

Carrier of the month



Joel Knight

Joel Knight has been named February's Carrier of the Month for the Farmington Observer. He is the son of Bill and Marjorie Knight.

A student at Power Middle School, Joel's favorite subjects are social studies, science and French. He enjoys playing sports, reading and playing with his dog.

Joel won the geography bee at his school two years in a row and made it to the top 100 in last year's state competition. He plans to go to Yale and study law after high school.

Earning money in his own neighborhood and interacting with people is what Joel likes the most about his route.

The following incidents were reported during the past week to the Farmington Hills Police Department:

EMBEZZLEMENT

The owner of Grand Sakwa Properties on Northwestern Highway, along with his chief financial officer and another employee, told police they suspect a recently fired employee has embezzled more than \$144,000 from the owner's personal checking account since Dec. 20, 1999.

The duties of the employee, who worked for Grand Sakwa from 1993 through March 1, included preparing checks for the owner to sign and balancing the checkbook periodically. The discrepancies in the checking account were only discovered

after the woman was fired for an unrelated reason. The owner believes the woman was somehow writing checks that she could cash herself.

He told police the woman was recently divorced and has a great interest in on-line stock trading.

The owner of Mr. Pita on Orchard Lake Road told police he suspects a 22-year-old male employee has been stealing money by selling food to customers but not ringing up a sale.

The manager said a review of videotape from the restaurant's security camera showed the suspect stealing money 13 times on Feb. 24. The manager, who is still reviewing videotapes, believes the suspect has stolen more than \$1,000 in all. He told police the suspect signed a state-

POLICE CALLS

ment agreeing that he stole money from Jan. 27 through Feb. 25.

BOMB SCARE

Longacre Elementary School Principal Bill Smith called Farmington Hills police Monday, March 5, after a teacher told him a first-grader wrote in his journal that his father showed him how to make a bomb. The reporting officer requested follow-up by detectives.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A 45-year-old Farmington Hills woman told police her 37-year-old husband imprisoned her in their home 9-11:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 6, after she refused to co-sign a boat loan.

The woman said her husband told her "he is not old like her and wants to have fun while he's

young," according to the police report.

She said he took her car keys and garage door opener and wouldn't let her make a phone call or leave the house. She said he physically restrained her several times and pinned her to the floor. Much of the struggle occurred in the presence of their 2-year-old son. She managed to leave the house after agreeing to sign the boat loan. She then dropped her son off at a day care center and went to the police department to make a report.

Police found bruises on her forearms and blood on the inside corner of her right eye. Her husband, who came to the police station after she did, had bite marks on his arm, which were consistent with his wife's story. Police arrested the husband

for domestic assault.

BREAK-IN

The 34-year-old resident of a house in the 22000 block of Inkster told police his wife returned home from work Tuesday, March 6, to find a Sears air compressor missing from the garage. Police found no sign of forced entry, but the garage door was ajar. Nothing else was reported missing.

A 27-year-old resident of Country Glen condos on 14 Mile Road reported Tuesday, March 6, that a computer worth \$1,500, a VCR worth \$100 and \$45-\$50 in coins and currency were missing from her home when she got home from work.

Police found no sign of forced entry. The owner said she lost her keys a month ago.

Despite burns, Survivor cast member aids Brother Rice

By KEN JANNETTE

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Although severe burns forced him out of the competition on TV's *Survivor*, White Lake resident Mike Skupin is using his notoriety from the wildly popular show to help Birmingham Brother Rice High School promote its annual fund-raising auction.

Standing in sub-freezing temperatures Wednesday in front of the school he once attended — a stark contrast to the balmy Australian outback where he gained attention as a *Survivor* cast member — Skupin showed off a new Jeep, one of the grand prizes in the two-day Brother Rice raffle and auction.

Skupin also showed off his slightly red but otherwise healed hands and chin, which he burned in a campfire accident on *Survivor*. Fans of the series watched the March 1 episode in horror as Skupin fell into a fire after swooning from smoke inhalation.

The third-degree burns he suffered on his hands and face necessitated an airlift to an Australian hospital and required him to forfeit his participation in the competition.

"People are still afraid to



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMEYER

Helping hands: North Farmington High alum Mike Skupin talks about his experiences on CBS' hit reality-television series "Survivor." Skupin has volunteered to help raise funds for another school he attended, Birmingham Brother Rice.

shake my hand," Skupin said. Ironically, Skupin couldn't "survive" at Brother Rice. With his boisterous personality and a reputation for outlandish behavior

and practical jokes, Skupin was expelled from the all-boys Catholic high school during his junior year.

"I was a prankster. I wasn't

into drugs, alcohol, or vandalism, just a lot of casual pranks. No one ever asked who did it, it was always 'Skupin - detention,'" he said.

Ultimately, Skupin graduated from North Farmington High School, after a brief stint at Orchard Lake St. Mary's, but loyalty to Brother Rice prompted his participation in the auction.

"My memories of high school are all right here," Skupin said, gesturing toward the Brother Rice building behind him.

The school's annual auction is a major source of funding, and school officials believe Skupin's notoriety is a great way to generate a buzz about the event, scheduled for March 16-17.

Survivor pits teams of otherwise ordinary people from all walks of life, picked by the show's producers, in competition to survive in wilderness conditions. Cast members participate in a series of votes to eliminate each other from the show, until one winner is left. The grand prize is \$1 million.

The show piqued local interest when Skupin, a computer software publisher, and noted metro area chef Keith Farnie of West Bloomfield were chosen to compete in the show's second series, which debuted after pro football's Super Bowl on Jan. 28.

Farnie, formerly a resident of Farmington Hills, is still in the running for the \$1 million prize.

East student wins 2nd National Geography Bee

For the second year in a row, East Middle School eighth grader Jaclyn Sanders of Farmington Hills has qualified to be one of the state finalists in the National Geographic Bee.

Only 100 students from the entire state qualified.

Jaclyn's selection was based on her winning the school-wide competition and then by achieving a very high score on the National Geographic Society's qualifying exam.

She will be competing in the state final competition on April 6 at Central Michigan University to determine who will represent Michigan in the National Geographic Bee competition to be held in Washington, D.C., on May 22 and 23.

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