

Farmington Observer

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1994 • FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 32 PAGES

FIFTY CENTS

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VOLUME 106 NUMBER 20



The Observer Newspapers

Starting today, Observer readers can look for headlines from their hometown newspaper at 5:30 p.m. every Monday and Wednesday on WJBK-TV 2 Eyewitness News.

The new segment, Suburban News Network is a partnership between Suburban Communications Corp. (SCC), which publishes the Observer Newspapers, and WJBK-TV 2.

The Suburban News Network will be televised every Monday and Wednesday on the 5:30 p.m. edition of Eyewitness News with Rich Fisher and Jerry Hockak.

The segment will also feature headlines from SCC's Eccentric Newspapers in northern Oakland County and Hometown Newspapers in parts of Wayne, Oakland and Livingston counties.

"We look forward to our partnership with the Observer and delivering the news that's closest to home," said Mort Meisner, Channel 2 news director.

The partnership is SCC's first venture into television.

"I'm excited," said Richard Agnifian, SCC president. "The partnership promotes the distribution of necessary and important information to our readers and viewers of Channel 2."

Watch for headlines at 5:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday and for complete coverage of local news, read the Monday and Thursday editions of the Observer Newspapers.

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Lights on: Farmington Hills folks turned out in chilling cold as the city switched on its holiday lights. /3A

Next round: Farmington Hills City Council mulls over how it grants liquor license requests. /3A

TASTE

Gifts for Cooks: Local chefs reveal what's on their Christmas wish lists. /1B

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

It's The Ritz: Meet Frank and Debbie Caruso celebrating their 20th anniversary in retail with the announcement of a new store. /4B

SPORTS

Youth movement: Farmington Hills Harrison might have the youngest varsity boys basketball team in the state. /1C

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Man bound over in escape try



An attempted escape from Farmington Hills police could by a man 20 years or more in jail. The June 8 incident led Hills police to tighten security during prisoner transport.

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

A Brighton man accused of trying to wrestle a pistol from a Farmington Hills police officer in a failed escape attempt now faces a Circuit Court trial.

Gregory Krachenfels, 36, pleaded not guilty to assault with intent to

commit murder in 47th District Court Nov. 30.

Judge Fred Harris bound Krachenfels over to Oakland County Circuit Court, where he is scheduled to be arraigned on the charge before Judge Eugene Schnels at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 15. If convicted, Krachen-

fels could face a 20-year-to-life prison term.

That charge was filed by the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office after testimony by Farmington Hills detective Dave Lee at Krachenfels' preliminary examination on two other charges: attempting to take a firearm from a police officer, a five-year felony, and attempting to escape, a four-year felony. The defendant still faces those counts as well.

All three charges stem from a June 8 incident.

Krachenfels had been bound over

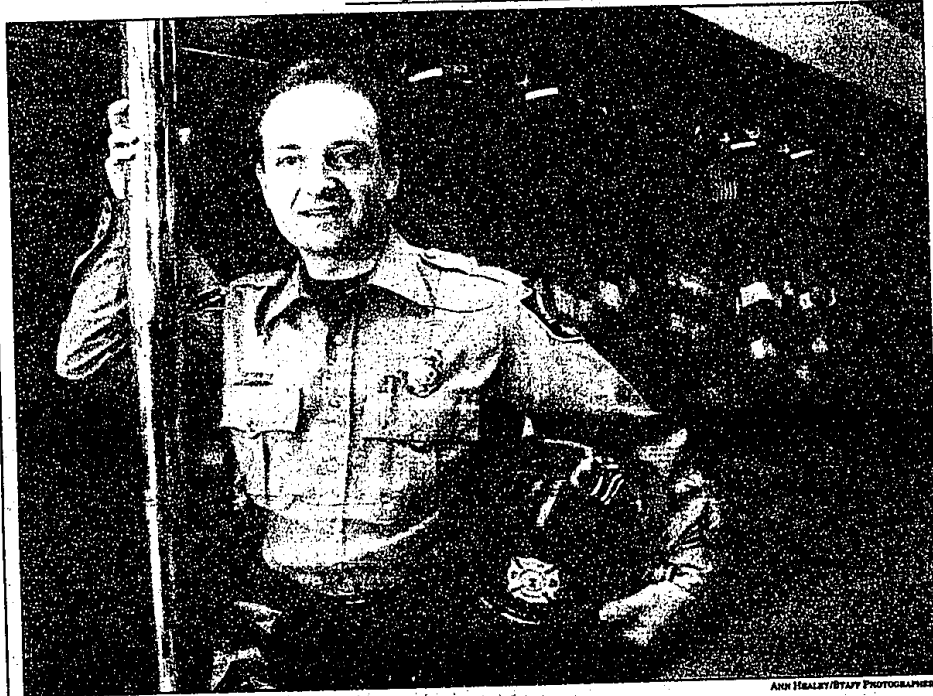
to Circuit Court on an armed robbery charge and was being transported by Lee from 47th District Court to the Hills police station, to be taken back to the county jail.

The prisoner, who was in the front seat next to Lee, is accused of pushing the detective into the door while the car was driving north on Power Road, causing the car to swerve across the road and onto the west shoulder.

Witnesses, who called police, saw

See BOUND, 4A

Firefighter of the year



AND HEALY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

On call: Farmington Hills 1994 Firefighter of the Year, John Zylka, is a paid-on-call volunteer. Fire officials say Zylka displays great skills during emergencies and can be counted on to do extra work.

Dedicated dad shines as firefighter of year

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Curiosity may have killed the cat, but it brought John Zylka back.

The Hills resident and firefighter was named Firefighter of the Year for 1994 after moving into Farmington Hills near fire department headquarters on Drake south of 13 Mile.

"I was in the neighborhood and was just curious about what went on there," he said.

One thing led to another and, be-

fore long, Zylka had been talked into joining the department as a volunteer paid-on-call firefighter.

Zylka, 35, says he's "retired" from Ford Motor Co., but it's more like he's a house husband taking care of his daughters Deanna, 8, Melissa, 5, and Allison, 8 months, and his son Tommy, 2, while his wife Mayan works during the day. But since joining the department in 1990, Zylka has taken classes, attended re-

cruit school and become a licensed paramedic.

"I was totally shocked," he said of his selection as the department's top firefighter. "There are a lot of people who are deserving. There are a lot of high-caliber firefighters."

According to Fire Chief Richard Marinucci, Zylka distinguished himself not only by showing "great skill" during many emergencies, but by being there for a lot of runs.

"He can always be counted on to perform extra work," Marinucci said during ceremonies to honor Zylka last month.

The family man said, predictably, that it was through the support of his wife and children he had been able to dedicate the time and effort he had to firefighting.

See DAD, 4A

Arraignment expected this week in robberies

By SUZ BUCK
STAFF WRITER

A Lincoln Park man is expected to be arraigned early this week in connection with two Farmington armed robberies.

Wallace Schmidt, 21, was arraigned Nov. 30 in West Bloomfield following

a crime spree Nov. 29 that began as an armed robbery in Farmington and ended with a five-community police chase and a roadblock in Southfield.

Police believe the Nov. 29 robbery of Flower Express and the Nov. 25 hold-up at Washing Well Gifts were committed by the same man. The

Nov. 25 robbery was the city's first of the year.

Schmidt will be arraigned at 47th District Court today or Tuesday, said Farmington Commander Chuck Lee.

Farmington police were still seeking a warrant Friday.

"His description appears to be sim-

ilar to that of the composite from Sunday's (Nov. 27) robbery," said Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss.

In the Washing Well Gifts in the Drakeshire Plaza. The robber stole

See ROBBERIES, 4A

Cool yule

The Farmington Community Chorus presents its annual holiday concert 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 16 and 17, at Harrison High School, 12 Mile Road, east of Orchard Lake. The chorus, sponsored by the city of Farmington Hills Department of Special Services, will present a program of "Cool Yule" selections.

Several soloist and small ensembles will perform along with the 80-plus voice choir. The holiday hit list includes: "Home for the Holidays," "Silver Bells," "Hinge Bells," and comedian Steve Allen's "Cool Yule."

Tickets are \$6 (\$5 for seniors and students and \$3 for kids 10 and under). Advance tickets are available from community chorus members or at the Hills Department of Special Services, 81000 11

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Mile Road. Tickets are also available at the door, depending on availability.

Claus calls

Farmington Hills Department of Special Services has established a North Pole hotline. Santa Claus will phone children between 4:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 13, to wish them a Happy Holiday and to find out what they want for Christmas.

To register a child, parents should fill out a registration form at the Department of Special Services Office at city hall, 31865 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills 48336. Forms can be returned by mail to the same address. They must be received

by Monday, Dec. 12.

Opening gem

To celebrate its new state-of-the-art showroom, Greis Jewelers in Farmington Hills is having a grand reopening weekend Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 10-11. The event will feature a special trunk showing with jewelry by Namdar along with a raffle for a watch, pin and earrings.

Also, a percentage of all purchases during the weekend will benefit Gilda's Club of Metro Detroit. Gilda's Club is a support group for people with cancer. The club is named in memory of comedian Gilda Radner, who died of cancer.

Greis Jewelers, 82940 Middlebelt, near 14 Mile Road. For information, call 855-1730.