

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Carriers collect: Just a reminder that your Farmington Observer newspaper carrier will be collecting for the month of February this week. The monthly home delivery charge is \$3. Thanks for your cooperation.

Water plan: By planning to conserve water in the case of extreme drought, Farmington Hills will get an additional 2,220 water taps. /2A

Flowers to smell: Fred Harrison, who died last week at 84, loved to smell the flowers. He didn't have to go far to find them. /9A

COUNTY NEWS

Campaign violations?: Members of Gov. John Engler's administration may have violated state campaign laws in an attempt to promote Proposal A. /5A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS



Mall grazin': Customers testify that the best part of shopping is stopping for treats. /6A

Bath indulgences: Columnist Linda Bachrack shops for things that top personal vanities with style. /6A

OPINION

Unlikely twosome: As Democrats gathered for their annual dinner in Farmington Hills recently, guest columnist Albert Holtz, an Oakland County attorney, found two future "presidential" candidates greeting each other. /8A

SPORTS

Ski results: Mercy High School attempted to qualify again for the state finals in girls skiing Thursday. /1C

Hoop scene: Farmington High tried to create momentum for itself going into the WLA playoffs with a victory Friday. /1C

INDEX

Classifieds . . . B-D
Auto . . . D
Index . . . 7B, 8C
Employment . . . C, D
Real Estate . . . B, C
Crossword . . . 6B
Malls . . . 6A
Personal Scene . . . 6B
Police, fire calls . . . 3A
Sports . . . 1C
Street Scene . . . 4B
Tease . . . 1B

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Mental tests ordered for Ponke



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A judge has ordered medical and psychological tests to determine the mental state of Raymond Ponke, who is charged with first-degree murder in the brutal slaying of his estranged wife in a Farmington dental office on Jan. 8.

reignment Thursday before Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Jessica Cooper.

Ponke, who sat with other prisoners and was unemotional during the proceeding, stood mute on the first degree murder charge. A not guilty plea was entered for him.

A court date has been set for May 17 in Circuit Court. Results of forensic testing should be known by then.

During testimony in his preliminary exam, it was revealed Ponke's family has a history of Huntington's chorea — an ailment that affects the central nervous system and can lead to dementia.

"We know he has it, but the question is at what stage it is," Chapman said. "All of the signs he exhibits are pretty clear that he has it at some level."

In addition to Huntington's disease, such tests will determine if Ponke is competent to stand trial and if he's criminally responsible for his actions, Chapman said.

"Someone can be competent to stand trial, and still not be criminally responsible — still insane," Chapman said.

A medical examiner's report indicates Jackie Ponke received more than 40 blows to the head and neck with a hammer in her murder Jan. 8. Raymond Ponke surrendered at the scene to Farmington police without incident.

A brother of the accused testified Raymond Ponke told him he spent 10 hours sledgehammering the family's Oxford home at Christmas time. An-

See PONKE, 4A

View from the top



SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Nailing it down: Carpenter Rich Parent, a Livonia resident, lays plywood on the roof of a garage under construction in Farmington Hills. With winter taking a break last week, such outdoor activities were much more pleasant to perform.

Tension over pension, pay arrests contract talks

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Contract negotiations have broken off between the city and the union representing the Farmington Public Safety officers. Both sides are girding for arbitration.

Public safety officers have been without a contract since Dec. 31.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Since July, city and union negotiators have met three times and separately with a state mediator.

Both sides say wage and pension benefits are main sticking points. Neither will elaborate on what's

on the table.

"Again, because of the status of them applying for arbitration, we can't talk about those things at this time," Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said.

Lauhoff said previously the city is offering a contract similar to one ratified by the Farmington Command Of-

ficers Association, which called for a 6.5-percent wage increase over three years in return for better pension.

Offers not similar

Farmington Police Officers Association president James Madigan said

See TALKS, 2A

Hills council wants liquor law violators to face music

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills City Council thinks a few establishments selling liquor to underage patrons aren't getting the message.

After reviewing the Hills police department's liquor sting operation, in which an underage police cadet asks to be served alcohol, the council voted 5-0 to ask representatives of establishments that have multiple violations to appear before council at its March 7 meeting.

Mayor Larry Lichtman and councilman Jon Grant were absent at the

Feb. 14 regular meeting.

"These two (the Metropolitan Musicale and the Tivoli Restaurant in the Clarion Hotel) have violated the law almost every single time there has been a sting," councilman Terry Sever said.

The two, along with another restaurant, were cited for selling to a minor during a Dec. 28 sting operation. The department conducts the stings in June and during the Christmas holidays every year.

A registered letter warning businesses that the sting is coming is sent to each licensed business.

The Clarion Hotel had also been cited after stings in December of 1989, 1990 and 1991. The Musicale had been cited in June and December of 1992 as well as December of 1993 — the last three times the department conducted the sting.

Several council members said the establishments had not been penalized enough. The Clarion had paid a fine of \$200 in 1989, \$300 in 1990 and \$1,000 in 1991. The Musicale had paid \$200 and \$300 in fines respectively for violations. A hearing on the 1993 violation is pending before the state Liquor Control Commission.

The city plans to give the two establishments a hearing and then make a recommendation to the LCC. The council will then announce a recommendation at its March 21 meeting. The city could then decide not to renew business permits for the two establishments.

Police Chief Bill Dwyer said the city's decision to take strong action is welcome.

"It tells the licensees that they have to be accountable to the city, not just the (Liquor Control) Commis-

See LIQUOR, 4A

FFIA needs volunteers

A local anti-drug group — Farmington Families in Action — is sending out a call for volunteers to help spread the word about "healthy bodies and healthy habits," said a group spokeswoman.

"For 10 years, our volunteers have worked with preschool, elementary, middle and high school students," said Nancy Smith. "They present ways to avoid peer pressure, to help them 'say no' and still keep their friends."

FFIA needs volunteers to help with publicity, fund-raising, newsletters, phone calls and mailings, Smith said.

"Even if you are available only on an occasional basis, please call Betty Nicolson (951-3645) or Nancy Kring (553-0611) for more information," Smith said.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Interested people should attend FFIA meetings at 9:15 a.m. the first Thursday of each month in Room 108 of the Farmington Training center on Thomas Street in downtown Farmington. People of all ages are welcome, including parents, retirees and singles, Smith said. "The only requirement is a common desire to encourage healthy lifestyles in our community."

George Washington in City Hall

An exhibit on George Washington, prepared by Pam Correll of the Farmington Hills Historical Commission, may be viewed

during normal business hours at the Farmington Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads, through March.

The display is in the glass display case near the city council chambers. It includes books, portraits, glassware, postcards, a presidential plate, and a whimsical cloth doll.

Memory Lane

From the Feb. 18, 1954, edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

Richard VanDusen, a Birmingham Republican, was elected to the state House in a special election in the Third District. A light voter turnout was reported.