

# the farmington enterprise & observer

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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Today's  
hot line

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Who's in

## Winery Future?

What is going to happen to the old brick landmark on Grand River? Some background on the winery and hope for the future are offered in McCosh's column.

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## Scholarship

The Farmington Musicales has awarded cash scholarships to 20 young musicians and honorable mention to six more. We have names of our winners in our Amusements section.

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## Predictions

Jeanne Dixon made some -- and didn't make others -- when she was a Farmington town hall guest. Read what she said in Observing Life.

Page 1C

## Untold Story

History is still being written. An Orchard Ridge campus English teacher is using a sabbatical leave to collect the "sad, fragile" stories of Armenians who were almost wiped out by the Turks in World War I. Corinne Abatt reports the touching story.

Page 8C

## Commencements

Three Observerland colleges will hold simultaneous commencements Sunday. Oakland Community College will hear the governor. Schoolcraft will hear a congresswoman, and Madonna will hear a congressman.

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## Four Singers

In a change of pace, but not of mood, the Clarenceville Entertainment Series is presenting four singers as its next attraction. Lovers of the big bands, brought in by the series, will want to hear this group too.

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# What Would Lure A Working Cowboy From Rodeo Circuit?

By KATHY MORAN

The smell of sawdust brings visions of cowboys, and rodeos to a small boy's mind.

Thomas Decker of Farmington knows all about that, as well as the excitement of roping a steer or the challenge of riding a wild horse.

He's done it all. A professional cowboy until 1965, Decker experienced the "rough living, cheap whiskey, on-the-road" life that most boys just dream.

Now, at age 32, he has hung up his cowboy hat, chaps and lasso and let his grip slip from the reins to a paint brush--but he's a cowboy at heart and always will be.

At age 13, when most boys are soaking in cowboy movies and idolizing John Wayne, Decker left home with his 15-year-old brother to follow the nomadic trail of cowboys and rodeos.

He hung around rodeos, savoring every chance to get on a horse or rope a cow. In the course of 15 years, he became a professional, winning about every title he could.

Why did he do it? "I had a tremendous desire," Decker said. "And I never got tired of it. After they were done riding, many cowboys would leave, but I always stayed until the rodeo was over."

It wasn't Roy Rogers or Gene Autry or even John Wayne who inspired him to hit the trail.

It was a wild west show that he saw as a youngster with his family in Toledo.

"My brother and I just always knew we were going to try it after that show," he said. "I don't think my parents ever believed us."

His parents weren't pleased with their decision, but Decker says he'd do it all over again with just one exception.

"I was just too young," he said. "I was too little too weak and too frail. I should have waited until I was 16."

Following ads in cowboy magazines, Decker bounced from town to town and state to state, participating in whichever rodeos appealed to him.

"I've been in rodeos from South Dakota to Texas, from Florida to Maine and about every place in between," he said.

He favored riding bulls and bareback riding and figures that he rode 1,500 head of stock before leaving the saddle.

Knowing that "the only way to learn is to get on a lot of them," he rode every chance--and at \$5 a ride he often made more money than he could spend.

"It's such a challenge to ride a bucking horse," he said with a sparkle in his eye.

Along the trail he won the bareback riding championship from the Midwest Cowboy Assn. in 1958, 1959 and 1963 and was all around champion in 1963.

The falls and injuries are part of the sport but Decker figures he was "pretty lucky as far as getting hurt." A broken arm was his worst injury and a broken ankle was second.

The old saying that "the show must go on" applies to wounded cowboys too.

"You have to be able to perform no matter how you're hurt," he said.

"I got to do a lot of living when I was young," he added.

After he and his wife, Judy, had four children, and he was at the top of his career, Decker decided that being a cowboy wasn't the best way to insure a living for his wife and family.

Continued on Page 3A



BAREBACK RIDING was Thomas Decker's specialty, and at 21 in 1958 he already had seven years experience. He went on to win about every

title he could and then retired and came to Farmington as a painter.

# Memorial Parade Plans Outline Biggest Yet

Farmington's Memorial Day Parade committee has seven trophies waiting to be presented to winners in the colorful annual affair.

The May 28 parade, one of Michigan's largest, is entirely sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion with financial help only in the form of voluntary donations.

Guest of honor this year

will be Brig. Gen. James H. Berge Jr., assistant deputy chief of staff for air at Marine Corps Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

A 30-year Marine Corps veteran, he served as a naval aviator in Korea and Vietnam. He has received nine air medals, a bronze star, two legion of merit awards and the distinguished flying cross. He also earned a Republic of Vietnam Armed

Forces meritorious unit citation.

Highlights, of course, are the imaginative floats and talented performers. The Elks Club, which has been acclaimed in the past in the motorized unit category competition, will perform again.

Trophy winning categories will be best high school band, best junior high school band, service man of the year, best float, best decorated bicycle, best equestrian group, and

best motorized unit which includes motorcycles, minibikes, antique autos and the like.

It is unnecessary to be either a veteran or a Farmington resident to win a trophy. Guests of honor will be judges.

Those wishing to donate should contact Robert L. Smith, committee treasurer, 21109 Laurelford, Farmington.

# Road Paving Listing Shows Top Priorities

Independence, Gill, 11 Mile Road and Tuck are the top priority roads for paving in Farmington Township, according to a list released by the planning commission.

The planners established three priority groups for planned road improvements, but did not approach the touchy subject of local streets.

"We do believe the complexity and magnitude of the problem (local streets) should be a study in itself," said Douglas Mann, planning commission chairman.

The list in an attempt by the township to reorient the Oakland County Road commission's local priorities, according to Supervisor Robert McConnell.

McConnell asked for the local study in January. Edgar Raedle, Stella Strye and Tom Zoedens were appointed by the commission to make the study.

"If the charter is approved May 8, I would expect these recommendations will become the guidelines of the new council for road improvements," McConnell added.

The first priority group is: Independence, from Middle Belt to Colwell; Gill Road, from Eight Mile to Nine Mile; 11 Mile from Powers to Farmington; and Tuck from Eight Mile to Folsom.

The second priority group is: Drake from 11 Mile to 14 Mile; Nine Mile from Gill to Halstead; Folsom from east of Farmington to Tuck; and Lytle from Drake to Gill.

The third priority group is: Halstead from Eight Mile to north of Nine Mile; 13 Mile from Haggerty to Drake; and 11 Mile from Halstead to Drake.

Roads left off the list included: 14 Mile from Middle Belt to Inkster; Tuck from Grand River to Shiawassee and Howard from Drake to Haggerty.

The first group was named because the streets were major collectors, a police route (11 Mile), or because of schools (Gill).

The second priority, particularly Drake and Nine Mile, were picked "more from a planning viewpoint to open these sections."

Folsom and Lytle were named as collectors.

"Third priority streets were also named because of 'planning considerations.'"

Tuck was also named as needing improvements, Howard was to be considered with local streets, and 14 Mile was left off the list because it is a boundary road.

Boundary roads were also to be considered as a special item, according to the report.

The truck driver, James Pastlewait, of Pennsylvania, was uninjured, although the truck overturned on impact.

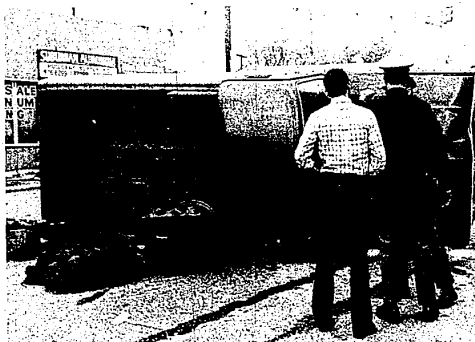
It was the fourth fatal traffic injury this year in Farmington Township.

Mrs. Murray was alone in the car when, according to

witnesses, she went through the red light at the intersection. Her car was struck broadside by a pickup truck loaded with steel according to township police reports.

The truck driver, James Pastlewait, of Pennsylvania, was uninjured, although the truck overturned on impact.

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FATAL CRASH -- Celia Murray, 71, Detroit, died several hours after her car was hit by a pickup truck at Eight Mile and Inkster. (Photos by Ralph Evert)



# Woman Killed In Car Crash

Celia M. Murray, 71, Detroit, died in Botford Hospital of injuries suffered in a collision Monday afternoon at Eight Mile and Inkster.

Mrs. Murray was alone in the car when, according to

witnesses, she went through the red light at the intersection. Her car was struck broadside by a pickup truck loaded with steel according to township police reports.

The truck driver, James Pastlewait, of Pennsylvania, was uninjured, although the truck overturned on impact.