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Twenty Five Cents



Hotdogger

Jerry 'Sal' Salczynski, a cross-country ski enthusiast, enjoys the many winding trails and long downhill at the Kensington Metropark Gold Course ski area. For more pictures on cross-country skiing, see today's sports section. (Photo by Blain Rorai).

Crime stoppers 1975

Police solve murder cases

While the crime rate declined during the first half of 1975, Farmington area law enforcement agencies were kept busy this year with two of the biggest murder cases in the community's history.

The investigation, trial and conviction of George Onifer, who was charged with the brutal sex slaying of an 11-year-old Detroit girl, took center stage as one of the top news stories in 1975.

In another major incident, a 14-year-old Farmington Hills boy was convicted of second-degree murder in the slaying of a Hills' girl, 10-year-old Joan Wagner.

ONIFER WAS CONVICTED this summer in the March 19 kidnap, murder and rape of Kelly Curley. She had left her home March 14, reportedly to spend the night with a friend. But a missing person report was not filed with police until the next day when it was learned she had not attended school that day.

A neighbor later told police she saw a child get into a truck. It was the description of the truck and man that provided police with a lead in the case.

Kelly's body was found March 20 floating in a pond near Halsted Road between Twelve and Thirteen Mile roads by three men walking through the field.

In the other major murder case, the conviction of a Hills' teenager closed the book on a tragic incident which began June 10 when the Wagner girl was reported missing after not showing up for an afternoon baseball practice session.

She was stabbed to death and later found stuffed inside a plastic garbage bag in a yard between two houses in the Forest Park subdivision near Nine Mile and Inkster roads.

Through the quick investigative work of the Farmington Hills Police Department, with the help of other area law enforcement agencies, both cases were brought to a swift close.

Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson expressed these thoughts during the Onifer trial: "How many times will we have to be raped, robbed and murdered by the same hardcore criminals, over and over again before there is a change?"

Kelly's "senseless death" was the result of the "same stupid error" that has been made before, Patterson said while calling for serious parole reform.

Onifer had been paroled in 1972 from Southern Michigan Prison in Jackson for good behavior. He had been sentenced to serve a 30-to-50 year term for the rape of a Hamtramck girl in Warren. But he was released after serving four and one-half years of the sentence.

DURING THE YEAR, Farmington Hills was tagged a "dumping ground" for apparent murder victims. Several bodies were found in the area, each possibly killed elsewhere and "dumped" in Farmington Hills.

One man, James Henry Johnson of Detroit, was found July 23 in a grassy field near Fend and Drake roads. Through investigations by both police departments, this case was wrapped up. Alan McHenry of Detroit was

charged in the Johnson slaying.

Police also found the skeleton of Misses Harvey of Detroit in the high weeds on the side of the I-630 expressway. His body was reportedly dumped sometime in July but was not found until Nov. 2 by two girls riding horseback. This case and the other dumping cases are still under investigation by Hills' police.

In July, the City of Farmington experienced its worst month in history for crime as vandalism increased 62 per cent over 1974, according to Daniel Byrnes, who was appointed director of public safety this year.

Byrnes had reported to the city council the month before that crime had dropped 10 per cent in the Farmington area during the first six months of 1975. The biggest decrease came in bicycle thefts which were down 50 per cent. But he reported to the council in August that the crime rate rose considerably during the summer.

July was an extremely bad month for burglaries, larcenies and van-

dalism. Police said most of the crime was believed to have been committed by young people.

In response to complaints aired by the Farmington Hills subdivision concerning the spiraling rate of vandalism and youths crimes in their area, the city launched a study to how to combat crime in the city.

One major conclusion of the study was that more community cooperation is needed if crime is to be reduced in Farmington. The city also is hiring a new police academy graduate whose main concern will be patrolling subdivisions to help reduce juvenile crime.

Earlier this year, Hills police arrested six persons in a move aimed at breaking up a 20-member burglary ring. As a result of the arrests, police said they were able to clear up 74 burglaries, 31 in the Hills area and a number of other crimes committed in other communities, including 17 in the City of Farmington.

Hills Public Safety Director Ronald (Continued on Page 2A)

Old library becomes dental lab building

The vacant Farmington Library building on Twelve Mile Road is being bought by the Castle Dental Laboratory of Detroit. The firm will use the structure as a laboratory, said Gordon Lewis, library director.

Castle's bid for the building was accepted as the highest of 15 bids last summer. The firm will pay \$165,000 over a 10-year period for the building. The money will be used to defray the cost of the new \$225,000 Farmington Community Library on State Street.

ALTHOUGH THE attorney for Castle, Steve Gutman, described the transaction as almost completed, he declined to comment until the sale was officially finished.

The Farmington City Clerk's office said it wouldn't be necessary to change the area's business zoning for the laboratory.

The 400-square-foot building became inadequate to handle the circulation of more than 10,000 books a month. Lewis said the size of the old building made it impossible for the entire book collection to be placed on the shelves. Some of the books were put into storage.

The new 1,600-square-foot building was designed by the Farmington firm of Merritt, Cole and McCallum. The two levels of the new library contain meetings rooms, a history room and storage area.

THE CHILDREN'S reading room re-

sembles a tree house. The eight-sided structure, which is built on stilts with a rampway entrance, was designed by the Farmington-based firm of Wall, Art Inc.

The local historical society helped design the history room. The library is completing an oral history of the area as a bicentennial project.

The meeting rooms of the library are open to local groups.

Pedestrian killed by car

A Livonia man was killed at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 24, after he was struck by a car on Grand River, just west of 10 Mile in Farmington Hills. Eldon R. Foelt, 33, of 9333 142nd, was pronounced dead on arrival at Botsford General Hospital. According to police, witnesses said Foelt possibly was walking westbound in the roadway when he was hit by the car. Police identified the driver as Gary L. Brock, 23, of 23612 Ruston in Farmington.

Brock was taken to the Hills' police station for questioning and later was released. A summons wasn't issued and the case still is under investigation.

From behind some vantage points Christmas sales appeared slack

By CORINNE ADATT

Even a small sampling indicates that Christmas was better for some local merchants than others.

The Vintner manager, Philippe P. Pothoff, says in his store on Grand River in Farmington that people aren't drinking as much—at least from his vantage point behind the cash register.

"Our business was down this Christ-

mas from last year," he says. "People are buying less, but more expensive wine. For instance, the guy who last year bought a case of \$1 a bottle wine, bought two bottles of \$6 or \$7 wine this year. The only thing that is saving us is this new tax system on our merchandise."

POTHOFF MAKES no attempt to account for the tastes of his wine customers. He recalls the man who came

In recently, bought a \$30 bottle of wine and pulled the cork on it before he was out of the store. Another gentleman bought a \$70 bottle and pulled the cork on it as he sat parked in front of the store and shared it with his woman passenger.

"It's the same wine stores all over," he remarks. "They are all down this year over last—maybe people were buying gifts rather than booze."

Lucy and Al Vance, proprietors of the antique store in the Village Mall, Farmington, were surprised by their Christmas business.

"Our business was better than we really expected," Mrs. Vance says. "We sold everything from depression glass to bookcases. We got into estate jewelry this year for the first time and that went well, too. I think people are buying antiques as an investment and enjoying them at the same time."

She points to a gum ball machine, circa 1923, and comments, "I could have sold this gum ball machine a thousand times over the holidays, but it's mine and not for sale."

Bertha Cunningham, co-owner of Jerry's Bookstore in downtown Farmington with husband Jerry, says business wasn't quite as good this Christmas as in former years.

"Maybe," she says, "it's because there are so many more book stores around."

Ms. Cunningham says customers still come to browse through the large used book section, many picking out special ones for Christmas gifts.

"The older men still come in for adventure stories and the younger ones

for science fiction and mysteries."

According to Ms. Cunningham, the women flock to the Harlequin books, which are love stories set in foreign countries.

FARMINGTON'S newest art gallery, The Garrett, a co-op gallery started by a group of area painters, didn't set any holiday records.

Mrs. Dorothy Clark, one of the painters in the group, said four or five paintings were sold over the holidays. There were numbers of curious, but the city has yet to become an artist's paradise, she said.

"Fair" was the answer given by Michael Lamb of Viking Sporting Goods in downtown Farmington in assessing the store's Christmas rush.

"Not as good as last year," was another phrase Lamb used as he described the December business. Bowling equipment was in demand, as were warm-up suits for tennis and racquetball and transfers and shirts went well.

One thing surprising to Lamb was that the store had very few returns.

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Correction

"The spirit of giving really hasn't turned Christmas into tragedy."

A story in the Dec. 22 edition of the Farmington Observer & Eccentric entitled "Hills workers save a Christmas" incorrectly said a family's Christmas was turned to tragedy.

The lead should have read, "The spirit of giving help turned a tragedy into the best Christmas ever for Mrs. Mary Lou Evans and her family."

Employees for the City of Farmington Hills collected \$200 for the Evans' family after their home had been burglarized and Christmas gifts stolen. It was a joyous Christmas after all.

We regret the error and commend the Farmington Hills workers for their effort.



The Christmas book business was not as good as last year says Bertha Cunningham of

Jerry's Book Store. (Staff photo by Craig Nowman)

inside

1st Class Mail

From our letter bag:

Gentlemen: We recently placed a classified ad in your paper under the heading "Part Time Help Wanted" and the response we received was tremendous. We found someone to fill the position we had available. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Mike Harrison
Harrison Enterprises

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