

Farmington Observer

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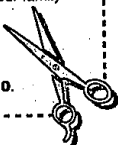
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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Group's future: The Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Farmington Business Association plan to have lunch soon to discuss whether they'll be having lunch in the future. /3A

OPINION

Joys of reading: Reading-incentive programs come and go. Many are uninspired. Let's have one with some vigor. /14A

Blind justice: A drug law meant to capture kingpins of the underworld has backfired and needs to be changed. /14A

Good Scouts: Scouting adds to the "constant adventure" of youth, says Farmington Hills' Pat Bradley, this week's guest columnist. /15A

ENTERTAINMENT

Community theater: Trouble is hard to find in the Village Players of Birmingham production of "The Music Man." /5B

SPORTS

Mat tourney: Redford Catholic Central will try to defend its title Saturday in the Third Annual Observerland Wrestling Tournament. /1B

A real climber: Farmington Hills resident Marshall Seybold will take part in the Summit Step Up at the Westin Hotel Saturday. /1B

Hoop results: Farmington played Plymouth Canton in a key Western Lakes boys basketball game Tuesday. /1B

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Ponke testimony elicits tears



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

After emotional testimony from witnesses and family members Wednesday, Raymond Ponke was bound over for trial on charges of first-degree murder in the beating death of his wife at a Farmington dental office.

Arraignment will take place 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, before Judge Jessica Cooper in Oakland County Circuit Court. Raymond Ponke, wearing a new

beard, looked downward during most of his preliminary examination Wednesday in 47th District Court before Judge Frederick Harris.

Jackie Ponke died Jan. 8 from several blows to the head with a hammer in the office of Dr. Alan Bredin on Freedom Road where she worked for 19 years.

An Oakland County Medical Examiner's report estimated she was struck more than 40 times.

Raymond Ponke was arrested by Farmington police at the scene.

Two witnesses were first asked by Oakland County assistant prosecutor Robert Hedges to testify.

Bredin said he was working on patient Janet Dolinka that Saturday morning when he heard a commotion.

Bredin said he saw a man, whom he identified as Raymond Ponke, striking his assistant in the head and neck. He told how he tried to stop the man.

"When I tried to grab the hammer or his arm, I was thrown off, pushed back," said Bredin. "I had seen Jackie's injuries were inconsistent with life."

Family members of Jackie Ponke wept as Bredin then described in detail the massive head injuries she received.

Dolinka also said she saw the man

hit Ponke five to six times. At first she said she thought it was some type of joke, but realized it wasn't.

Dolinka said she heard the attacker say, "If I can't see my daughter again, neither will you."

Both Bredin and Dolinka fled to a neighbor's house and called police.

John and Nicholas Ponke described their brother as despondent and withdrawn. Nicholas Ponke said his brother mentioned suicide shortly after the couple separated in November.

"He felt everyone was for Jackie and not for him," Nicholas Ponke said.

The brothers also testified they heard Raymond Ponke make threats toward his estranged wife.

See MURDER, 2A



SHARON LAMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Day in court: Raymond Ponke, accused of murdering his wife, Jackie, is led into 47th District Court Wednesday by Cmdr. Thomas Cox of the Farmington Public Safety Department.

New schools chief's challenge: Think bigger

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

New Farmington Public Schools superintendent C. Robert Maxfield looks out the window of his soon-to-be vacated Berkeley office and sees more of the same.

A lot more.

Instead of 4,420 students, Maxfield will oversee the education of 10,931 in Farmington. There will be three high schools compared to one, 13 elementary schools instead of five.

He'll oversee twice as many teachers

and administrators and be the commander of a fleet of 63 school buses — 68 more than he has in Berkeley.

As those numbers add up, so will the expectations of him. Maxfield looks as overwhelmed as a sunbather sentenced to life in Monaco as he starts the Farmington job at the end of March.

"I'll have to pick and choose," said Maxfield, who was named as the Farmington schools chief in December. "I attend 50 percent of the bas-

kethall games here. You can't go to 50 percent of the games with three high schools.

"You can try to be everything to everybody and end up being nothing to anybody."

'Getting to know you'

The theme for Maxfield's transition could be: "Getting to know you."

Visits to the district have been few as he's busy wrapping up business in Berkeley where he's served as superintendent since 1988. Maxfield did at-

tend the "Odyssey of the Mind" competition Saturday at Farmington High.

His anonymity was validated after a parent took notice of Maxfield and said, "It's nice to see a principal here."

He sees some similarities between Berkeley and Farmington, especially in terms of diversity and concern over educational issues. The Farmington district is more spread out.

See SCHOOLS, 4A

Residents want to dismantle proposed development

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

About 60 residents who showed up for a joint Farmington Hills City Council and Planning Commission study session were encouraged to "fight tooth and nail" against a proposed residential/commercial development.

They didn't need much encouragement Monday night.

For three hours, audience members, commissioners, council members and developer Gary Jonna, who

is proposing the 91.8-acre project on the east side of Middlebelt between 12 Mile and I-696, discussed traffic, housing density and the city's future.

One thing was clear, there was little support for the project that would include 205 total housing units and a shopping center on 11.1 acres at the corner of Middlebelt and 12 Mile.

"There are eight schools within a mile and a half (of the planned unit development)," said BrookHills Estates resident Bob Harris. "The traf-

fic would make it even more dangerous for kids."

Harris added that the proposed project would not blend in with the surrounding area.

Jonna had originally requested a much larger area for commercial space that would have included a Source One retail outlet. In the face of strong opposition from more than 100 residents he withdrew that request for planned unit development qualification from consideration by the planning commission.

He then met with some residents and came back with a plan that included a scaled-down retail center with 165 units and space for a grocery store. That proposal also met with resistance from residents. Jonna's most recent proposal fared no better.

Maisha Silver, a resident of nearby Beechwood Hills condominiums, said that if a location became available suitable for a grocery store, Kroger would likely move to the new location.

See PROJECT, 4A

It's for the birds

Marj Ferguson, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited on 12 Mile Road, will present a program on "Bird Feeding Basics" during a meeting of the Hill and Dale Garden Club at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, at the Hill branch of the Farmington Community Library, 12 Mile Road between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads.

The public is invited. For more information about the club, call Jeannine Gundole at 478-8295.

Dads and daughters

Attention, daddies and daughters of Farmington Hills . . . another Daddy-Daughter Dance — two of them, as a matter of fact —

FARMINGTON FOCUS

has been planned by the city's recreation department.

The event will be 7-8:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11, and at the same time Saturday, Feb. 12, in Dublin and Shannon Halls of the Mercy Center, 11 Mile Road, east of Middlebelt Road.

Registration deadline is Friday, Feb. 4, at the Farmington Hills Special Services Building, behind City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

The evenings will include entertainment, refreshments, dancing, a corsage for daughters and a boutonniere for dads, and a picture. Cost is \$15 per couple and \$7.50 per additional daughter. Call Cathy O'Rourke-Wendrick at 473-9579

Memory Lane

From the Feb. 4, 1954 issue of the Farmington Enterprise:

■ Additional volunteers were needed for the Farmington Ground Observer Corps, which maintained a 24-hour lookout for enemy aircraft.

■ A subscription to the Farmington Enterprise cost \$2.50 a year, according to an advertisement. A single copy cost 7 cents.

■ A church program on Haiti — "Where Black Rules White" — was planned for the Farmington Baptist Church. Some 3-D color slides of Haiti were to be shown.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, faxed to 477-9722 or dropped off at the newspaper office.