

Farmington Observer

VOLUME 106 NUMBER 66

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1995 - FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN - 106 PAGES

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS
© 1995 Suburban Communications Corporation

IN THE PAPER
TODAY

Fish story: A fishing derby is planned for the Farmington stretch of the Upper Rouge. The stream will be stocked with trout. /3A

Lights out: South Farmington folks were without power Tuesday after Detroit Edison lines were knocked down. /7A

Flamingo central: Birthdays are for the birds. Just ask birthday gal Alice Berns. She has 60 of them on her lawn. /6A

COMMUNITY LIFE

Mail bonding: The U.S. Postal Service is sticking with customer service and delivering more than letters. /11A

A natural woman: Hills naturalist Joe Derek says a Fox brought birds to Heritage Park. /11A

OPINION

A better Battle?: The Battle of the Books is one fine reading program, but it could be even bigger and better. /16A

LET'S GO!

Get in line: Practice your country line dance lessons at Center Stage in Canton. /1B

Pass the popcorn: Engaging, nostalgic, and thoroughly predictable, "Circle of Friends" has played to packed houses in its limited first-week run at the Maple. /4B

SPORTS

Getting untracked: Harrison High fields another talented track team in hopes of winning the boys league title again. /1C

Making the pitch: Mercy's Marlins are setting out to make a good impression under new coach, Jack Falvo. /1C

CREATIVE LIVING

Ancient artistry: Donna Jacobs Gallery Ltd. gives history a special shine with its ancient glass exhibit during Michigan Glass Month. /1D

Glorious glass: Contemporary artists from throughout the Midwest dazzle with their talents in a glass exhibit at the Oakland County Galleria. /1D

INDEX

Building/Business 1F	Crossword . . . 10E
Calendar 6C	Let's Go 1B
Classifieds E-G	Obituaries 9A
Auto G	Opinion 16-17A
Employment F, G	Personal Items 7G
Index 9E, 9F	Recreation News 7A
Real estate E, F	Specials 2, 7
Community Life 11A	Y Highlights 4C
Creative Living . . . 1D	

HERE'S HOW TO REACH US

Newsroom: 810-677-8480
 Newsroom Fax: 810-677-8742
 Sports: 313-663-3141
 Reader Comment Line: 313-663-3042
 Classified Advertising: 313-663-3000
 Display Advertising: 313-663-3000
 Home Delivery: 313-663-2800
 Cable/TV Weekly: 313-663-2182

Arson victim battles fear

■ "We were way underinsured," says Dr. Michael Hartman as he tries to put his life back together after the destruction of his Farmington Hills house in an arson fire.

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

It's not a typical Monday morning for Dr. Michael Hartman as he looks over papers in his Southgate office.

The podiatrist is not studying patient records. He's checking a list of items destroyed during the arson fire of his Farmington Hills house in the early hours of March 20.

"We were way underinsured," he said. "We had riders for the jewelry, but we didn't know we needed them for other things like antiques and

Oriental rugs."

It's been a depressing and frightening time for the Southfield native and his family.

The arson of his \$300,000 house was a shock, even though a week earlier someone had tried to set fire to his Southgate office.

"I thought that (arson attempt at the office) was just a prank or some kids or gangs or something," he said.

But less than a week later, the early morning fire of his Glenview house left no doubt that someone was se-

rious. An investigation is ongoing. Arsons are known to be particularly difficult to investigate because little evidence survives the crime.

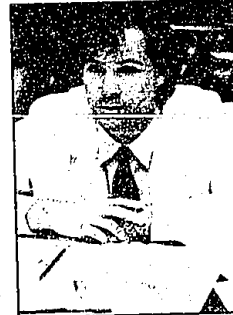
In Hartman's case, were it not for the quick thinking of he and his wife, the results could have been deadly.

"My wife got most of the jewelry out, but other than that, we walked out with what we were wearing."

His family is now relocated to an apartment, but they can't shake the fear and depression.

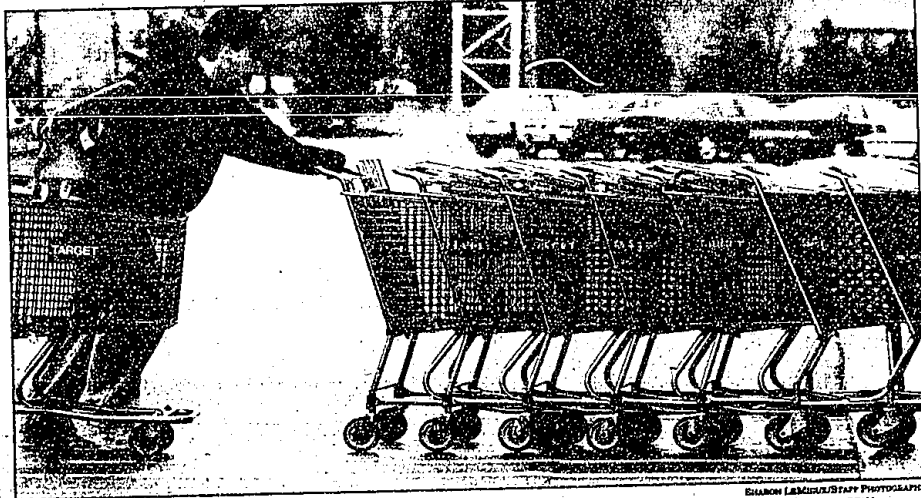
"If I could understand why someone was doing this . . ." he asks and then trails off.

See AFTERMATH, 2A



Dr. Michael Hartman

He's right on Target at work



Collecting carts: Darrin Reynolds rounds up shopping carts in the parking lot of the Target store in Farmington Hills. Reynolds was a participant in a program operated by Target and the city of Farmington Hills that helped special needs individuals learn work skills. Reynolds has since graduated and is now a regular Target employee. "The program has been beneficial for all concerned," said Dan Eggers, store manager.

Former publisher wanted for larceny

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington police are expected to extradite a former newspaper publisher from Florida. He's wanted here on three felony warrants.

Derek Gendron, 30, faces three counts of larceny by conversion for more than \$100, stemming from a 1993 incident involving Homefront Delivery Corp., which operated out of The Winery on Grand River in Farmington.

Business owners said they paid for

advertisements to appear in an advertising shopper called The Homefront News. The paper never materialized.

Authorities said Gendron is being detained in a Palm Beach, Fla. County jail on an unrelated possession of stolen goods charge. Bond was set at \$5,000.

Two Farmington police detectives are expected to fly to West Palm Beach, Fla. on Thursday and return Friday with Gendron.

An arraignment could take place

here Friday or Saturday, Farmington Public Safety Deputy Director Mike Higgins said.

Three of four businesses who filed the initial complaints want to prosecute, Higgins said. The other business, Prime Time Sports in Farmington Hills, has since disbanded.

"These businesses are just the tip of the iceberg, I think," said Farmington police Det. Dan Deller.

Larceny by conversion for more than \$100 is a felony, which carries a

maximum penalty of five years in jail or a \$2,500 fine.

Gendron also has an outstanding warrant in Ann Arbor, a Palm Beach County Sheriff records clerk said. Ann Arbor police would not confirm it.

U.S. Secret Service and the state Attorney General's Office also want to speak to Gendron. A Secret Service agent declined to discuss their interest in the case.

See LARCENY, 2A

Residents don't want to get drilled over oil

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

There may be oil in them that hills, but some Farmington Hills residents would be happy if it stays there — under the ground.

A representative of West Bay Exploration Co., which buys oil and gas rights, has been active in the city recently — offering residents in the Meadowbrook Hills, Woods and Forest subdivisions \$200 to sign over their oil and gas rights and qualify for royalties for any possible gas strike.

But Rick Lethemon, Meadowbrook Hills subdivision president, said he and others in the area aren't exactly gushing at the prospect of oil or gas wells in the area.

"Last year they did the same thing in Farmington Square" (bordered by Nine Mile and Halsted), he said. "They come door-to-door and try to ram this thing down our throats. This is an affluent area. I just can't understand why anyone would sell their gas rights for a lousy \$200."

Gary Gottschalk, vice president of

West Bay, said residents are operating under some misconceptions about how the industry operates.

"We don't do anything on the surface in a residential area," he said. "Any drilling we do is off site. We use angle drilling."

Gottschalk said the company was active in buying gas and oil rights in the city last year, but doesn't make its activities public for good reason.

"We spend a lot of money testing and finding gas and oil, getting permits and buying equipment," he said.

"Once we find an area that we're interested in, we don't want our competitors, who have not done the work, to get the advantage."

West Bay has working wells in the area including three at Kensington Metropark, two at the Northville Regional Psychiatric Hospital, one on Ford property and at Eisenhower High School in Shelby Township. The wells at those sites are 10 feet surrounded by fences.

See OIL, 3A

Here's to you two

Katie Montgomery and Maggie Durkee are VIPs these days at the Farmington Area YMCA.

Montgomery and Durkee were honored by the local YMCA recently as March's Volunteer of the Month and Employee of the Month, respectively. Durkee, an employee since the summer of 1994, "has been a wonderful asset to the YMCA's Prime Time programs, summer camp and various youth and teen events," according to a Y missive. "She goes that extra mile in everything she does."

A graduate of Birmingham's Marian High School, Durkee attends Oakland community College. She intends to earn a degree in nursing. Montgomery, a sixth-grader at Drunkle Middle School in Farmington Hills, spends her after-school hours at the YMCA First Step Child Care

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Center taking care of preschool youngsters.

"She can attend a boo-boo, read a story to a child who needs a quiet moment or two, or help to dress a child after a swim lesson," said a YMCA spokeswoman.

She has a special friend in Daniel Lorenson, age 3, who calls her "My Katie" and wants to marry her when he grows up and can drive.

It's 'Sheer Magic'

The Farmington Downtown Development Authority's Winter Fun Series concludes at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 8, with a performance of "Sheer Magic & Comedy" at the Clivo

Theater on Grand River.

Sheer, a perennial favorite, entertains parents as well as children with his magic and comedy act. Admission is \$3.

Ice hockey, anyone?

Farmington Hills' new ice arena is still under construction, but hockey programs for men and women already have been announced, according to Gerald Nelson, arena manager.

Individual player registration for possible men's and women's adult hockey programs for players at least 18 years of age will be 1-5 p.m. Saturday, April 8, at the Visitor's Center at Heritage Park on Farmington Road between 10 Mile and 11 Mile roads.

See FOCUS, 4A