

Ex-pastor now breeds llamas

By Tom Beer
staff writer

Anyone remember Ralph Rideout? Those who do probably have logged at least 20 years in the Farmington area.

As pastor of the North Farmington Baptist Church, the Rev. Rideout was one of the founders of the Farmington Area Advisory Council, a local anti-drug organization in the early 1970s.

In 1972 he headed for Washington State, where he had been appointed by Gov. Dan Evans to coordinate the state's Drug Abuse Prevention Office.

"These days, Rideout is still in Washington, but drug programs and pastoring belong to the past. Now he raises llamas, those South American beasts of burden, for fun and profit."

Rideout and his wife, Vicki, were in Farmington Hills last week, visiting friends Jack and Jane Hooper.

In the back of the Rideouts' van were two female llamas — Nova and Ecstasy — being transported for sale in western Massachusetts.

"I guess I'm still a minister," said the 54-year-old Rideout. "The easiest way of saying it is, 'Once a minister, always a minister.' But I have no parish responsibilities. ... I started the llamas back in

1979 as a lark and eventually they became a means of economic support."

MORE THAN 30 llamas now graze on Rideout's land near Olympia, Wash. He sells them for pack animals on the West Coast and as pets elsewhere.

"Llamas are great as pets," he said. "They're intelligent and so mellow. Even 3- or 4-year-olds can lead them on pack trips. They're like cats. ... they'll accept you on their terms. They don't need to be coddled."

In South America, llamas are "the athletic work animal," Rideout said. A full-grown llama weighs about 350 pounds, he added. They resemble a camel without the humps and are a source of meat, wool and milk.

Rideout has visited the Farmington area several times since he headed west, but he never fails to wonder at the development that has taken place here.

"My first comment to my wife was, 'Look at the size of those trees.' They were really just saplings when I left. Everything is so different. It's so ... old-looking now, not the brand-new subdivision town we left almost 20 years ago."

"It's been developed — and that's an understatement."



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Jason Paradowski of Farmington meets Ralph Rideout's llama Nova at the house of a mutual friend, Jack Hooper of Farmington Hills.

Hills detective helps in Livonia porn raid

A Farmington Hills police detective joined Livonia police and other area law enforcement agencies Oct. 2 to search a Livonia video distribution company. More than 100,000 pornographic video tapes and thousands of magazines were seized.

The 9 a.m. raid at General Video of Michigan Inc., 13200 Levan south of Schoolcraft, was part of a crackdown on pornography being conducted jointly by the Wayne and Oakland County prosecutor's offices, said Livonia police detective Lt. Mike Murray.

Farmington Hills detective Bert Cook helped assistant prosecutors in the raid. "I did some of the leg work, phone calls. I had the opportunity to go anywhere and everywhere in the building," Cook said.

About 20,000 of the total 24,000 square-foot building was full of pornographic materials, including magazines and video tapes, Cook said.

Farmington Hills was involved in the raid because it's been determined that some of the video stores "we're getting supplies from this place," Cook said. "That was our tie-in."

NO ARRESTS warrants were issued in conjunction with the raid, Murray said.

An attorney representing the company questioned the propriety of police in conducting the raid and said

the action was "totally without merit."

"It's premature to comment at this point on whether anything will be seized. We're still inventorying," Murray said two hours after officers arrived at the warehouse.

The search warrant was issued Wednesday by 16th District Judge Robert B. Brzezinski after a lengthy investigation by police in Hazel Park, Pontiac and Waterford Township.

Officers in those communities traced materials gotten in raids of several adult bookstores last spring to General Video, which also is identified on company documents as News Wholesalers of Michigan Inc.

THE LIVONIA company was called "one of the largest suspected distributors of obscene material in the state," in a statement made by Richard Thompson, Oakland County Prosecutor.

Carl Rubin, an attorney representing the company, said police had no right to seal off the premises and prevent employees and others from going about their business.

"I am not aware of any crime that anybody has committed," Rubin said.

Faxon talks on state of arts

State Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, will speak on the current situation of the arts in Michigan at a meeting of the Farmington Artists Club on Wednesday, Oct. 9.

The public may attend. The meeting will begin at 8 p.m. at the Farmington Hills Library, 32737 W. 12 Mile, and will feature questions from the audience.

Faxon sponsored legislation establishing the Michigan Council for the Arts. He has served as assistant minority floor leader and on the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Legislative Retirement Board of Trustees and the Library of Michigan Board of Trustees. His professional associations include the Michigan Council on Post-Secondary Education, the Anti-Defamation League and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

obituaries

ANNA PALMER WYMAN

Mrs. Wyman, 85, of Farmington Hills died Oct. 1.

Born in East Jordan, Mrs. Wyman was a homemaker.

Survivors include her husband, Joseph; sons, John and David; sister,

Evelyn P. Soares; 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Services were Oct. 3 at the Heene-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Edward L. Duncan of First United Methodist Church of Farmington officiating. Burial was in Brookside Cemetery,

Charlevoix, Michigan.

GEORGIANA V. EMERY

Mrs. Emery, 95, of West Bloomfield, formerly of Farmington, died Oct. 1 in West Bloomfield Convalescent Nursing Home.

Born in Baltimore, Md., Mrs. Emery was a homemaker. She graduated from high school in Syracuse, N.Y.

Survivors include her sons, John,

Donald and Allen; daughter, Phyllis Lettich; 10 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Services were Oct. 5 at the McCabe Funeral Home, Farmington Hills, with the Rev. Dr. Brewster H. Gere of First Presbyterian Church of Farmington officiating. Burial was in Grand Lawn Cemetery, Detroit.

ARTIE C. LOUKOJARVI

Mrs. Loukojarvi, 80, of Farmington Hills died Oct. 2 in Botsford Hospital, Farmington Hills.

Born in Woodlawn, Ky., Mrs. Loukojarvi worked in the restaurant industry.

Survivors include her son, Larry, two grandchildren.

Services were at the Heene-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington, with the Rev. Gerald A. McEnhill of St. Gerald Catholic Church, Farmington, officiating. Burial was in Oakland Hills Cemetery, Novi.

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