

# Farmington Observer

Serving Farmington and Farmington Hills for 111 years

HomeTown  
COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION  
Putting you in touch  
with your world

VOLUME 114 NUMBER 51

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 72 PAGES • <http://observer.eccentric.com>

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

© 1998 HomeTown Communications Network, Inc.

## Beer bash host charged in holdup



The same man who got probation for hosting a teen beer bash in Farmington last fall is facing armed robbery charges in connection with a holdup at a South Lyon market. He was shot in the arrest and arraigned in the hospital.

The Farmington man who recently received probation for hosting a party where alcohol was served to minors was arraigned Thursday for the armed robbery of a South Lyon grocery store. Kevin Tod Alexander, 34, was shot in the legs after allegedly robbing Showerman's 1GA April 19. He was arraigned in his hospital room by 52nd District Judge Michael Batchik. A not guilty plea was entered for him, accord-

ing to South Lyon police. A cash bond totaling \$1 million was ordered by Batchik, with \$100,000 for each of 10 counts, all linked to last Sunday's robbery. Alexander was arraigned on two counts of armed robbery, six counts of weapons felony firearm, and two counts of felonious assault. The name of the hospital was not disclosed for security reasons, said Farm-

ington Public Safety Detective Scott Herrmann Friday. Alexander is in fair condition and under police watch at the hospital.

According to Herrmann, additional charges against Alexander - including those connected with the Jan. 11 robbery of the Grand River-Halsted Kmart in Farmington - are "pending at this point."

Alexander is considered a prime suspect in nine previous "closing time" robberies, where a total of about \$176,000 in cash was stolen. Among other previous targets was the same South Lyon Showerman's, victimized on Nov. 5.

"The task force is still attempting to coordinate evidence and prepare cases" for the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, Herrmann said.

If the bond is not met, Alexander will be transported to the Oakland County Jail in Pontiac as soon as he is sufficiently recovered from the gunshot wounds.

Herrmann said Alexander's preliminary examination in Novi's 52nd District Court must be scheduled by Thursday, May 7.

Alexander was arrested last Sunday night in the back of Showerman's. He

Please see CHARGED, A6



### Message to Mom

Why is your mother special? Tell us in 50 words or less and you may win lunch or dinner for your mom (and three other people) at a local restaurant. Mail, fax or e-mail entries by noon Friday, May 1.

**MAIL:**  
Community Editor Dave Varga  
33411 Grand River  
Farmington, MI 48335

**FAX:**  
(248) 477-9722

**E-MAIL:**  
dvarga@poe.homecomm.net

Be sure to include your name, your mother's name, your address and telephone number. You may send a photo, however, judging will be based on your message.

We will print as many entries as possible on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10. The contest is open to readers of all ages.

### THE WEEK AHEAD

#### SUNDAY

Arts honors: Artist-in-residence and service awards will be handed out 2 p.m. today at the Festival of the Arts at the William Costick Center.

#### INDEX

Autos/J5  
Class. Index/H3  
Crossword/E5  
Arts & Leisure/C  
Jobs/H4  
Movies/G4  
Obituaries/B3  
Police, fire/A4  
Rentals/E7  
Real Estate/E1  
Service Guide/J3  
Sports/D

#### HOW TO REACH US

Newsroom: 248-477-5450  
Newsroom Fax: 248-477-9722  
E-mail: dvarga@poe.homecomm.net  
Nightline/Sports: 734-953-2204  
Reader Comment Line: 734-953-2042  
Classified Advertising: 248-901-0900  
Display Advertising: 248-901-2524  
Home Delivery: 734-591-0500

## Ameritech asks if towns want cable TV

Farmington area cable TV customers may get a choice in who provides their service.

Ameritech New Media wants to offer cable television service to Farmington and Farmington Hills residents. Currently, Time Warner is the only cable service provider in the Farmington area.

However, officials on the cities' cable authority are skeptical whether customers will see lower rates with new competition.

Ameritech, which has franchise agreements for its Ameritech cable service in 33 other Detroit area municipalities, has zeroed in on the Farmington area.

An Ameritech New Media representative has asked cities in the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission for letters to state their interest in having another service provider. Ameritech officials also want to look over the three cities' cable ordinance.

SWOCC represents Novi as well as Farmington Hills and Farmington.

"We look forward to it and think it's a great area," said Geoff Potter, Ameritech New Media spokesman. "We certainly hope to offer a service that many of the area's neighbors already enjoy."

Ameritech made a similar presentation to SWOCC two years ago. However, the

Please see CABLE, A5

## Family affair takes class

Dad fills in during daughter's leave

Daddy-daughter combinations usually are found at dances, not in front of a classroom. But for pupils in the Gill Elementary School classroom of teacher Molly Gray, that's exactly what's happening.

Gray, who is expected to deliver her second baby any day, is handing over the classroom reins to her father, retired public school educator Lincoln Avery, for the rest of the school year. Avery has been standing in the wings since early March, when he began volunteering his time to team up with his daughter and teach the fourth/fifth-grade split class at the Farmington district school.

The hardest part for the 31-year-old Gray, a 1986 graduate of North Farmington High School, is knowing what to call her father in front of her "second" family.

"My biggest problem has been calling him Mr. Avery," said Gray, sitting next to Avery following a Thursday morning reading lesson. "I want to call him 'Dad.'"

Avery, a 35-year veteran of Southfield Public Schools before retiring in 1990 to take the job of executive director of downtown Farmington-based Keep Michigan Beautiful, seems to be fitting in just fine with the students in his daughter's class.

"It's really exciting, but it's also kind of strange," said 10-year-old



All in the family: Lincoln Avery, a former teacher, will take over the class of his daughter, Molly Gray, when she leaves her fourth- and fifth-grade class at Gill Elementary to deliver her second child.

fourth-grader Radhika Upadhyaya about learning from Gray and Avery. "It kind of feels funny that our teacher's dad is going to be teaching us. But he's fun to be with."

According to fourth-grader Marie Smith, 10, "I thought it would be kind of strange. But I've grown to like him."

Both teach the same way, too, said 10-year-old Alex Romine, one of the fifth-graders in the class. "There's some similarities. They have the

same style."

"They're excited because he's my father," said Gray, asked about class reaction to Avery.

#### Principal pleased

Gill principal Mike Duff also likes the unique arrangement and noted that it didn't take very long at all for Avery to become accustomed to teaching again, something he last did in 1963.

"It's worked out fine," Duff said.

"He seems to be picking up right where his daughter is leaving off."

Duff said parents have not complained about Avery taking over the class. Usually in cases involving maternity leave, guest teachers receive a few days to learn the ropes next to the teacher, not nearly two months.

"It's much more beneficial," said Duff, about the elongated transition.

Please see TEACHERS, A5

## 11-hour standoff ends peacefully in Hills

A 32-year-old Farmington Hills man and an Oak Park woman holed up in his home before surrendering to police Friday, after an 11-hour standoff mediated by the man's attorney.

Police wanted to question the pair in connection with a shooting around 11 p.m. Thursday in the area of Mystic Forest and Knighton, which is in the city's northwest corner. They were questioned and released pending further investigation.

Residents phoned police after hearing several gunshots in the area. When police arrived, they found an abandoned silver and maroon van with two

bullet holes in the passenger side. No one is believed to have been injured.

Witnesses saw a red vehicle pull into a Knighton Drive residence, which was surrounded by police. Officers tried several times to make contact with the man but were unsuccessful.

Police obtained a search warrant signed by 47th District Court Judge Maria Parker.

"We had no communication with him all night," said Bill Dwyer, Hills police chief. "He wouldn't answer the phone; he wouldn't answer the door."

The Oakland County Sheriff's special

response team was on standby. Residents in the subdivision were puzzled to find police cars patrolling on their street.

"I saw four police cars when I got up and then there were two when I went to school," said a 13-year-old boy who lives nearby. "They were just driving around the neighborhood. I didn't know what was going on until one of the kids at the bus stop told me."

Around 10:15 a.m., the man's attorney, who was at the scene, convinced him and the woman to come out.

"We were patient," Dwyer said. "We

didn't rush and nobody got hurt. Everything turned out well."

Later Friday, Farmington Hills police were still uncertain of what charges will follow. Officers continued to interview witnesses and collect evidence, which included several shell casings found at the scene.

Shots were likely exchanged between occupants of the two vehicles, which rammed into each other, Dwyer said.

After the van crashed into a parked vehicle, a person inside escaped on foot through a common area. Police used tracking dogs, but couldn't pick up a trail.

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

For information, call the Farmington Hills Planning Department at (248) 473-9543.

### Mr. Hobbs stays

Farmington Hills City Manager Dan Hobbs is officially, entirely out of the running for the position of city manager of Boulder, Colo.

Although he was in the final six interviewed candidates for the job, the council has hired a manager

from Virginia, after its first choice turned down the job offer.

### Chorale benefit

Three Men and a Tenor, an a capella vocal group that has gotten rave reviews, will be coming to North Farmington High School to perform a concert on Friday, May 1, to benefit the school's choir.

The show is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors. Call 489-3545 or 473-2578.

The group bills itself as part Smothers Brothers, part Marx Brothers and part Statler Brothers, all in one high-energy, musical comedy show.



6 53174 10005 4