

Farmington Observer

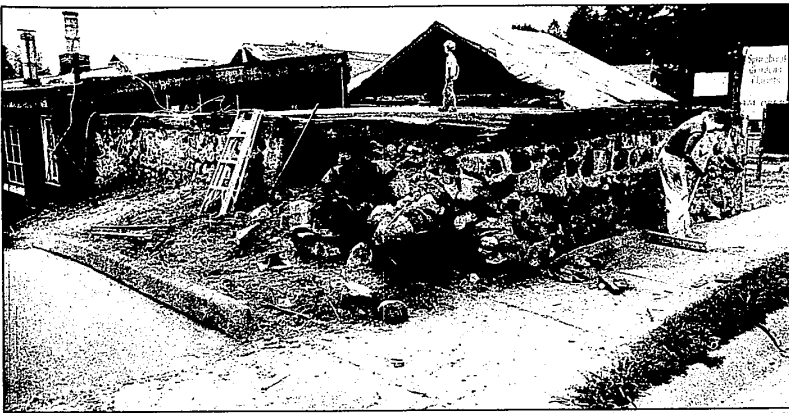
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The familiar barn on Power street was razed to the foundation to make way for the new structure.

staff photos/RANDY BORST



Mike Hatfield holds one of the artifacts found in the barn — an 1874 edition of Harper's Weekly complete with a political cartoon by Thomas Nast.

Landmark razed, but relics saved

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

An historic barn that has been a landmark in Farmington came down Wednesday when its owners decided it was in danger of falling or burning down.

The Ely barn, estimated to be about 125 years old, stood at the corner of Power Road and Shilawasse and was recently being used as a storage shed for the Springbrook Gardens florist shop.

The barn will be rebuilt, using much of the original wood inside, as close as possible to the original style. Al Dompierre, owner of A.J. Dompierre & Co. of Farmington, is doing the work which he expects will continue for the next three months.

When the barn was being readied for dismantling, florist shop owners John, Mike and Frederick Hatfield searched the rafters for items that had been gathering dust in the barn.

They uncovered a large envelope containing copies of an 1874 edition of Harper's Weekly magazine including a

full-page illustration by famed political cartoonist, Thomas Nast. Nast was a German-born illustrator who drew the famous picture of Santa Claus smoking a long-stemmed pipe and chronicled Tammany Hall politics. His May 16, 1874 illustration showed a lion watching a scuffle over inflation entitled "A General Blow-up — Dead Asses Kicking a Live Lion."

"MAYBE (President Ronald) Reagan was reading this before his election," joked Mike Hatfield, suggesting that the President might've read the edition when it was current.

Fred Hatfield displayed the wooden dowels that held together the hand-hewn beams of the barn and squared off spikes that joined the floorboards.

The barn was originally owned by Charles and Addie Ely who operated a dairy farm on the site on 200 acres. The Farmington Historical Commission plans to present a plaque to the Hatfields describing the history of the site when the refurbished barn is finished, says Fred Hatfield.

Council eyes sewer revamp to halt floods

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

Costly plans to separate a 1928 combined storm and sanitary sewer system serving close to one-fourth of the city's residents will be discussed at 8 p.m. tonight at the Farmington City Council meeting.

Consulting engineer David Mariner of the Orchard, Papke, Hiltz and McCliment firm says he'll present an engineering report tonight that will echo a 1975 engineering study. That study urged city officials to curb flooding in the lower section of the city by removing storm water from the sanitary sewer pipes.

Flooded basements are a periodic problem in the area west of Farmington Road to Gill and north of Alta Loma to Shilawasse St.

About three dozen homeowners had their basements flood in the June 28 downpour that dropped 1.75 inches of rain in a 40-minute period.

Homes on Liberty, Alta Loma, State, Orchard and Cass bear the brunt of the flooding because they're situated at a low spot.

City Manager Robert Deadman says preliminary cost estimates on remedying the problem put the price tag between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

While only an estimated 25-40 families experience the flooding, the engineer says about 275 homes are in the drainage district and are contributing to the problem. Therefore, if any special assessment is levied, it would be levied against all 275 homeowners not just the persons whose basements are flooding, according to the city manager.

"THE PROBLEM is the solution is going to cost a great deal of money,"

says Deadman. "There are no easy solutions."

Federal funds are no longer available, says the city manager, for separating storm and sanitary sewer systems. Until the engineer's report is presented at tonight's meeting and councilmen discuss methods of financing the project, Deadman said he can't predict how much each homeowner would be assessed to fund the work.

According to city and private engineers the problem in the area is caused primarily by the inadequate size of the outlet, or main line, that smaller sewer pipes feed.

"All the water comes from the upstream end and pushes all the water to the lower end and the lower ends flood up," Mariner says. "The problem is in the total district itself."

Plans call for the construction of two parallel sewer lines of 18-and-21-inch diameter along Alta Loma leading to a new 42-inch pipe that would stretch to Grand River near Mayfield.

OTHER OPTIONS being studied include restricting the size and number of holes on manholes leading to sewer catch basins. Mariner says such a move can prevent sewers from backing up into basements if there is enough room for the water to stand on the ground without entering the first floor of homes or businesses in the vicinity.

Additional outlets might be provided under current plans.

Another inexpensive method being eyed is informing members of the public that open downspouts contribute to flooding in heavy rains.

Deadman says engineering studies done in Livonia using dyed water show the water runs off a house roof, down a home's foundation, out the footing and into the sewer system within 11 minutes.

Cyclist charged with assault

A felonious assault charge has been leveled against a 24-year-old Livonia man who held a knife in his hand just after an FBI agent drove in front of his disabled motorcycle.

The arrested man, Daniel T. Demitroff, 24, of Livonia says he was using the knife as a tool to remove two screws from his air filter in an attempt to fix the motorcycle.

Farmington Police charge that Demitroff drew the knife against the FBI agent, William F. Edwards.

According to Farmington Public Safety Officer Anthony Gubacz, Demitroff was pushing his Harley-Davidson motorcycle east across Farmington Road at Eight Mile, when Edwards turned the corner and cut in front of Demitroff, causing him to abruptly stop.

Gubacz says he watched the incident unfold from his patrol car behind Edwards' silver Chevrolet.

In a statement to Farmington Police, Edwards, who is black, claims Demitroff yelled "nigger" when Edwards drove in front of the motorcycle.

Demitroff says he muttered to him-

self when the driver cut in front of him because he believed he had the right-of-way and had a hard time stopping his 700-pound motorcycle in time.

EDWARDS TURNED around into the Mobil gas station lot to confront Demitroff, according to police reports. Demitroff says he wasn't aware that Edwards had turned around until he saw him heading toward his motorcycle in the car.

Demitroff admits he was holding the knife but says it was out as a tool, not a weapon.

"I know damn better than to pull a weapon even with the intent to scare," Demitroff said Friday outside of court.

After posting \$1,000 bond in the felony case, Demitroff said, "This whole thing has gotten out of hand." He complained police could've charged him with felonious assault with a dangerous weapon even if he had been holding a screwdriver at the time.

Examination of the knife blade, Demitroff says, will reveal a number of nicks caused by using the knife as a tool to repair his motorcycle.

Employee jobs saved

Hills companies get job done

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Two Farmington Hills companies played key roles last week in an arrangement that will mean 80 jobs for Van Buren Township and the transfer of 120 employees of Coca-Cola Bottlers

of Detroit Inc. in Livonia. Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. of America and R.A. DeMatia Co. of Farmington Hills, Van Buren Township and the Livonia bottlers company clinched a deal that paves the way for a new 91,250-square-foot distribution center for Coca-Cola Bottlers near I-94

and I-275 in Van Buren Township. The center will be financed through the sale of \$2.5 million in Van Buren Township economic development corporation bonds to Alexander Hamilton.

R.A. DeMatia, builder of several local distribution facilities including Aetna Industries' manufacturing facilities in Farmington Hills, a Perry Drugs warehouse in Waterford and several Japanese-based tool manufacturing facilities in Plymouth, is the developer and a general partner in the lease arrangement.

Coca-Cola Bottlers of Detroit presently leases a facility at 18200 Globe in Livonia. It will operate and manage the new center.

Expanding operations and limited space at its old site prompted the corporation's proposed move. The distribution facility will provide at least double the space of its Livonia locale. Construction on the 27-acre site, which offers easy access to nearby Detroit Metropolitan Airport from Van Buren Industrial Park, is scheduled to begin in September.

"This significant investment by Alexander Hamilton Life helps continue jobs in Michigan and will help a respected company like Coca-Cola Bottlers of Detroit relocate to larger facilities," said Richard Headles, president of the insurance company.

Coca-Cola Bottlers of Detroit is an independently franchised firm with eight production and distribution facilities in six southeastern Michigan counties.

It bottles and distributes Coca-Cola, Dr. Pepper, Squirt and Sunbelt brands.

"WE'VE BEEN PUTTING this package together for months," said Robert DeMatia, president of the real estate firm.

"Half the reason it came together is because we're experienced in this mode, and also have worked with Alexander Hamilton which is very committed to the project. Coca-Cola came to us."

Alexander Hamilton never wavered in its conviction to purchase the EDC bonds, despite Michigan's weak economy, according to Terry West, vice president of mortgage and real estate for Alexander Hamilton.

"This is one of six projects we've committed to this year," West said.

"Coca-Cola Bottlers is a large, well-known distributing facility with good credit. All 120 of the company's Livonia employees will be transferred, and ultimately the center will employ over 200."

Alexander Hamilton, which prior to the August primary was examined publicly by Headles' gubernatorial opposition, employs 498 persons at its Farmington Hills world headquarters.

West conceded truth to the charge that 70 percent of the insurance firm's investment is done out of state, but added the company derives only 11 percent of its income from Michigan.

This year, Alexander Hamilton completed its third addition, doubling its floor space and increasing its staff by 100 employees.

Driver is killed in head-on crash

A 19-year-old Farmington man has been charged with manslaughter in the traffic death of Donald J. Jasinski, also of Farmington, in Livonia last Sunday.

Anthony Costa pleaded innocent Monday at his arraignment before Magistrate Walter Guth in Livonia's 16th District Court. He was released after posting a \$10,000 deposit bond. He will re-appear in local court Aug. 19 for a preliminary examination.

Jasinski, 47, a Ford Motor Co. machinist, was heading home on Farmington Road at 4:55 a.m. when he was in a head-on collision south of Eight Mile Road.

Livonia rescue workers rushed Jasinski to Botsford Hospital, where emergency room staffers spent more than an hour treating him before he died, according to spokesmen in the Oakland County Medical Examiners office.

truck was hit by Costa's van. Police said the van was southbound on Farmington when it abruptly crossed the center lane and drove into the northbound lane. There were no passengers in the van.

Lt. Richard Widmaier, head of the Livonia traffic bureau, said Costa had been administered a Breathalyzer test, to determine level of intoxication, and was found to be "criminally drunk" at the time of the accident.

Widmaier declined to reveal the exact reading. Under Michigan law, a person who registers a reading of at least .10 is considered legally drunk.

Jasinski is survived by his wife, Shirley; children, Donald, Steven, Sharon, Patricia and Denise; mother, Bernice Jasinski; and brother, James. Funeral services were scheduled this morning at the Jarzembowski Funeral Home, Detroit, followed by church services at St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Detroit.

60 CALLS!

Proto-Vest ran an ad in the Observer & Eclectic Newspapers classified help wanted section. They were very pleased at receiving 60 calls one day and 30 calls the next day! They filled the position right away. "Great response!" Remember...

One call does it all!

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