

# Earns Diploma In Wheelchair

By JAN WILLIAMS

## FARMINGTON

Getting a high school diploma was a long, hard struggle for 21-year-old Mike McConatha.

A car accident left McConatha a quadriplegic (no use of any limbs) at the beginning of his senior year at Redford High School in Detroit.

Two months after his accident, McConatha started taking courses at the Rehabilitation Center in Detroit in an effort to earn his diploma. He learned to write with an adapter.

In February, 1971, he was transferred to the Oak Hill Nursing Home in Farmington. At the home he was tutored by teachers from Farmington High School.

After taking the eight hour GED (general educational development) test, McConatha qualified for a high school diploma. He scored above average on the test which is evaluated at the high school senior level. After the age of 18 the test is required in order to get a diploma.

Dr. Edwin Blumberg, owner of the Oak Hill Nursing Home, presented the diploma to McConatha last week at a pizza party for physically handicapped members of "living opportunities".

"For awhile I never thought I would make it," McConatha said. "It's like tearing down a wall. After working at it so long, it gives me a great feeling of achievement."

Mrs. Jean Isles, a nurse at the home who has worked closely with McConatha, says it took two years to talk him into this and she hopes he won't stop now.

McConatha has plans to enter Oakland Community College and will major in history or public relations.

"I'm not sure yet what I'll go into, but I like working with people."

McConatha says without the help and encouragement of people like Mrs. Isles, he would've never made it.

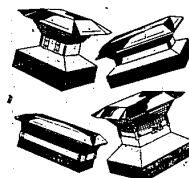
"It gave me confidence knowing someone really cares."

McConatha is the son of Mrs. George Dougherty of Detroit.



A DIPLOMA after three years of study, means a lot, particularly when you are confined to a wheelchair. Dr. Edwin Blumberg (right) presented the GED certificate to Michael McConatha. (Evert photo)

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## Calendar

## CLASSIC FILM

Thursday, July 19, at 7 p.m., "The Gold Rush," starring Charlie Chaplin, will be shown in the auditorium at the Farmington Public Library, 32737 W. 12 Mile Road. Admission is free.

## FARMINGTON AREA NATURALISTS

Monday, July 23, at 8 p.m., the Farmington Area Naturalists will meet at the Farmington Community Center. Dr. Robert Douglas will speak on the Florida Everglades. A short business meeting will follow and slides of interest will be shown by members.

## SENIOR CITIZENS SOCIAL CLUB

Friday, July 27, at noon, the Senior Citizens Social Club of Farmington will meet at the First United Methodist Church, Grand River and Warner. Those attending should bring a sandwich. Cards and games will follow the business meeting.

## FARMINGTON GARDEN CLUB

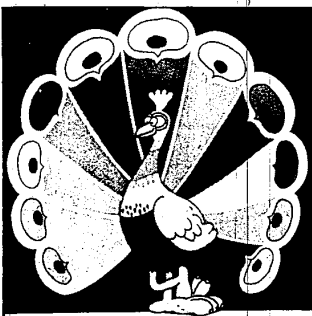
Monday, Aug. 6, at noon, the Farmington Garden Club will hold its monthly meeting at the Farmington Community Center. Slides of local field flowers will be shown by Mrs. Richard Frankel.

## DROP IN CENTER

Every Monday and Wednesday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., cards are played in the Farmington drop-in center, at the Masonic Temple, Farmington and Grand River. Bring a sandwich; coffee is served.

## SORROWS SENIOR CITIZENS

Thursdays - First and third Thursdays, the senior citizens from the Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic parish meet at the church. Mass is at 11:30 a.m. and lunch is at noon. Bring lunch, but coffee and dessert is provided. The group is seeking members from any parish, not just Sorrows.



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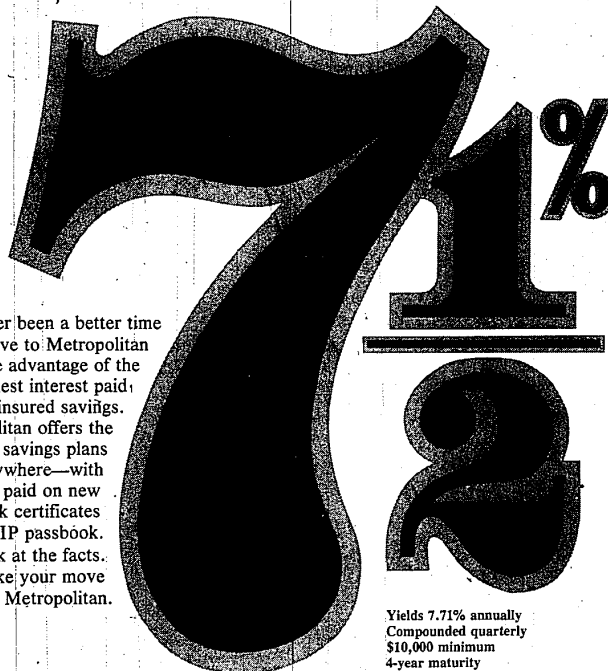
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