



Mercy Center may lose its tax exempt status, because it has been renting facilities. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Mercy Center may lose tax exemption

By SUSAN AVERILL

Area youngsters who are in the Farmington YMCA swimming, tennis or belly-dancing programs may have to look elsewhere if a Farmington Hills ex-novitate loses its tax exemption.

No longer used as a training ground for aspiring Catholic nuns, because it has been receiving revenue from conversion business.

Sister Lois Wozniak, administrator of the center, said the Sisters of Mercy decided to open the center for

commercial business when declining numbers of girls in training to become nuns threatened to close the center's doors.

THE FARMINGTON YMCA, which has few facilities of its own, has been using the center's swimming pool and outdoor tennis courts for some of its classes.

Tax levies against the center would render its maintenance unfeasible and it might have to close, Sister Lois reportedly said.

Until recently, Farmington Hills tax

officials were not aware the center was receiving such revenues. They said they would consider revoking all or part of its tax exemption.

Brochures advertise the 18-year-old center's gymnasium, pool and tennis courts as well as its various conference rooms and overnight facilities.

The center has been plagued with problems since it opened in 1968. Originally intended as a training center for young nuns, Mercy Center was built with 200 sleeping rooms.

But it never lived up to its potential.

Styles in the education of the nuns changed, and the center was no longer needed as built. According to recent reports, there were never more than 25 women enrolled in the program at one time.

By 1973, with only 15 women in the program, it was clear something had to be done. The novitiates moved to St. Eugene Convent in Detroit and Mercy Center opened its doors to weddings, retreats and conventions to make ends meet.

Sister Lois estimated that about 25

per cent of the activity at the center is Catholic-oriented, 17 per cent Protestant and 25 per cent commercial.

THE GOALS OF the center's operation are to:

1. "Foster and maintain an environment of mercy for the Sisters of the Province."
2. "To provide Christian hospitality to all who come here."
3. "To be a center, where ecumenism may flourish."
4. "To foster continuous renewal of the Christian life."

5. "To provide the physical facility that assists those seeking to develop their skills and understanding and their service to others through professional meetings."

6. "To utilize the facility in an effort to become self supporting."

The last goal has never been achieved.

National headquarters for the Sisters of Mercy, the center boasts 17 conference rooms, a chapel, gardens, 200 single sleeping rooms, a swimming pool and gymnasium.



## Hills officer plays midwife for Farmington couple

FARMINGTON, HILLS—There's much more to police work than chasing criminals or trying to preserve law and order.

You can take the word of Officer Ray Cranston of the Farmington Hills Police Department for that.

There are times when you are called upon to do many unusual things—even delivering babies.

This happened to Cranston last week when he received an emergency call at 7:04 a.m. to attend Mrs. Diane

Vaughn as she was en route to the hospital.

Mrs. Vaughn and her husband had left their home at 22741 Colgate but traveled only a short distance when she started to deliver.

A hurried call was placed to the police department and Cranston, who is the first aid specialist, was assigned the call.

On arrival at the scene, he quickly cared for Mrs. Vaughn when she delivered a fine baby boy. Meanwhile the fire department had also

been summoned and helped in the unusual emergency.

Following the birth Mrs. Vaughn was taken to Botsford Hospital for examination and later moved to Oakwood Hospital. At last word mother and baby are doing fine.

This was not a new experience for Cranston, according to the records of the police department.

"He has had several other cases just like this one," the girl on the police desk chuckled. But Cranston just took it as part of a day's work.

## Last year's paving pact may no longer be binding

The Farmington school board's promise to pay part of the cost of a controversial paving project came before an unsuccessful millage attempt last year rather than the successful April 23 election, a trustee said Tuesday.

Farmington Hills recently asked the school district to pay 18 per cent of the cost of paving a stretch of Gill Road in front of Power Junior High and Gill Elementary. School officials said the Farmington district would pay part of the cost, originally estimated at \$60,000, if a millage increase passed.

However, the school board decided last week not to act on the request. Tuesday night, the four members present held a short discussion on the paving project and placed the item on the next meeting's agenda.

THE AGREEMENT to pay for part of the paving cost, one board member said Tuesday, came before the millage election last year rather than before the special election in April.

After the millage failed, Dr. Merwyn Ross said, Farmington Hills reversed the district of paying for the paving.

"It's a little unfair for us to be asked at this time to share in some

thing we were relieved of," Ross said.

He said he would vote against payment.

Mrs. Emma Mahinen, acting as board president in the absence of Gary Lichman, said she received a call from a Farmington resident who questioned if payment would be legal since the paving project is not a special improvement district.

The district's attorney in the past has said state law neither specifically permits nor prohibits such.

"That's not to suggest we have not done it in other ways at other times," the business manager said. Payments, business manager William Frisk said, Farmington School District's share of the cost would be more than \$20,000. Frisk said no final figures are available, but the best estimate is a total cost of \$260,000.

IN OTHER MATTERS, the board rejected the first attempt of a new board member to have an open rather than a closed study session.

Michael Stipiece asked that a closed session scheduled for 8:30 p.m. July 14 in the board room be opened to the public. The motion failed for lack of a second.

The meeting, trustee Ross said, is

scheduled for July 14 so the board can elect officers before the legally required date.

## Phillip Reda joins aviation fraternity

Phillip Reda of Farmington Hills was elected to Alpha Eta Rho, an international aviation fraternity at Parks College of Aeronautical Technology, St. Louis University, Cahokia, Ill.

He was also on the dean's list for the university's winter trimester.

Reda is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Don Reda, 21874 Ontaga.

## FHS to hold '65 reunion

The Farmington High School class of 1965 will hold its 10-year reunion 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 11 in Behan Hall, Southfield.

Class members interested in attending should make reservations with JoAnn Maki Adams, 1909 Deering, Livonia, or Mark Chasson, 2308 Orchard Lake, Farmington.