

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Thanksgiving and trash

Heady! Hear ye! Refuse and recycling will not be collected in Farmington and Farmington Hills on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23. Thursday's collection will be picked up Friday, and Friday's will be removed on Saturday.

Now hair this!

Have a good hair day and help the needy at the same time by participating in the Crowley's Hair Salon/Focus:HOPE food drive. Crowley's Hair Salon is accepting donations of canned food at its shop on the second floor of Crowley's at 12 Mile and Farmington roads in

Farmington Hills through Dec. 11. Those who donate will receive 15 percent off all hair-care products. Donated food will be delivered to Focus:HOPE, a metro Detroit civil and human rights organization that offers a supplemental food program and training for disadvantaged youth. More information, call Crowley's Hair Salon at 553-0790. **Let's hear it for Dan** An Schoening is November's "Applause! Applause!" winner at Botsford Continuing Health Center, a 179-bed nursing facility in Farmington Hills. Schoening, a Redford Township resident, is a

maintenance supervisor at BCHC. His duties include maintenance and grounds work at BCHC as well as at the nearby Botsford Commons retirement community apartment building, independent homes and all-purpose community center. Every month, BCHC honors an employee with the "Applause! Applause!" award.

City union doings

Don Gould, crew chief of the city of Farmington's Public Service Department, was re-elected president of the local of AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees), the union that represents many Farmington and Farmington Hills employ-

ees, in a recent election. Robert Buschma of the Farmington Hills Assessors Office, was elected vice-president of the local. Charles Rudy of the Farmington Water Department was re-elected secretary/treasurer. Pat Carlisle was elected recording secretary, and Robert Hops, Robert Boyd and Diane Scott were voted to the executive board.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 3341 Grand River, Farmington 48335; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literature, the Internet E-mail address is: pachy@oeonline.com.

Depression is viable force in baby's death

BY BILL COULTAN STAFF WRITER

Although postpartum depression is a recognized medical condition, its standing in law is uncertain.

But the issue could play a role in the murder trial of Japanese national Itsumi Koga for the death of her 26-day-old son, Tomoyuki.

"We really don't have any statute that speaks to that issue," said Farmington Hills Attorney Raymond Cassar, who specializes in criminal defense and has experience with innocent by reason of insanity. "My guess is that the

defense will use the insanity plea."

Cassar said American courts do not have a statutory basis, or case law experience, to treat the condition, which can lead to severe depression and other problems. As a consideration in a capital offense, a strong case could be made, he said.

"The fact that it is a recognized medical condition means it isn't something an attorney just dreamed up," he said. "It could be a viable defense even though it has not been recognized as such."

Adding to the credibility of such a defense is the fact that

Great Britain has long recognized the nature of postpartum depression. That country's Infanticide Act of 1930 does not permit the prosecution for murder of an infant by its mother for 12 months from its birth.

In "Depression After Childbirth," British author Katharina Dalton described three types of tragedies after child birth.

"(They are) those occurring shortly after birth while the mother is in an acute psychotic state; those occurring with the return of menstruation; and, thirdly, the many domestic feuds."

Koga had been under a doctor's

care for depression, which could be brought up as further evidence of temporary insanity. According to Farmington Hills police, the woman had told them the baby had been crying a great deal due to colic.

The child was found in a pond behind the apartment where Koga, her husband Akihiro and sister Midori Teganaki had been staying in Farmington Hills.

"But there is a problem with that defense," Cassar said. "Postpartum depression lasts from 30 to 60 days. So they've got to show that she was in that time frame."

Exam from page 1A

about five years and came to Farmington Hills three years ago. Akihiro Koga works as an engineer at the Nissan automotive research and development facility here.

The defendant's older sister, Midori Takayagi, said she came to Farmington Hills from Japan Oct. 10 to visit with her sister after the birth of the baby, Oct. 7.

According to her testimony, the night before the death was a quiet one for the family, Akihiro Koga returned from work at 6:30 p.m. The Kogas ate dinner while Takayagi took care of the baby.

Later, Takayagi ate and showered and went to bed around 11 p.m. Nov. 1.

"Were there any problems?" asked Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Paul Walton. "There was nothing wrong that day," Takayagi answered.

Left him at marsh

In his testimony, Akihiro Koga said he had fallen asleep shortly after 11 p.m. after helping his wife feed the baby. He woke up about 7 1/2 hours later to find his wife and baby, whose crib was in the bedroom, gone.

According to testimony, the night before the death was a quiet one for the family. Akihiro Koga returned from work at 6:30 p.m. The Kogas ate dinner while Takayagi took care of the baby.

After finding her in the living room, Akihiro asked his wife where the baby was. He did not quite believe her answer, he said.

"I left the baby at the marsh," he said she told him.

After taking several times, he said he woke Takayagi, and the three dressed and drove the car nearer to the pond. He and Takayagi had to help his wife dress and helped her down the stairs of the apartment, he said.

After first searching around the pond without success, Akihiro Koga said he started looking, with a flashlight, in the pond. Walton asked what part of the baby's body he first saw.

"The soles of his feet," he said, adding that the baby was upside down in the water.

The three took the baby back to their Citation Club Apartment, located on Meridian in the 13 Mile/Hogarty area, and tried to

revive it. But the "cold, limp" child could not be saved.

Akihiro Koga said that his wife had told him she left the baby at the pond and never said she threw him in it. He had made a throw-in motion when, without an interpreter, he described to police how the baby had gotten into the pond. But that was a misunderstanding, he testified.

Footprints in the mud

Farmington Hills police officer Wayne Beebower testified that foot prints in the mud and dirt around the pond matched those of shoes worn by the three people, including a lone set of tracks belonging to the defendant.

Judge Parker said she would take briefs from the defense and prosecution and would hear final arguments Wednesday afternoon at 2 p.m. She also kept a gag order

on all of those involved in the case, for now.

Attorney Tom Cranmer, who represents Akihiro Koga and Takayagi, asked that the judge allow them to have their passports, which had been held by the court. He said Takayagi had been scheduled to return to Japan Thursday (Thanksgiving) and that since she had already testified, she should not be needed here.

But Parker honored Walton's request, for now, that she may be needed for further testimony and one out of the country, she could not be ordered to appear.

There has been interest in the case in Japan, but not the kind of intense Japanese media scrutiny that other stories involving Japanese nationals have received.

"It is not a big story in Japan compared to the story in Baton Rouge (La., where a Japanese exchange student was killed)," said Sumiko Miyamoto of TV Asahi in New York, N.Y. "The circumstances seem to be unfortunate."

Itsumi Koga, 34, had been under a doctor's care for depression before the death of her son. The baby was her first.

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Most men labor and deliver more than one child in the fall than in the spring. Why is this so? According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, men's sperm production is highest during the winter. Sperm counts are low in summer by some 22% to 30% with spring and autumn falling somewhere between these extremes. Studies indicate that the reason behind these fluctuations may be seasonal variations in natural light. Patterns of daylight and darkness prompt annual biological cycles, among which are the release of hormones. With about the formation of sperm. Couples may want to have children.

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