



# Farmington Observer

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## Hills psychiatrist sued in negligence case

By Doug Funke  
staff writer

A Farmington Hills psychiatrist is one of three professionals facing a multimillion dollar lawsuit filed by a Troy family whose son was stabbed to death last summer. The two psychiatrists and a social worker were treating the alleged killer at the time of the murder.

Troy residents Larry and June Howard charge that Farmington Hills psychiatrist Yogeshchander Shukla, psychi-

atrist Ismail Sindi of West Bloomfield and psychiatric social worker Charles Sonnenfeld of Auburn Heights were grossly negligent in releasing Michael Harless from a state mental hospital less than a month before Philip Howard, 16, was killed.

Harless, now 18, admitted to killing Howard. But Harless was found not guilty by reason of insanity in a first-degree murder trial this spring. He remains institutionalized for treatment.

The Howards are asking at least \$10

million in damages from the three defendants in a suit filed last week in Oakland County Circuit Court.

They also have filed suit in the state Court of Claims asking for at least \$10 million from the Clinton Valley Center and the Fairlawn Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Center where Harless was being treated.

"EVEN THOUGH it's a state institution, and they have doctors there, they should know what they're doing,

right?" Larry Howard said.

"The main reason we're doing this is to help other people and to help our son Philip, so he didn't die in vain," June Howard said.

Sendi, now director of the Fairlawn Center, declined to comment on the specifics of the Howards' allegations.

"The doctors have done very well, and the therapist has done well," he said of Harless' treatment. "We feel the case has been handled properly."

Sendi said he would forward specific

material on the case to the legal affairs office of the state department of mental health and the attorney general's office.

Shukla and Sonnenfeld couldn't be reached for comment.

A recent state Court of Appeals decision holding psychiatrists liable for the actions of their patients under certain conditions is the basis of the suit, said Geoffrey Fieger, lawyer for the Howards.

"WE'RE ALLEGING negligent re-

lease, failure to warn, the fact that they (the defendants) were aware of his (Harless) propensity to violence," Fieger said. "He was still extremely sick, and he was released as an experiment."

The lawsuit alleges that Harless was treated as an inpatient in the Glen Eden Mental Health Facility when he was 16 "for auditory hallucinations and threats of violence."

Harless was treated in Fairlawn

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## Dope pusher jailed

Former Farmington Hills resident and convicted drug dealer Dolores Federico, 26, has been sentenced to 20-60 years in prison for her part in a botched armed robbery which resulted in the death of the intended victim.

Federico, formerly of 30330 W. Eight Mile, recently was convicted of assault with intent to commit armed robbery against Jess Brown, 27, of Ann Arbor. Brown died of a gunshot wound to the head.

The incident occurred on Lotz Road in Canton last October.

SENTENCING CAME Tuesday by Judge Thomas Foley, who presided over Federico's week-long trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.

Foley described Federico, a former Plymouth resident who was living in Canton at the time of her arrest, as a "long-term danger to the community." Federico also was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for conviction of using a firearm in commission of a felony.

Under Michigan law, she will have to serve at least 22 years on the two convictions, Foley said. Her attorney has up to 60 days in which to appeal the sentence.

Foley said testimony indicated Federico was a big-time drug dealer in the Plymouth-Canton area. The judge said he based the sentence on Federico's lifestyle and Brown's death.

TESTIMONY INDICATED Federico took over her husband's wholesale drug practice after he went to prison.

"It was a \$10,000-\$70,000-a-week wholesale practice in the Plymouth-Canton area," Foley said.

"When you go in with a loaded revolver, anything can happen — and did," Foley added.

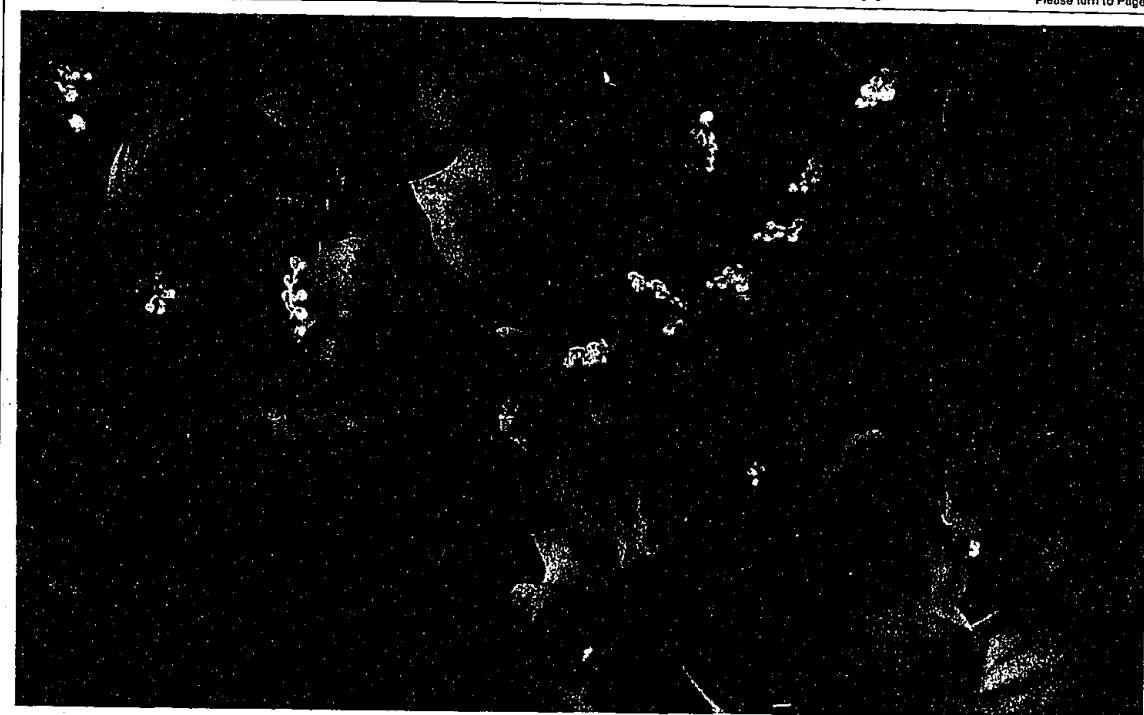
Federico currently is serving a two-year sentence in a federal prison on an unrelated drug charge, Foley said. Imprisonment on the firearms and assault charges will be at the Huron Valley Women's Correctional Facility near Ypsilanti.

The jury earlier acquitted Federico of second-degree murder and felony-murder charges. Felony murder is defined as a killing which occurs during a felonious act.

According to testimony, Federico formulated the robbery plan with Ricki Sparks, 31, and George McCue, 25, both of Canton.

Federico testified she met with the men to sell them drugs but became frightened they would rob her. She said she grabbed McCue's gun and during a scuffle with McCue and Sparks, the gun went off, killing Brown.

McCue already has been sentenced to 4½-15 years imprisonment on a similar assault with intent to rob charge. Sparks is to be sentenced Friday, Sept. 2, on the same charge.



## Prize-winning lily of the valley

This photograph by Judith A. Garbin of Livonia took first-place honors in the Observer & Eccentric color photo contest. She wins \$40 and a framing of the winning photograph. A panel of five judges ruled this photo of lily of the valley

was the best among more than 200 entries. The theme of the contest was "Nature in the suburbs." For more information about this photograph and other winners, please turn to the back page of this section.

## Cable opens door for TV participation

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

When \$75,000-\$80,000 worth of television production equipment arrives in mid-October at the MetroVision cable

firm's headquarters, public access programming will be closer to reality.

The Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission, representing Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi, asked MetroVision Aug. 23 to order the equip-

ment that will be used by residents to produce their own cable television programs, said Lark Samouelian, SWCC executive director.

Some of the new equipment, which MetroVision will pay for, includes three tube cameras, video recorders, a character generator, editing suite and lighting package, Samouelian said. The equipment will be set up in a television studio at the MetroVision headquarters on Halsted Road, south of 12 Mile.

More equipment will be purchased later "based on need and if we find we're having a hard time scheduling," Samouelian said.

Anyone interested in signing up for the workshops in which MetroVision employees will explain equipment use and program production, should call Samouelian at 474-5500. But Samouelian is asking residents and organizations to have an idea of the kind of show they wish to produce before attending the workshops.

"It will be easier for them to learn if they have an idea of what they want to do and then they have something to apply it to," Samouelian said.

Although the equipment and 15 public access channels are available to anyone in the tri-city franchise area, Samouelian said the public access

shows must be "community-oriented" rather than home movies.

Both MetroVision and the citizen public access committee, which is responsible for coordinating all public access programming in the tri-city franchise area, are now developing

guidelines for using the television equipment, as well as programming. Advertising on a public access program, for example, will be prohibited although MetroVision officials are developing a program solely for advertisers, Samouelian said.

## Young volunteers aid in hospital

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

A new volunteer program at Botsford General Hospital gives the nursing staff extra help and teens a chance to test their dreams.

Formed in June, the Junior Friends of Botsford is the Farmington Hills hospital's first volunteer program for 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds, said Adele Emmer, volunteer director. After a short recruitment period, Emmer said, 31 students from 16 area high schools volunteered this past summer.

"Our administrator wanted youth to come into the hospital," Emmer said.

"The trend has been to bring in the community."

Spending one four-hour shift a week in the hospital helping nurses do routine errands, making beds, "visiting patients and generally making them warm and comfortable," the volunteers also participated in the hospital's new escort program. The program involves welcoming new non-emergency patients, waiting with them as they go through the admitting process, taking them to their rooms and getting settled, Emmer said.

"It's a good way to help the youth

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