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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

By the numbers: A Farmington area committee to commemorate World War II is honored as the 6,000th group formed nationwide. /3A
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Corridor care: Farmington Hills has put up the money to improve the Grand River corridor. /8A

TASTE



Royal feast: Three Emperors Dinner fit for mere mortals. / 1B
Pull the cork: Vignier is a white grape with an attitude. / 1B

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Tepper's Triumphs: After 18 years in Southfield, Tepper's Jewelry moves to a state-of-the-art headquarters at Orchard Mall in West Bloomfield. /4B
Behind The Label: Meet Lois Snyder, the woman behind moderate-priced Dani Max designs. /4B

SPORTS



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Service work to stay voluntary



Community service is still voluntary at North Farmington High School. Officials will extend the current program that rewards those who complete 20 hours of volunteer work.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

To serve or not to serve . . . that question will be left up to North Farmington High students, at least for one more year.

A service learning proposal that would have required North Farming-

ton students to complete 30 hours of community work in order to graduate will likely be put on hold.

Instead, North Farmington will extend its current program that rewards students who complete 20 hours of volunteer work, a school official said. Seniors receive a stamp on their di-

ploma and a purple honor cord to wear at graduation upon completion of an essay.

Some Farmington School Board members said they had concerns about the plan and tabled the matter March 28. A parent and a community member also spoke out against required service.

Students would have needed to complete 30 hours of service learning starting in the 1996-97 school year. The requirement would increase to 40 hours in following years.

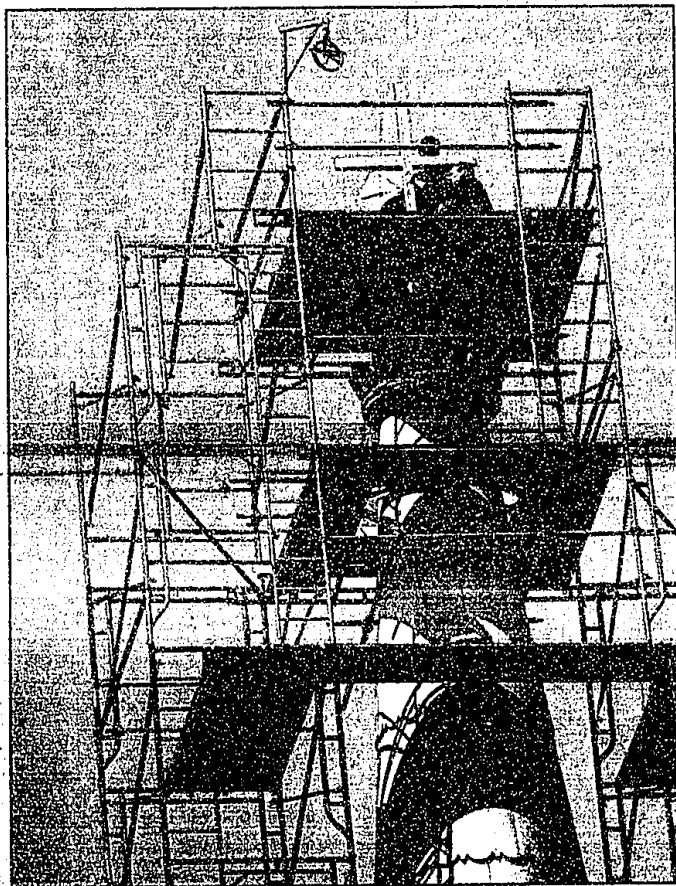
Service learning would allow students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world situations, supporters said.

Those affected — the students — said they weren't consulted. They mounted a petition drive against the graduation requirement and collected more than 700 signatures.

Senior Dan Pierce said he plans to present the petition at the Farmington School Board study session May 9.

See SERVICE, 2A.

Laying on the leaf at Nardin Park



BRADSHAW LEE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Steeple renovation: Carl A. Nielblock and Tony Elam lay golf leaf on the cross at the top of the Nardin Park United Methodist Church. They're 120 feet up.

Steeple renovation glows for gold

BY TOM HAZEK
STAFF WRITER

Scaffolding is high at Nardin Park United Methodist Church in Farmington Hills in both feet and inches and dollars and cents.

The edges and wooden platforms that surround the 120-foot (from

ground to cross) limestone steeple of the church on 11 Mills Road cost about \$30,000 to build and maintain, about half of what it's costing for the steeple renovation.

"The cost surprised me," said Fred Tinspoor, chairman of Nardin Park's board of trustees. "But I guess that's the cost of doing busi-

ness. There are a lot of federal and state regulations to consider here."

Another \$7,000 is being spent for gold leaf being applied to the 7-foot-high copper cross at the very top and to the crown right below it, Tinspoor said.

See STEEPLE, 2A

Diamond hearing scheduled

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

After 40 years, the murder of a girl in what is now Farmington Hills is still a source of hurt for her family and a legal tangle for the state's judicial system.

Floyd Diamond, now 54, was convicted of murdering 9-year-old Kath-

COURT

leen McLaughlin at a pond where she was skating on a February afternoon in 1955. Friends of the deceased girl assumed that Diamond had served his sentence and been paroled by now. Those same friends did not know that the girl's family still lives in the area.

But after 40 years, the state appellate defenders office is trying to have his sentence changed to reflect his second-degree conviction.

"At the time, a life sentence with parole usually meant about 10 years (in prison)," said Kristina Dunno of the appellate defender's office. "Probably because of his mental illness — and he has been certified to be mentally ill — he wasn't given parole."

Oakland Circuit Judge Barry Howard will hear testimony and an independent psychological evaluation of Diamond at a hearing at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, May 25.

Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Joyce Todd fears the length of the time Diamond has served has led the Department of Social Services to suspend any possible threat he poses.

"The issue is whether he got a fair shake," she said. "The D.S.S. saying that he would report or stay in a halfway house is a charade. He's under no obligation to do anything if he's released."

The two surviving older sisters, Terry and Judy, and Kathleen McLaughlin's mother, Martha, don't want to see Diamond released. Terry, a Bloomfield Hills resident, and her sister Judy, who lives in Southfield, have circulated petitions to 35 communities in the area to get signatures opposing Diamond's release.

The family did not know of the latest legal developments, and was stunned to hear of Diamond's possible release, Terry McLaughlin said.

"We never went to any of the parole hearings," she said. "We were never notified."

Diamond is serving his sentence at the state prison in Coldwater.

Terry McLaughlin was 17 at the time of the murder and her mother Martha was in the later stages of a pregnancy. Her mother had not realized many of the details of the murder until recent publicity about the case, McLaughlin said.

"All of the sudden it's like this is thrown up in our face," she said. "But

See HEARING, 2A

Hills businesses aid Oklahoma City relief efforts

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Corporate Farmington Hills is helping victims of the Oklahoma City bombing.

Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance is planning several fund-raisers in the next week. Also, Michigan National Bank, whose corporate offices are in the Hills, have asked employees to contribute to the Red Cross relief effort.

"Usually on earthquakes and other disasters we send an E-mail note to ask them if they want to make a contribution," said Margie Flitts of Michigan National Bank. "Then the company matches the total."

Last year, Michigan National employees raised

Usually on earthquakes and other disasters we send an E-mail note to ask them if they want to make a contribution. Then the company matches the total.

Margie Flitts
Michigan National Bank

money for Midwest flood victims. Money was sent to the Salvation Army.

Alexander Life employees were blue jeans and paid \$2 for the privilege at the door Friday. A simi-

lar casual day fund-raiser will take place this Friday.

Also on Friday, the insurance company is having a bake sale and raffle. Money from both events will go to the Red Cross relief effort in Oklahoma City.

Organizers hope to raise \$900 to \$1,000 alone from the bake sale. Employee contributions will be matched for the first \$1,000 by Alexander Hamilton. Also, the parent company, Household International Company, plans to match contributions \$25 or more.

"We tried to issue the gauntlet," said Alexander Hamilton manager Jeff Kuloseus. "If there is anyone else who wants to take up the challenge and raise money for the Red Cross in Oklahoma City, we are interested."