

# Farmington Observer

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## Battle looms over emergency medical business

By Mary Rodriguez  
staff writer

A company which provides emergency medical service in Farmington says it's fighting for its life.

Novi Ambulance Inc. and its president, John Early, have been the target of recent controversy, culminating with a temporary license suspension and an ongoing probe into rates charged users.

Early claims local hospitals want to drive him out of business so that rival ambulance companies can take over.

One such competitor is Am-Care Inc. of Redford. The firm was saved from financial ruin last year by Medical Credit Associates. The major stockholders in Medical Credit Associates are doctors on staff of Botsford General Hospital, one of the primary hospi-

als serviced by Novi Ambulance Inc.

"It's a tremendous conflict of interest," Early charged. "They want me out of the system so that they'll be able to turn around and monopolize the whole area."

Am-Care provides service to Redford and Farmington Hills and backup service for Farmington users.

"The only benefit (for the doctors) is that they'll get their loan back," said Ed Barter, Botsford associate administrator.

"There is no ownership for their private benefit."

The loan was made because Am-Care on Beech Daly in Redford is the closest ambulance carrier to the hospital, on Grand River west of Inkster, Barter explained.

BARTER DENIED that the hospital

**'It's a tremendous conflict of interest. They want me out of the system so that they'll be able to turn around and monopolize the whole area.'**

—John Early

is part of any conspiracy to put Early out of business.

A few years ago, administrators from Providence Hospital in Southfield approached Botsford officials about working out a joint venture to buy Novi Ambulance Inc. Botsford declined.

The two hospitals were bumping heads over control of ambulance service, according to Barter.

"Since then, we have drawn up a philosophy, the most sensible way to route patients," he said.

But Early claims Providence administrators are still trying to buy him out. On June 28, Early says an emergency room physician at Providence threatened that public opinion would force him out if he refused to sell his business.

The most serious dilemma encountered by Early was temporary suspension of his license to operate advanced life support service, which was ordered by the Oakland County Council for Emergency Medical Service (OAK-EMS).

On June 25, Early says he was notified that his license was being suspended for operating an unlicensed vehicle. The vehicle in question was marked Alert — not Novi Ambulance. Early later proved that the ambulance was licensed with the Michigan Department of Public Health.

Early uses the Alert unit in Garden City, where Novi Ambulance provides carrier service to Garden City Hospital.

"WE DIDN'T want people in Garden City to think we were coming all the

way from Novi to provide ambulance service," Early said.

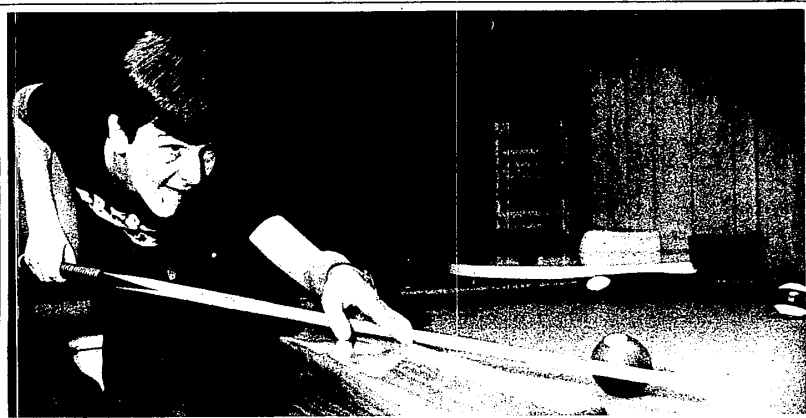
"The city administration asked if we could register another name in Garden City."

After Early's attorney, Allen Ingles, asked the Oakland County Circuit Court for an injunction, state public health officials verified that Novi Ambulance is also registered to use the names Farmington City and Alert under its corporate umbrella.

Concurrent with Early's licensure problems, a Detroit newspaper published a story quoting Novi Ambulance customers and Am-Care General Manager Gregory Beauchemin. The gist of the story was that Novi Ambulance levied excessive charges.

That spurred Novi City Manager Ed

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Francois Vaillant is enjoying his American stay with his hosts Leonard and Mary Lou White of Farmington Hills. The French student is one of 4,000 spending the summer in the United States.

## Come to the Hills

### French launch cultural invasion

By Brian Murphy  
staff writer

Francois Vaillant does not take American girls or hamburgers for granted.

The 16-year-old French foreign-exchange student has been the guest of Leonard and Mary Lou White of 23427 Chesterbrook, Farmington Hills, since July 7.

"I am surprised at American girls," Vaillant said. "All American girls are tall, but they are pretty."

Vaillant said he likes American blonde-haired girls, but added that there is no shortage of pretty girls, blondes included, in Brest, France, where he lives with his family.

Vaillant is one of more than 4,000 French students ranging in age from 13-18 who have come to stay with American families for a month as part of the North Atlantic Cultural Exchange League program, said Evelyn Prince, the NACEL's Michigan coordinator.

"United States is the favorite country for French people," Vaillant said, explaining why he participated in the program. "It's like a dream country. Everyone wants to come here."

VAILLANT ALSO has traveled to Bulgaria, Russia and England, but his dream came true when he came to America — he likes this country best.

"Russia and Bulgaria I didn't like," Vaillant said. "And the English peo-

ple..." he adds, shaking his head. "I didn't like them."

Americans are the most social breed of people the Frenchman says he has met.

"Here Americans receive more people into their homes," he added.

"People here are more hospitable," Vaillant said, struggling for the proper word.

It was one of the few times during the interview that the Frenchman, who has studied English for approximately four years, had to ask for help in choosing the right word. He rarely had trouble with questions, except those that were posed too quickly.

"It's a different thinking (mentality) here," he said. "In my country you don't have friends and relatives visit as much. It is more (immediate) family-oriented in France."

IN FRANCE, Vaillant lives in an apartment during the week with his parents, brother and the family cat. On the weekends the family stays with his grandmother in a large, slate-roofed home elsewhere in a Brest.

The principal source of revenue in Brest, a medium-sized town of 200,000, is commercial fishing. The city is located on the coast of Brittany, a peninsula jutting northeast into the tuna, mackerel- and sole-stocked waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

"Life is not very busy there," Vaillant said. "People are very fast moving here."

Vaillant characterized France's slower lifestyle by noting the lack of expressways through the heart of its larger cities.

"In French cities it is very concentrated, and there are no large roads," Vaillant said. "The expressway goes around the town."

Brest and other French cities are so crowded and concentrated, he said, that Detroit and the surrounding suburbs appear spacious to him.

"IN DETROIT, there are a lot of trees," he said. "Here all the gardens make one (large garden)," he added, gazing out the Whites' large sliding-glass patio door to their tree-laden, fence-free back yard.

"In my country everyone has a wall around his property," he said.

Brest, like Detroit, is teeming with cars, but its population is less dependent upon them than Detroiters are.

"I have a moped," Vaillant said. "There are many mopeds and motorcycles there."

"There are a lot of cars, too, but they are different. French cars are small, no-luxury," Vaillant said, with a little assistance from Steve White, his surrogate brother.

Mary Lou and Steve accompanied Vaillant during the interview, occasionally supplying the right word for the young Frenchman or looking up a French word in a French-English dictionary.

Vaillant said he fears many luxuries

that his native-born family enjoys will disappear with the recent coming to power of President Francois Mitterrand.

"FRANCE LIKES its liberty, but I don't know the future with four communists in the government," he said. "I hope it won't be like the USSR. Many people in France fear the communists."

The press is not hindered by government control in France, but the French press is very selective about whose letter they print, he said.

"If I write a letter to the newspaper, it won't get printed," Vaillant said, "but if it is an important person, someone know, it will."

Vaillant said he has enjoyed his stay, though he is already preoccupied with how he will manage the trip back to his home country.

The idea of the program is to exchange culture outside the classroom, Prince said.

Any Farmington-based family interested in the program should call Prince at 626-6641.

The Whites are one of 109 host families in Michigan that have participated in the NACEL program, Prince said. This is the second year the program, established in 1967 and encompassing 30 states, has been open to Michigan families.

Participants are not foreign-exchange students in the traditional sense because they do not attend classes in the host country.

## Delay urged in building new hospitals

State Rep. Sandy Brotherton (R-Farmington) has urged the Michigan Department of Public Health to delay action on \$140 million in hospital construction until a bed reduction plan for southeast Michigan is available.

Brotherton says that the two projects would create 700 new beds in an area that already has 1,037 excess beds, according to the department's own figures.

"It would be irresponsible and foolish to permit a major expenditure of millions of dollars before the bed reduction plan is completed. I strongly urge the department to wait until it knows exactly how this will affect existing hospitals before any decision is made," he said.

Brotherton explained that the Comprehensive Health Planning Council of Southeast Michigan (CHPC-SEM) voted Tuesday to grant certificates of need to the Samaritan and Detroit Macomb projects. However, ratification by the state's public health department is necessary before construction can begin.

"The tragedy of this situation is that some very fine hospitals will have to carry a greater burden of de-bedding if the Samaritan and Detroit Macomb projects are approved," he said.

"The careful planning that has gone

into developing a new hospital reduction plan — that is within weeks of completion — could go down the drain with a hasty and unsubstantiated decision to build two new hospitals now."

Two years ago, Brotherton called for a joint legislative committee to investigate hospital reduction because of a lack of support for the original bed reduction plan developed by CHPC-SEM.

"Since then, a group of 27 area hospital administrators and staff have worked long and hard to develop a plan aimed at reducing beds in an equitable manner. But because of computer error, the final figures are not available," he continued.

"We know we have to cut in excess of 1,000 beds, we just don't know how many beds in each individual hospital must go.

"I think proponents of the new hospital projects are attempting to short-circuit the process. Politically, unfortunately, has gotten in the way of good health planning.

"If the department acts on the Samaritan and Detroit Macomb projects now, the serious consequences on health care in southeast Michigan will be felt for years. The department will, in my opinion, have lost the public trust."

## Bar brawl spurs police probe

Redford Township police expect to seek warrants charging two persons in connection with an assault of a Redford resident early last week.

Police Detective Sgt. John Crete, investigating the case, said he has released two suspects, a 43-year-old Farmington man and a 24-year-old Detroit woman, pending further investigation. He said, however, he anticipates seeking warrants on both of them, charging the man with assault and battery and the woman with destruction of property.

Both are misdemeanor charges in violation of township ordinance.

Crete said he is attempting to contact a witness for questioning before he seeks the warrants.

THE VICTIM of the attack, Robert

Edward Patterson, 35, of Wakenden Street, suffered bruises about his face and swollen eyes and was treated at Redford Community Hospital. A hospital official said Patterson was treated and released.

Patterson told police that the male suspect insulted his friend while they were in Sargent's Bar, 26145 Grand River. As he left the bar shortly after 2 a.m. July 12, the suspects followed him out of the bar, and the woman beat and smashed the windshield of his friend's car, Patterson said.

He said he got out of his car to confront the woman, who wrestled him to the ground. Patterson said she held him on the ground while her male companion kicked him and beat him about the face with a belt buckle.

## Brodhead pans foreign car purchases

U.S. Rep. William Brodhead, D-Detroit, has taken the U.S. Defense Department to task for a purchasing plan which calls for buying 20,000 European-made cars over a five-year period.

Eurohead and Rep. Edw. Edwards, R-Ind., introduced an amendment to the defense authorization bill — pending before Congress — which would bar the department from buying foreign-made cars without express authorization of Congress.

The House approved the amendment last week.

The order would apply to vehicles to

be used by administrative personnel. The amendment would not apply to cars purchased in small numbers — or purchases under \$50,000 — or those purchased in Canada.

Brodhead said the amendment was introduced after it was learned that the Defense Department planned its entire European fleet of administrative vehicles (cars and non-combat trucks) to be cars and trucks made in Germany, Italy and Great Britain.

The replacement would take five years and cover 20,000 vehicles at a cost of nearly \$300 million. Brodhead

and Hillis protested the decision because of unemployment and losses in the U.S. auto industry.

"We believe that DOD's 'Buy Foreign' policy is not in our best interest and is inconsistent with the administration's laudable efforts to limit imports," said Brodhead and Hillis in a letter to members of the House of Representatives.

"This year unemployment in the U.S. auto industry will top 250,000, with the resulting fiscal burden on our state and federal unemployment, welfare and TRA programs. Unemployed auto

workers and their families have virtually no hope of finding jobs unless the auto industry turns around, yet they are being asked to stand by and watch as their future prospects for employment are handed over to foreign workers.

"This situation is particularly disturbing in that it conflicts with our national priorities. This administration, aware of the condition of the U.S. auto industry, recently negotiated a voluntary agreement with the Japanese to limit automotive exports to this country," they wrote.

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