off-premise liquor

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## Hills council stalls on skateboard law

By Susan Buck  
staff writer

The Farmington City Council is stalled in drafting a skateboarding ordinance.

There did not seem to be a consensus to go forward with it," said City Manager Robert Deadman after a recent council meeting.

At a previous council meeting, the council asked that a proposed ordinance be drafted which would restrict the use of skateboards and roller skates from certain sidewalks, parking lots and other designated areas within the city.

"We have received some more complaints about skateboarders coming onto private property," said Frank Lauboff, Farmington public safety director.

Only bicycles are addressed in the traffic code, so the only thing police can do with skateboard or roller skating problems now is to issue a trespassing ticket.

The skateboarding issue was brought to the city's attention by resident Debbie Cornwell, president of the Longacre Elementary PTA, who said she and other parents have no-

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**'Study in Gold and Lace'**

This still-life painting — "A Study in Gold and Lace" by Farmington's Donna Vogelheim — will be shown in museums, universities and art centers throughout the state this year. Vogelheim is this year's Artist in Residence in Farmington. For a story and more photographs of the artist and her work, please see Thursday's Suburban Life section.

## Cyclist dies in accident

A 43-year-old Farmington Hills man died after he was struck by a pickup truck Tuesday night as he bicycled on Freedom Road, according to Farmington Hills police.

Darryl W. Busser was removed from life support systems at Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills, at 11 a.m. Wednesday, said officer Skip Crump of the police department's traffic section.

Busser, who was wearing a protective helmet, was bicycling westbound on Freedom, west of Gill, when he was struck from behind by a pickup truck at about 6:30 p.m. "He was knocked off his bicycle and onto the shoulder of the road," Crump said.

Busser suffered head injuries and was transported by Community Emergency Medical Services ambulance to Botsford.

Charges have not been filed against the driver of the pickup, pending investigation, police said.

Busser is survived by his wife.

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