

Farmington Observer

Part of HomeTown Communications Network™

Hugh Gallagher
MANAGING EDITOR
Sue Rosiek
PUBLISHER
Banks Dishmon
VP/COO

Jeanne Tower
VP, EDITORIAL
Dick Agnalin
PRESIDENT
Phillip Power
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.

Farmington bank holdups show disturbing violence

It's scant comfort to employees and customers of two Farmington banks held up in the month of December that the Federal Bureau of Investigation's preliminary uniform crime statistics show a 2.6 percent drop in all armed robberies nationwide for the first six months of 2000.

Bank robberies are still a rare event. One recent report showed there were 28 in year 2000 in all of Oakland County as of mid-December. Nationwide the FBI continues to report a drop in armed bank robbery from a high in 1995 through June, 2000.

Even so, the two December robberies — one in the city of Farmington and one in Farmington Hills — were disturbing for their brazenness and violence.

In the city robbery the one robber pistol-whipped a customer for no apparent reason. Fortunately, he was not seriously hurt. In the Hills robbery, the bank robber, who at times made no attempt to hide his identity, pretended to have a bomb, and threatened to take a female employee with him.

She foiled his attempt by locking the bank door as he left.

There was also a Hills bank robbery in November at a Flagstar bank on Orchard Lake Road

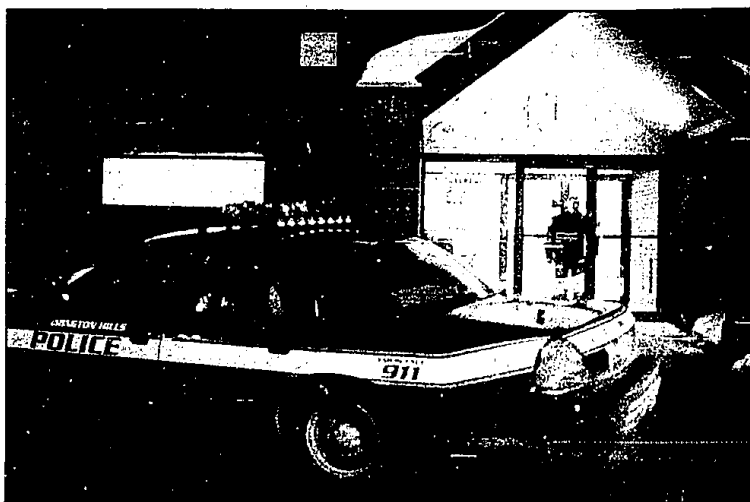
Police say all three robberies were different. In the Flagstar robbery, the stick-up man wore a ski mask. In the city robbery, the suspects are black. In last week's robbery the man was blond and carried a briefcase. He started the robbery by asking to have a document notarized.

We note banks take numerous precautions to protect staff and customers.

In some cases, bulletproof teller cages make armed robberies all but impossible. Good security camera footage and lucid descriptions from witnesses help the police. So do programs where pictures are broadcast or printed so the public has an opportunity to identify the criminals.

Given the nature of banking it appears it is impossible to prevent robbery entirely. But we know police and security experts have methods for "hardening" the bank, training staff and supporting the prosecution of offenders.

We trust all Farmington banks are taking every precaution, particularly in light of the recent seemingly more violent holdups locally. Farmington residents need to be extra cautious in light of the three recent bank holdups. We would hope there are no more Farmington victims — people or banks.



Third bank stickup: A Farmington Hills police officer stands inside the locked front entrance to National City Bank last Thursday. The holdup man threatened to take a female employee with him.

LETTERS

■ Snow removal

The City of Farmington is going to start ticketing for snow covered sidewalks.

There are two other areas that need to be taken care of; this includes the City of Farmington Hills.

No.1. The snow pushers that push snow into handicap parking slots.

Take a look in front of the downtown Post Office.

Take a look at the North end of the JoAnn Fabric parking lot.

Before any contracts are signed, a clause should be included that handicap parking areas need to be completely hand shoveled.

An example of proper care can be found at the Costco Center.

We have a very efficient Handicap Patrol. They could report all these areas.

No. 2. What about the individuals and businesses that plow snow from their driveways, into or across the roadways.

These areas belong to the public and not for your private convenience. Will it be your grass clippings and yard waste next?

Let's hear from other concerned people. We need a good reporter to investigate (with pictures) every year.

Mary Williams
Farmington Hills

■ Left's 'contortions of logic'

In his recent editorial "Playing games ought to end at the Capitol" (O & E, 12/21/00), Mike Malott goes to great lengths to extend the deceptive power of the term "will of the voters" over the uninitiated and glibly wishful.

In a desperate, last-minute attempt to try to fight a fair and consistent concealed weapons policy, Mr. Malott ignores the fundamental processes by which representative, republican government has operated over the last several centuries. At the same time, he confines the concept of the people's will to the recent aberration known as the ballot initiative, popular among those who like to teach us that we live in a democracy. This hypocrisy becomes unbearable as he defends a system whereby the people's right to self-defense is arbitrarily rationed by UNELECTED county gun board members, while decrying the action of ELECTED officials in Lansing.

Who is the "will of the people" in this? Why do the "police officers and prosecutors" to whom he refers somehow have a monopoly on representing "the people's will"? By the way, those "police officers" are in fact mostly political appointees serving in administrative positions, primarily in large cities and counties, hardly the rank and file officers Mr. Malott would have us envision.

The last time I checked, the Constitution allowed the people to elect a legislature, and the legislature to write laws. But apparently I missed something, and the will of the people now resides only in lawsuits, petitions, and ballot initiatives. By the way, if the fact that the law was passed in "lame-duck" session so bothers people, why don't they launch a ballot initiative to bar the legislature from legislating after election day? More to the point, if the voters' memories are so short

that they can't remember something for two years, whose fault is that?

When the representatives elected by the people do something objectionable to the Left, the contortions of logic and self-serving rhetoric that result are amazing.

Ted Gomulka, Jr.
Livonia

■ Problem unsolved

On the morning of Dec. 9 the temperature was 8 degrees. I had received a call from a person, Cynthia, 56 and disabled, who resides at Detroit Baptist Manor in Farmington Hills, an assisted living residence. She had filled her car with gas at a local gas station and after paying for the gas the motor would not turn over to start it. She asked me to help her.

I drove to the gas station where the man on duty gave her car a jump start free of charge. I followed her to a repair shop/parts store near Grand River and Eight Mile in Farmington Hills where her car was still under warranty for repair of the same problem. I went to the service counter with her and both the counter service attendant and the service manager vehemently insisted the repair they had performed was not covered under the warranty because the bill they had given her for the repair did not have written on it that they had charged her for diagnosing the problem prior to repairing it.

She had said to have a new starter installed and a new battery connector terminal on her previous visit.

When Cynthia had taken her car there originally she did not know the source of the problem; they just made the repair and she paid the bill.

This time they insisted she pay a \$70 electrical diagnosis fee.

Finally the service manager said he would forego the diagnosis fee this time, but still charge for any repair or parts.

They were unable to diagnose the problem and Cynthia is right back where she started, the same problem and no warranty, less the amount she paid from her Social Security disability check to have her car fixed at this facility in the first place.

Kenneth Kemp
Farmington Hills

■ A big cable quiz

In reference to the signing of the cable agreement: I hope that community access will come out all right. We have been stagnant for years, little growth — so I am not optimistic. SWOCC promises a meeting "soon" to give us the details (those they want us to hear).

Access advocates should be there and ask and have answered, many questions!

Questions like: How will SWOCC promote the growth of access over the next 15 years?

When will Farmington Hills repay SWOCC the access funds (\$18,000-plus) used to purchase their Government Channel's broadcast camcorder?

What plans does SWOCC have to staff up to levels that can replace the lost Time Warner access staff?

When exactly will Time Warner's studio close?

Will the Research Drive/government access studio be available for community access during any transition while

space is found for a larger facility?

Why haven't we heard from cable access committees elsewhere who represent their cities with regard to how they will promote/stand up for community access? Why must they remain silent?

These and many other questions are begging to be asked and answered.

Community access is a rare forum that, when used effectively, can inform residents of many more issues than newspapers, radio or broadcast TV.

As Mr. Benish illustrated at the recent council meeting, turn to your blank screens. That's community access without the support of users, council, committees and residents.

Mark Adler, Tri-City Producers
Alliance, Novi

■ Trade barriers

It is so easy to attack foreigners for political advantage; it seems almost patriotic. They do not vote and have no lobby in our country. Unions push for immigration barriers to preserve high-paying jobs without commensurate skills. Corporate managers demand skills to eliminate competition and loss of markets to more efficient producers. However, consumers are victims when imports are stopped. Union wages, profits and prices rise, but quality and variety fall.

Why not buy an import if it has value? Poor countries need jobs, and their workers create markets for our goods. Boycotting products made at low wages removes all wages. Is starvation humanitarian?

When the balance of trade favors foreigners, they have dollars to purchase our goods. If America continually sells more than it buys, bankrupt countries cannot pay unless we loan them the funds.

The IMF (International Monetary Fund) gives away billions to produce nothing; those dollars go to politicians, not paychecks. Let's not make the world depend on our welfare. There is no such thing as a good trade barrier.

Hank Borgman,
Farmington

Share your opinions

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

Mail:

Letters to the Editor

Farmington Observer

33411 Grand River

Farmington, MI 48335

E-Mail:

jmaliszewski@oe.hometowncomm.net

Fax:

248-477-5450

HomeTown
COMMUNICATIONS
NETWORK

GUEST OPINION

Fire did not end their dream

By ANNA STEFOS
SPECIAL WRITER

Some dreams never die. Some even expand out of desperation or sheer persistence. Whatever the reasons, it is sheer satisfaction when your dreams are realized.

Ten years ago Thanksgiving week, a tragedy happened to someone who worked so hard to realize his American dream! He traveled across oceans and came to a foreign land he loved. It didn't matter that he did not understand the language. He knew that he too, with hard work, could achieve the dreams of his childhood.

One of four children raised fatherless in war-ravaged Greece, hunger and poverty were all he knew. At night he would dream about traveling to the country where his father sought a better life for himself and his family.

The family lost touch with the father who sought work in America. They thought the father was dead; and the father didn't know what happened to his family! The Red Cross could only do so much to reunite the family since there were so many similar cases.

The father later recalled that he would listen to the old music he had enjoyed with his family in Greece, crying over the memories and of not knowing whether his kids or wife were even alive.

Years passed, and the boy grew up and had a family of his own. Then one day the Red Cross contacted his mother to say his father was alive.

Father and son reunited in 1970 in America, the land of opportunity regardless of one's color, nationality, gender or social class. Joined in America by his wife and two children, the son spent the first few months pinching himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming.

For years he worked hard to support his wife and two children. He saved every nickel he could looking toward the day he could open up his own business. As a child, he dreamed of coming to America and building new homes, fixing old homes and making them beautiful. He knew his calling!

In 1977 it happened. He bought his own home improvement business. Suburban Aluminum and Glass was a small home improvement and glass shop for sale. He stumbled upon it while shopping for siding. He did home improvements for people, as a second job, to pay for his daughter's college education.

The shop wasn't much. A little shack of a place at the northwest corner of Eight Mile and Inkster, in Farmington Hills, but he knew he could make a go of it.

His vision was to have an attractive place of business that reflected his open, friendly and honest nature, a place where the customer was treated like family, a place where the customer would come in for a cup of coffee and a smile. His motto — no sales pressure, no overselling, no shoddy jobs.

His kids worked in the business after school and on weekends. They learned the business.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DASHLEIGH
Loyalty: Anna Stefos and Tony Chrysogelias.

Dad wanted to make a good living but by overcharging his customers, but by offering good value for the customers' dollars.

His excellent reputation caused the business to grow at a rate that he never imagined.

Dad didn't do formal advertising. He believed word-of-mouth was all the advertising he needed.

"My good work is advertising," he always said with his charming accent. A hands-on person, he personally inspected every job. He paid attention to details and followed-up with every customer personally until the customer was absolutely happy.

He always said that if you do every job with the same kind of care you would take in your own home, you will be successful. He strove to provide complete and total customer satisfaction. Anything else was regarded as a personal failure.

The business was thriving, but then disaster struck. In 1989, his place burned down because an employee was playing with matches upstairs. What's worse is that Dad had let his insurance lapse that month while looking for another insurance company. The fire destroyed everything. He was financially wiped out in less than one hour.

Dad stood, white as a ghost, watching his dream reduced to ashes. "I will rebuild," he whispered. "I will rebuild."

For the next 10 years, the family was actively involved with the Home Improvement business, even though they worked other jobs. Every so often, Dad would declare that he would buy a building and name his company Phoenix, after the mythical bird that rose from the ashes.

It all hurt so much that they avoided passing by the old location. They didn't want to see the empty space, where their company used to stand, covered with weeds. But one day, his daughter passed by his old place by accident. She found for sale, less than 30 yards from the old place and on the same side of the road.

In the summer of 1999, Suburban Construction and Glass Works Co. opened its doors with the same people and same philosophy.

Suburban Construction and Glass Works Co. is at 27454 W. Eight Mile Road in Farmington Hills and has about 20 down full-time employees. Call (248) 428-6820 for more information. Anna Stefos lives in Farmington Hills; her father, Tony Chrysogelias, lives in Livonia.