

Farmington Observer

VOLUME 110 NUMBER 16

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1996 • FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 120 PAGES

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

© 1996 Suburban News Publications Corporation

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Get to the cause: People suffering from depression must come to terms with its causes, psychologist Dr. Paul Kaye told an audience of Farmington area senior citizens recently. /B1

Going once . . . There were plenty of good deals Saturday as bikes, TVs, jewelry and other items were sold at the Farmington Hills public auction. /B8

SPORTS



Hoops touney: Three girls basketball teams from Farmington — including Mercy High (above) — were among the four playing Wednesday for a berth in the district championship game. /C1

Grid playoffs: West Side meets East Side when Farmington Harrison plays Grosse Pointe North in a Class A semifinal football game Saturday. /C1

INDEX

A&E	E1-5	Movie Guide	B6
At Home	Section G	Obituaries	A18
Cable Connection	A8	O&E On Line	D2
Columns	A23	Police & fire	A6
Community Life	B1-5	Real estate	Section H
Crossword	17	Recreation News	A8
Editorials	A22	Religion	B13-16
Letters	A22-23	Sports	C1-6

A dignified cause to die for

By WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Furthering the cause of assisted suicide was not the issue at gathering Nov. 14, just how best to accomplish it.

About 40 people came to an organizational meeting of Merian's Friends at the Universalist Unitarian Church in Farmington Hills to discuss a ballot proposal that would make "death with dignity" legal in Michigan.

The group, named for an Ann Arbor woman who ended her life with the help of Dr. Jack Kevorkian,

is working to get a ballot proposal before Michigan Voters in 1998.

State Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, hosted last week's meeting.

"I've decided that this is an issue I want to become involved with," Dolan said. "We're all going to die." Dolan reviewed state legislative attempts at addressing the issue of assisted suicide but concluded that even though a majority of the public favors some form of assisted suicide, it will not likely come out of Lansing.

A bill that would allow a person who is terminally ill and mentally

competent to receive the help of doctors in ending a painful life will not make it through the process, she said. And even though the U.S. Supreme Court will be taking up the issue next year, the outcome is unclear.

To that end, Merian's Friends are using the next six months to organize a petition drive to get the issue on the ballot. They will have six months to gather from 350,000-400,000 signatures beginning in May. The number will depend on whether a constitutional change is sought.

Dr. Ed Pierce, the group's chair-

man and a former state senator from Ann Arbor, said in the Netherlands, where the practice is legal, only 1.6 percent of dying people choose assisted suicide. Of those, 85 percent have cancer.

"One third of us will die of cancer," he said. "It can be a very painful way to die and most of those who choose to die would probably only have a week or less to live."

The ballot proposal would permit a physician to help a patient die. It would apply only to the terminally ill. Two physicians, including a fam-

See MERIAN'S, A2

'It's a job. Somebody has to do it.'



STAFF PHOTO BY BRADLEY LEMLEY

Graveyard shift: "I had a doctor who told me, 'That was my sister's grave you did. I want you to do my grave,'" says Richard Saylor (above).

He puts finishing touches on death

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

In 82 years of life, Richard Saylor has spent 40 of them surrounded by death.

The numbers don't stop there for the Farmington resident and employee at Livonia's Glen Eden Memorial Park cemetery. The octogenarian is a veritable lottery

ball machine gone haywire of numeric equations and dates in describing his job helping bury the dead.

His first day on the job: May 23, 1956. Number of people buried in Glen Eden when he started: 2,100. The number resting now at the site: 30,759.

How many people who were buried his first year: 298. The

annual burial rate now: 750-800.

The size of a typical plot: 8 feet long and 38 inches wide. And the depth?

"Five and a half feet," said Saylor spreading the soil over the previously-held six feet figure.

Saylor worked long enough at the plush 246-acre cemetery on Eight Mile Road to see a nephew and two grandchildren employed

there.

He hasn't had to cut the grass in 16 years, though he still adroitly handles the cemetery's tractor. His duties largely center on maintenance and layout of burial plots, which he takes enormous pride in.

"I get a lot of compliments," said Saylor, who has lived in Farming-

See GRAVES, A2

Tree plan has personal touch

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Planting a tree leaves a lasting memory, say members of the Farmington Beautification Commission.

That's why the council-appointed commission is proposing the city start its own remembrance tree program where people could plant a sapling for a bereavement, retirement or anniversary.

Farmington Hills, among other cities, conduct similar programs.

However, Farmington's tree program would add a personal touch, commission member Walt Gajewski said.

"This is not (just) a tree planting program; this is a community service program," Gajewski said during Monday's Farmington City Council meeting. "This will enhance the beauty and visual appeal of the city's parks and properties."

People could dedicate a tree to remember a family member, friend or coworker at Shawwassee and Drake parks or other city-owned grounds.

Participants would receive certificates of recognition during an individual ceremony presided over by Beautification Commission members. A 1 1/2- or 2-inch sapling is planted with a dedication plaque.

Cost to participants is estimated at \$165 to \$350, depending on the size of tree and make of the dedication plaque.

Engraved site plaques range from 3 by 8-inch cast bronze with two lines of text to 5 by 8-inch ones with three lines of text.

Sugar maple, Norway maple, ash, oak, Bradford pear and cherry are types of trees being considered. Trees would be bought from a Department of Public Services approved nursery, Gajewski said.

Beautification Commission would administer the program, keeping records and coordinating the purchase of trees with the DPS and suppliers. Members would be present at the planting to take photos and provide certificates.

In drawing up the proposal, commissioners looked

See TREES, A2

City: Keep investigating Legionnaires

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

With the Legionnaires' disease outbreak over, Farmington city officials want state and county health and elected officials to investigate possible remedies to prevent a similar health hazard from occurring.

Farmington City Council passed a resolution at Monday's meeting, asking state elected and health officials to investigate whether more inspection and maintenance requirements are needed for water-cooled rooftop units often found at commer-

cial establishments, which can harbor and spread Legionella bacteria.

State health officials identified a similar unit at Cattleman's Market as the source for airborne transmission of Legionella, which led to four deaths and 30 reported cases of the disease.

City officials are asking state and county health and elected officials to investigate possible remedies to prevent a similar health hazard from occurring.

"I'm convinced we're in the right direction by asking these various agencies to investigate this matter for us."

JoAnne McShane
—Farmington Mayor

Cattleman's officials dispute that its Grand River and Mooney store was the sole cause of the outbreak in October.

"I'm convinced we're in the right direction by asking these various agencies to investigate this matter further for us," Mayor JoAnne

McShane said. "As far as the issue of what can be done with these types of units, I don't think we have the staff or the answers to those questions."

"I think they are much more sophisticated than we are to handle those types of issues."

State and county health officials inspected and required the cleaning of 40 rooftop units — including the one at Cattleman's — during its investigation in finding the source of the outbreak.

Newly-elected State Rep. Andrew

See DISEASE, A2

Sing in the holidays

Anyone interested in getting the holidays off to a tuneful and traditional start should come to the Farmington City Hall, Grand River and Liberty, at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3.

That's when and where local Girl Scouts and city officials will gather to light the evergreen tree in front of the municipal building in the annual Holiday Sing.

The girls will be singing holiday favorites, as well as hanging bird houses on the evergreen tree.

Two Scout service projects are associated with this year's Holiday Sing:

■ Gift of Reading program: The girls will bring new unwrapped books to donate to the Gift of

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Reading program.

■ Quarter Jar project: Leading up to the Holiday Sing, the girls have been encouraged to do extra chores around their houses to earn quarters for their Quarter Jars. They'll bring their quarters to the Holiday Sing and donate the money to a local couple in need.

Farmington's safe streets

Farmington, its drivers and pedestrians have done it again: Another year — the

city's 18th in a row — without a pedestrian death. Farmington has been awarded a Pedestrian Safety Commendation from Michigan AAA. The award "recognizes the city's special efforts toward pedestrian safety education and protection," according to an AAA missive.

Farmington Mayor JoAnne McShane accepted the award at an AAA breakfast Nov. 19 at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer-literate, the Internet e-mail address is: packy@mail.aconline.com.