



Farmington Observer

Volume 103 Number 21

Thursday, December 12, 1991

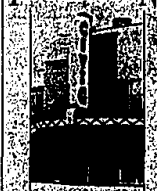
Farmington, Michigan

104 Pages

Fifty Cents

© 1991 Suburban Communications Corporation

FARMINGTON



FOCUS

GONE FROM the city council, but certainly not forgotten in the community that's Farmington's Ralph Yoder.

Yoder, denied re-election to the council after more than 15 years of service, was honored in the Michigan Senate recently when Sen. Jack Paxon, D-Farmington Hills, offered a resolution honoring the longtime councilman. It read, in part:

"Whereas, for years, beginning as a planning commissioner and then as a council member, Ralph Yoder has been a public servant to the trust of the city of Farmington and was not easily persuaded to change his mind, or his vote, and

"Whereas, while his love for his city is legendary, his compassion for others was kept low-key, but was most evident in his work with the Farmington Exchange Club,

"A man of family, generosity, wit, and humor, whose presence at the city's government. He will be missed at meetings, but his spirit and true concern for his city and its residents are certain to influence the powers that be for a long time."

The resolution was adopted by the Senate.

THE reason to think of the needs of those of us who are less fortunate.

Again this year, Farmington Hills employees, led by accountant Bill Benton, are collecting food and clothing to donate to the area's needy.

Those with items to donate are asked to bring them during business hours to City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Road, Fire Department Headquarters, Drake Road between 13 and 14 Mile roads. After 4:30 p.m. weekdays and on weekends, the items can be dropped off at Police Headquarters on 11 Mile Road west of City Hall.

Items such as nonperishable food, baby food and clothes, soap, toothpaste, personal care items, towels and washcloths and clothing for adults and children are suggested.

The donated material will be given to Neighborhood House, a Farmington Hills agency connected with the Salvation Army, for distribution, Benton said.

MEMORY LANE

- From the Dec. 13, 1951 Farmington Enterprise:
 - Bob Neff, son of Mary Neff of Ruth Street and a former Farmington High School basketball player, is a member of the Wurzburg Warriors basketball team, a U.S. Army squad located in West Germany.
 - A spaghetti dinner — all you can eat for 75 cents — was the daily special at Lewis' Inn, 28410 Grand River, west of the Cot-Off.
 - A 1940 Pontiac was advertised for \$1100 at the Mark Leach Lincoln-Mercury dealer at Plymouth and Middlebelt.
 - Maple Leaf brand ice cream was being sold for 97 cents a half gallon at the OK Pharmacy in downtown Farmington.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21888 Farmington Road, Farmington 48334, or dropped off at the newspaper office.

Prosecutor: Revenge motive for killing

Defense says ex-Marine was taunted into shooting

By Casey Hans
staff writer

No one disputes that Raymond Florian Jr. shot and killed his roommate last summer — not even his attorney.

As Florian's murder trial began this week in Oakland County Circuit Court, the question was whether the former resident of Newport Creek Apartments in Farmington Hills planned to pull the trigger July 3, as prosecutors contend, or whether he did it in a fit of anger and passion, which is the defense.

Emotions ran high in the courtroom of Circuit Judge John O'Brien, as the victim's family members sobbed openly when prosecutor Robert Hedges detailed how the three bullets were fired into Daniel Magdon, 40. And the nervous smile Florian offered his family at the start of the trial turned to tears during prosecution testimony.

A 27-YEAR-OLD former Marine, Florian is charged with first-degree murder in the death of Magdon, who had lived with Florian only a short time at the Newport Creek complex on Eight Mile Road. Florian faces life in prison without chance of parole if the jury of seven men and five women hearing the case convict him as charged.

He also faces felony firearms charges for the shooting, which occurred shortly after noon on July 3. That was little more than half an hour after the defendant purchased the weapon used in the incident at a nearby Meijer Thriftway Acres and several hours after Florian had gone to the Farmington Hills police and complained he had been tricked by Magdon.

'My client is guilty of a killing in the heat of passion.'

— David Binkley
defense attorney

Hedges contends Florian was cool and calm about his actions as he went to the Meijer store at Eight Mile and Haggerty, purchased a .22-caliber semi-automatic Marlin rifle and ammunition, returned to the apartment and shot Magdon for revenge. He then called police and turned himself in.

Magdon had reportedly taken the last \$25,000 of Florian's inheritance left by his grandmother, telling him it was an investment in an aquarium business. On July 2, Florian met a young woman who told him she had been bilked by Magdon, which upset Florian.

"The evidence is going to prove that this man is a murderer," Hedges said in his opening statement to the jury. "His motive was revenge — revenge for an investment gone bad."

"He was too impatient to wait two days for a police investigation. He decided to appoint himself investigator, judge, jury and executioner."

DEFENSE ATTORNEY David Binkley said he did not dispute the killing occurred, but is claiming it was manslaughter and not murder. "My client is guilty of a killing in the heat of passion," Binkley said in his opening remarks.

As Florian held a gun on Magdon, Magdon dismissed his roommate's concerns about the investment and



Bloomfield Hills attorney David Binkley helps his client, Ray Florian, adjust his tie before Florian's trial begins in Oakland County Circuit Court Tuesday. Florian faces first-degree murder and felony firearms charges.

launched him saying: "you're not man enough to shoot me. Do it, do it, do it," Binkley told the jury. "In that flood of excitement, he did it. He was in a rage, no doubt."

Binkley described Magdon as a "studied and practiced liar, fraud and cheat. He scammed lots of people, because he was good at it."

After two hours of jury selection Monday afternoon, a number of Farmington Hills police officers took the stand to testify for the prosecution beginning Tuesday morning. Officers said they arrived at the scene to find Florian sitting on the

Please turn to Page 2

Schools ponder timing of millage election

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Farmington school officials are pondering the timing of a millage renewal election and looking at projections for the next four years, as a black cloud of school finance uncertainties continues to hang overhead.

With apparent anti-tax sentiment and an operating millage defeat last February, officials are taking no tax

renewals for granted. They are also concerned about state proposals which may appear on the November 1992 ballot, which could cut education dollars further.

Looking at a short-term financial profile is important for the district, said assistant superintendent for finance Bruce Barrett, who offered school board members information and options Tuesday night.

He said the district could fall into

a deficit as early as 1994 if a 5-mill tax renewal is not passed by voters by 1993-94. According to Barrett's figures, the district's fund balance will be pared by \$10 million even if tax renewals are successful and could fall into a deficit of millions if they are not.

Administrators suggested the board consider holding a renewal election either in September or in January or March of 1993 to impact

the 1993-94 fiscal year.

THE DISCUSSION at Tuesday's school board finance committee meeting comes at a time crucial to school finances because of property tax reform, tax freezes and state aid recapture. A decision on the election date may not be made until after a budget is adopted in June 1992.

"It's hard to put out the numbers that far into the future, then say

"there are 57 variables," Barrett said after the meeting. "It's tough."

"The intent was to give the board what the next two to three years will be and ... to make them sensitive to the array of variables."

Any one of those variables could impact the district tremendously, he added.

A September election date ap-

Please turn to Page 4



Nose to the window

Two-year-old Jessica Weiss of Farmington peers out from the trolley car, pressing her nose to the window, as Santa Claus walks through the crowd Saturday during special ceremonies. For a story and more photos, please see Page 3A.

Intruders terrorize pair in Hills condo

By Susan Buck
staff writer

A Farmington Hills man and a woman companion told police of two hours of terror in the man's Kingston Court condominium Saturday.

A tall man, wearing a dark blue blazer, knocked at the front door of the condo about 9 a.m. pretending to be a salesman, Farmington Hills police said. He then displayed a handgun and forced his way past the 24-year-old owner.

Less than two hours later, the 20-year-old woman visitor had been

sexually assaulted twice by a second intruder, the condo owner had been robbed of \$160, and his home ransacked. Police have no suspects.

Both were tied up with twine and left on a bed in the upstairs bedroom in the condo, located in the Nine Mile/Orchard Lake area.

"This (incident) is unusual for this area," said Farmington Hills Detective David Lee. "Livonia had a similar incident later in the day, but the weapons used were different."

That Livonia case, however, did

Please turn to Page 2

Make caution part of holiday decorating

By Susan Buck
staff writer

It takes less than a minute to engulf in flames an average fresh Christmas tree.

The temperature in the room on fire reaches several hundred degrees in 15 seconds. Painted walls bubble and plastic melts.

Fire departments throughout southeastern Michigan are busy edu-

cating their communities this holiday season about the hazards of hot lights on dry Christmas trees.

Farmington Hills Fire Department went one step further Monday by actually setting Christmas trees on fire in three rooms of a vacant house on Drake Road south of 12 Mile. The city-owned house is scheduled to be demolished for the widen-

Please turn to Page 6

what's inside

Building scene . . .	1G
Business . . .	12B
Cable connection . . .	18A
Classifieds . . .	Socs. D-G
Index . . .	6D
Auto . . .	Sec. G
Real estate . . .	Socs. D-F
Employment . . .	Sec. F
Creative living . . .	1D
Crossword puzzle . . .	7D
Entertainment . . .	7B
Obituaries . . .	16A
Opinion . . .	22A

CLASSIFIEDS . 591-0900
CIRCULATION . 591-0500
NEWS LINE . 477-5450
SPORTS LINE . 953-2139

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

SPECIAL SECTION IN TODAY'S ISSUE