

## THE WEEK AHEAD

**Hills Council:** Police Chief Bill Dwyer will present his department's annual report in written and video formats during the council's regular meeting, which begins at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, April 23, at City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Roads. On the regular agenda is a public hearing on the costs of a Special Assessment District in the Old Homestead subdivision. At a study session held prior to the meeting, State Rep. Andrew Raczkowski will provide a legislative update. The meetings are open to the public.

## WEDNESDAY

**Volunteer recognition:** The Farmington Hills Police Department will pay tribute to its many volunteers at a luncheon held today in Council Chambers at City Hall. The FHPD volunteer of the year is Stan Leeman, who has worked with handicapped parking enforcement and in the clerical department. He has logged more than 2,000 hours of service.

## SATURDAY

**Spring Sale:** Sign up now for the spring clean-up sale being held Saturday, April 28, at Heritage Park Day Camp Building. For more information, call the recreation division at 473-9570.

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## Udder disaster



**Vandals strike:** Silver Dairy workers hold all that remains of the dairy's signature cow. The head was salvaged from an earlier act of vandalism.

## Rustlers steal legen-dairy cow

By SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oe.hometown.net

The owner of Silver Dairy, a landmark on Grand River Avenue in Farmington, is offering a free ice cream cone to anyone who has information about the destruction and theft of his signature cow statue.

The three-foot-high, novelty statue was a fixture at the front of the store and attracted young and old alike. "We moved it to the side of the building last October after someone knocked its head and legs off," said Robert Ahn, the owner.

It took four people to herd the approximately 600-pound torso,

which was too heavy to place inside the Dumpster, Ahn said.

That's why Ahn was so surprised at the effort it must have taken to steal the torso from the dairy location and move it to where it was found — a Farmington residential street — on April 14.

Please see COW, A6

## Laptop thieves strike

**Farmington Hills police are hot on the trail of another series of laptop thefts, and they're offering a \$2,000 reward.**

By TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.hometown.net

It's a crime sequel that Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer wants to stop as soon as possible.

Thursday afternoon, Dwyer said a \$2,000 reward is being offered to anyone who can provide information on office buildings along Northwestern Highway and Orchard Lake Road.

Electronic equipment such as laptop computers and Palm Pilots are being targeted. So far, 11 businesses have been broken into on four separate dates over the past six weeks.

According to a press release from the Hills police department, entry into the building is gained by breaking window or door glass; once inside, the burglar then gets into as many adjacent office suites as possible.

Computer records may be stolen to enable identity theft, where a criminal assumes someone else's identity to commit other crimes.

"Flies will go up to put (businesses) on alert about this," Dwyer said. "We prefer not to wait on these things until you have too many. It's important to put something out and put up a reward. That's what helps us solve crimes."

The latest incident was during the early morning hours Thursday. Numerous laptop and Palm Pilot com-

Please see THEFTS, A4

## Batch plant denied

By TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.hometown.net

When all was said and done Thursday night, Farmington Hills planning commissioners decided Mercey High School property just wasn't the right place for a company to erect a temporary cement batch plant for its Orchard Lake Road reconstruction project.

"The key point is this is not a good site," said planning commissioner David Haron to proponent Robert Liddell of the Tony Angelo Cement Construction company.

Concurring was planning commissioner Paul Blizman. "This is not the most reasonable location."

The company wanted to put up the cement batch plant on the northern edge of Mercey property, south of I-696 and east of Middlebelt Road. Liddell explained to the commission that the location was the best it could find. The plant would have been used to mix

cement; from there it would be transported to Orchard Lake Road. Reconstruction between I-696 south and 10 Mile Road is scheduled this summer.

The plant would have been used about six weeks, three weeks both in June and September, when cement pours on the targeted stretch of Orchard Lake are expected to be completed.

But there were issues; among them, pedestrian and motorists' safety, potential traffic bottlenecks, noise, the likelihood of flying cement dust and crumbling feeder roads under the weight of cement-hauling convoys.

### Denied

The commission unanimously voted to deny the company's request for a Special Purpose District, after neighboring residents spoke out against a plan they thought could lead to a public nuisance.

In order for such a use to be permitted, the commission would have to

Please see BATCH, A4

## Farmington begins work on annual budget

By SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oe.hometown.net

Farmington residents can expect no proposed tax increase now, but next year could prove different, according to City Manager Frank Lauhoff.

"There's a lot of uncertainty with state-shared revenues," Lauhoff said. "We are cautious about next year."

Comprising 18-20 percent of the general fund revenues, these funds are typically returned to the city from state tax collections. The recently changed formula tends to favor townships, which have larger growth rather than older, established cities, he said.

The amount of these revenues was cut this year, necessitating some belt tightening. In the current fiscal year, Lauhoff estimates that expenditures will exceed revenues by about \$68,696, which will come from the fund balance.

**'There's a lot of uncertainty with state-shared revenues. We are cautious about next year.'**

Frank Lauhoff  
—Farmington City Manager

"This is a direct result of the reduction in state-shared revenues," he said. Lauhoff's presentation of the 2001-2002 summary budget to council members Monday initiates the city's annual budget talks. A 5 p.m. April 30 budget study session is scheduled at Farmington City Hall and is open to the public.

"All city services and operations are continued at current levels," Lauhoff said.

Please see BUDGET, A2

## A husband's plea for justice

### Bloom sentenced to life for sister's murder

By JONI HUBBARD  
STAFF WRITER  
jhubbard@oe.hometown.net

Harve Diener has spent the past 15 months thinking about what it meant to lose his wife, Susie.



Susan Diener

She died at the hands of her brother, Harold Bloom, who was convicted of first-degree murder last month. Bloom stabbed his sister 11 times with a knife he wiped clean and replaced in its sheath before calling his father and Farmington police, said Diener, who sat through all six days of the trial.

Before Bloom's sentencing hearing this week, Diener read a three-page statement in words that seemed to barely contain his grief and anger. He described a woman whose one motivation in life was to bring joy to others, who volunteered at Children's Hospital in Detroit and lovingly prepared Thanksgiving dinners for her family.

"Since the afternoon of Dec. 27, 1999, my entire life and world has been turned upside down with hate, anger, sadness, disbelief and a huge sense of loss," he said. "I lost my family when Susie was brutally murdered by her brother, Harold."

The community lost "a loving and giving person," he added. Folks at the Gale Group in Farmington Hills, where Susie worked, thought so much of her they planted a tree in her honor

the spring after she died.

Diener concluded with words that cried out for retribution and justice, beginning with the wish that Bloom will spend the rest of his life in prison, without the possibility of parole. But even that wouldn't be enough, Harve said.

"My next wish is that once Harold gets to prison ... another prisoner pulls out a knife with a five-inch blade and stabs Harold for one minute and a half, 11 times, and that they leave him to bleed and die on the floor in a pool of blood just as he did to my wife, his sister."

While Diener and prosecuting attorney Marc Barron are pleased with the verdict and the sentence, which Barron said was justified based on the jury verdict, Bloom's defense attorney Jose Faneago, said he intends to file an appeal designed to get his client either a new trial or the mental health treatment he believes is appropriate, given Bloom's history of mental illness.

"I brought a motion asking the judge

Please see BLOOM, A6

## Armenians recall genocide

By SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oe.hometown.net

"Who today remembers the Armenians?"

Adolph Hitler's chilling statement regarding the Armenian Genocide is repeatedly quoted by historians who portray Hitler's indifference to the first genocide of that century.

Others refuse to forget the 1.5 million people — many women and children — who lost their lives from 1915-1923.

Farmington-area officials and residents will join the estimated 1,000 people planning to attend the Detroit United Committee for the Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide: 86 Years of Denial & Injustice from 2-3:30 p.m. Sunday at St. John's Arme-

Please see GENOCIDE, A6