

# Family commission searches for direction

**By BILL COUTANT**  
**OF THE OBSERVER**  
 Taking on the problems of children and families — and finding answers — can be a big order.

That's what members of the Farmington Hills Commission on Children, Youth and Families are doing. They're also learning that they will be their biggest ally, at least in the commission's infancy.

"We may not know where we're going right now," said commission chairman Todd Lipa. "I hope we don't get bogged down and too confused about our direction."

But Lipa admitted that the newly formed commission does

need a more specific mission. And other commission members agreed at their regular meeting Thursday night.

"We can't move until we get it down on paper," said Joanna Ranaivatsarathorn, chairwoman of the volunteer and community access subcommittee.

Farmington Hills councilwoman Nancy Bates, who was instrumental in getting the city to create the commission, said she was not worried about the group finding its way.

"When we started the commission on aging, no one knew exactly what direction we were headed in," she said.

The commission was established

"to encourage an environment where children, youth, and families are happy, healthy, educated, safe and have the opportunity to reach their full potential." Commission members agreed that seems like an all-encompassing mission.

At this point, commission members need to learn from each other how to use resources to encourage volunteerism, provide recreation opportunities and address special needs in the community, Bates said.

"This doesn't have to be a 'warm fuzzy' commission," she said.

The commission, made up of

representatives from the schools, the clergy, the juvenile division of the judiciary, business, the medical professions and volunteer agencies.

With a broad spectrum of activities and agencies involved, the commission would be better served to start on fewer projects, said Wes Brun.

"We can't start with everything at once," he said. "We should start with the volunteer center at Mercy."

Part of the commission's function, through the volunteer center, will be to recruit volunteers and connect them with appropriate agencies. Making commission

members aware of what various agencies already do will also help.

Thursday's meeting brought to light several activities in the community either sponsored by the commission or that fit into its goals.

■ Kelly Masters, a resource person for the committee from Oakland Community College, said through a grant, high school students would be able to attend a five-week leadership program that will teach conflict resolution, diversity training and team building. The students will then take what they've learned and apply it to community service.

"It's a way to groom them into a lifelong sense of volunteerism,"

Masters said.

■ Mandi Skeegan of the YMCA said a Healthy Kids program at the Y from noon to 4 p.m. April 23 will combine entertainment with education on children's health.

■ The commission will sponsor Safe Kids Family Night from 6:30-9:30 p.m. May 13 at the Mercy Center on 11 Mile. The evening will include open swimming, entertainment, fire truck rides, concessions along with tips on fire safety, bicycle safety, drug awareness and disaster preparedness.

The commission, which meets the first Thursday of the month, will hear Eddie Ignatius of United Community Services at the May 5 meeting.

## Local leaders among graduates of county program

... where there is no leadership, society stands still."

Harry S. Truman

A progressive society, one that produces well-educated leaders, is what leadership Oakland is all about. There are 42 graduates of the program this year from throughout the county, from all occupations — profit-making and non-profit. More than 130 people have graduated from the program so far.

It is sponsored by the Council of Chambers of Commerce of Oakland County Inc., and it is one of 700 programs affiliated with the National Association of Community Leadership.

Leadership Oakland takes the form of a nine-month learning experience, beginning with a two-week orientation.

There are more than 100 hours of interactive presentations, panel discussions and workshops. More than 125 community leaders make presentations in

the areas of multi-cultural communication, health care and human services, economic outlook and trends and the judicial system.

While improving an individual's leadership skills, the individual gains access to data, develops solutions and becomes part of an ongoing community resource.

Tuition for the program is \$1,750 for all programs, meals and lodging for the retreat. A kick-off reception for the 1994-95 class is 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesday at Oakland University's Meadow Brook Hall.

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson will be the keynote speaker.

The free reception is open to all interested persons who live or work in Oakland County and the Detroit metropolitan area, including alumni and prospective participants.

Corporations and organizations are primary sponsors of participants.



**New leaders:** Graduates from a Leadership Oakland course this year are Christopher Carr (front row, left), Browning-Ferris Inc. municipal accounts representative of Northville; Alan Osterdale, vice president/treasurer Osterdale Insurance Agency of Farmington Hills; Daniel M. Brinks, partner, Dickinson, Wright, Moon, VanDusen & Freeman of Bloomfield Hills. Other leaders are Steven D. Myers (back row, left), principal associate of Suzuki, Myers & Associates Inc. of Novi; and Jeff Cothery, vice president of Reid Manufacturing Co. in Southfield.



**Also leading:** On the Oakland County scene are Monica Smith (front row, left), assistant to the executive director, Oakland Literacy Council in Pontiac; Robert Thomas, Oakland University Director of Placement and Career Services, Rochester; Lori DePriest, Oakland County Community Mental Health administrative assistant, Pontiac; Albert T. Nelson, senior partner, Kemp, Klein, Umphrey & Endelman, Troy; and Mary J. Lore, president, McFarland Florist & Greenhouses, Farmington Hills.

## Teens: Drive-by shooter shouted out gang slogan

**ALICE COLLINS**  
**OF THE OBSERVER**

How young teens from a group were shot at from a passing Grand Prix in a Southfield neighborhood testified Thursday the shooter leaned out the window and shouted a gang slogan before firing.

One of the approximately 15 teens gathered on Shawwassee Indian was hit by the blast in a shotgun in the April 5 incident. An empty shell hit one boy in the back, but caused no injury. The firing the first shot he heard, "Count love," 16-year-old Thomas said from the crowd.

Thomas identified the phrase as a gang slogan.

Thomas also testified that he was with his friends had been shot in an incident with the Grand Prix on Eight Mile about minutes before the drive-by shooting. The Grand Prix pulled

along side of the car Thomas was in, "bunked the horn and started throwing gang signs at us." One of the signs, he said, was "folk killer."

"We were just driving," Thomas said. "They motioned for us to follow them. . . We didn't. Then they turned into a side street."

He said he knew the driver, Dawn Beasley, and front seat passenger, Jason Holowicki, both are students at Southfield High School.

Thomas said he had gone with some friends to Detroit to pick up two new friends and bring them back to his house in Southfield where others were waiting.

The next time he saw the Grand Prix, Thomas said, was a short while later on Shawwassee just before the shooting incident.

Thursday's testimony came in 46th District Court during a preliminary hearing for three youths charged with attempted murder

and conspiracy to murder in the shooting incident. They are Beasley, 16, of Southfield, identified as the driver of the Grand Prix; Holowicki, 17, a neighborhood youth and front seat passenger; and Donald Rammage, 16, of Canton Township, one of the three back seat passengers.

A 13-year-old Farmington Hills boy, believed to have been the shooter, has been arraigned on similar charges as a juvenile. The case against him will be pursued in juvenile court.

A fifth person in the car, a 16-year-old male from Westland, has not been charged.

All of the defendants have entered not guilty pleas. The preliminary exam before District Judge Susan Masevic is to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to send the case on to circuit court for trial.

## School officials don't expect to ask for local tax vote soon

**LARRY O'CONNOR**  
**OF THE OBSERVER**

School districts are not out of the millage business, but Farmington school officials don't expect to open shop anytime soon.

Assistant superintendent for Finance Bruce Barrett said the district's financial situation is set for 1997. Voters approved a three-year millage renewal in

1991. The district's hold on its status, leaves Farmington in a sound fiscal footing. Pas-

sage of Proposal A has not affected the budget process, Barrett said.

"That is fortunate for us to be in that kind of situation," Barrett said. "Some school districts like Southfield have to do that (ask for millage) right way after the passage of Proposal A."

Barrett said the district is not considering a request for enhancement millage, or for capital and bond money at this time. Of those, a bond issue is the most viable.

"We're very low in terms of our

debt," Barrett said. "At this time, there are no plans to do that."

Though Proposal A doesn't put school districts out of the millage business, Barrett doesn't think requests will be as difficult as in the past. The main reason is the new 5 percent cap on assessment increases.

"I believe on a long-term basis, it's going to take a lot of pressure off property owners," Barrett said. "Before what you had was a request for millage along with an assessment increase baked into it."

That extinguished itself. There were no injuries.

But motorists trying to get to work had to find other ways, and there was a traffic backup until Detroit Edison crews could cut the power and clear the lines at about 9:30 a.m.

## Downed lines throw traffic for a loop

Downed power lines threw rush-hour traffic for a loop, but did not cause any injuries.

A heavy hauler pulled out of the Hills Chrysler Plymouth lot at 9:30 a.m. after dumping a load of power lines, but did not have its

box lowered. The box caught two power lines, pulling out one behind the dealership and another that crossed Grand River.

Farmington Hills firefighters from stations 1 and 3 secured the area, and police rerouted traffic. The downed line behind the dealership caused a small grass fire

that extinguished itself. There were no injuries.

But motorists trying to get to work had to find other ways, and there was a traffic backup until Detroit Edison crews could cut the power and clear the lines at about 9:30 a.m.

### JOIN OUR TEAM

If you would like to be part of our Farmington Reader Advisory Board please fill out the following information and mail it to the address below. The first session will take place at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 5. Please print or type your responses.

Name		Address	
City	ZIP	Phone (home)	(work)
Occupation			
What is the best day and time to contact you?			
(day)	(time)	a.m.	p.m.
Briefly list interests or hobbies you have:			

Please mail or fax your completed coupon to

The Farmington Observer, Tom Baer, Editor  
 21898 Farmington Road  
 Farmington, MI 48336 our fax number is 477-9722

## Observer is looking for a few good readers for advisory board

The Farmington Observer is looking for residents to serve as members of our Reader Advisory Board. Three sessions will be held.

The first session is at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 5, tentatively in the Farmington office. Steve Barnaby, Observer publisher, and Sandy Boulton, promotions director for the newspaper, will present an overview of the publication.

Boulton will discuss research

that provides a picture of Observer readers. Barnaby will address recent changes at the newspaper along with emphasis on local news and circulation.

The second and third sessions are set for the following Thursdays, May 12 and 19.

Topics to be discussed are: information on community organizations that provide direct or self-help services to residents, crime stories and how much detail is appropriate, and coverage

of upcoming elections for school board members and state legislators.

In general, the Observer wants to know how board members feel about their community and its newspaper.

To launch this process, the Observer asks interested readers to fill out the accompanying coupon giving some background on interests. We are looking for diversity. People of all ages, incomes and interests are urged to apply.

## Man accused of embezzlement allowed to withdraw guilty plea

**By BILL COUTANT**  
**STAFF WRITER**

Charles Anthony says he'd rather not be in jail.

The man accused of bilking hundreds of people out of thousands of dollars in several cities in at least two states decided to take his chances before a jury rather than spend time in jail.

Anthony, who was arrested in September and charged with more than 30 counts of larceny by conversion and embezzlement over \$100, was allowed to withdraw his guilty plea to six

counts of embezzlement after hearing a probation report that recommended some jail time. Each embezzlement could bring a five-year prison sentence.

Circuit Judge Robert Anderson allowed Anthony to with-

draw his plea April 6 and set his arraignment for May 2. All of the charges that had been dropped previously will be reinstated.

Anthony, who has used several aliases, has also faced charges in Illinois for embezzlement.

The charges stem from a company run by Anthony called Universal Automotive, which operated on Grand River in Farmington Hills when police raided it in September.

The business was billed as a subleasing operation, where customers would have Universal sublease their cars to other people. The company was to turn over the sublease payments minus the fee.

After several customers said they had received no money and that their vehicles had been leased, police obtained a warrant for the raid and seized 36 vehicles and records from the business.

Anthony remains free on bond.

In a similar case, James Glenn Brady, 23, of Southfield and formerly of Farmington Hills was bound over to 6th Circuit Court on charges of larceny by conversion, a five-year felony, April 6. Brady, who ran Eastern Auto, was charged with not paying subleasing money to customers.

Brady, who is free on \$5,000 bond, will be arraigned before Circuit Judge Rudy Nichols at 8:30 a.m. April 22.