

Volunteers welcome their 'probies,' 1B



Slo-pitch elite, 4D

Hills bank robbery nets \$73,000, 2A

# Farmington Observer

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## Farmington FOCUS

If you have a news item or an idea for a feature story or an action picture with a Farmington connection, send a note to our downtown office at 32203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

**JUNIOR scholar.** Farmington Hills resident Jancen Sprys is one of 116 high school seniors from six states forsaking fun in the pool for political science and botany this summer. They're participating in the Junior Scholar program at Miami University, Miami, Ohio. During the six-week program, Sprys earned college credits for course work in humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, business and fine arts. She attended seminars on study skills, career planning and stress management. Junior Scholars rank in the top 10 percent of their class and have scored well on college entrance exams. They must receive the recommendation of their high school principals or guidance counselors.

**THEY'RE** in good shape. Preliminary audit figures for the Farmington Public Schools show the district close to a 10 percent fund equity — a requirement the district has been working toward, Deputy Superintendent Michael Flanagan said. He attributed the increase to the passage of a special education millage by voters and "significant underspending" in several departments.

**SHE'S** a volunteer. Denise Manisto of Farmington Hills is getting a taste of the medical field as she begins work as a student volunteer for Huron Valley Hospital in Commerce Township. As a volunteer for the new 153-bed community hospital, affiliated with the Detroit Medical Center, she participated in an individual interview, passed a three-hour patient care class and attended a volunteer orientation program with other teen-agers.

**WESTWARD** bound. Farmington Hills resident James Grey, Metropolitan Detroit Council president, will lead a delegation to the biennial convention of B'nai B'rith, the world's largest Jewish fraternal and service organization. About 1,800 delegates, representing 43 countries, will convene in Las Vegas Aug. 24-29 — the first B'nai B'rith convention in the western United States since 1915.

**PAVING** news. Farmington Hills City Council has awarded a \$271,713 paving bid for Westgate Franklin Village subdivision to South Hill Construction Co. A cost hearing will be held Monday, Aug. 25. Work is slated for this fall.

**FOOTNOTES:** One year ago this week — The Farmington Board of Education's decision to sell the land on the southwest corner of 12 Mile and Drake, the seven-year home of the Farmington Soccer Club, has generated proposed offers. But Superintendent Lewis Schulman says price alone will not determine which offer school officials will accept. The proposed use of the 38 acres will play a big role. In the final decision, he said.

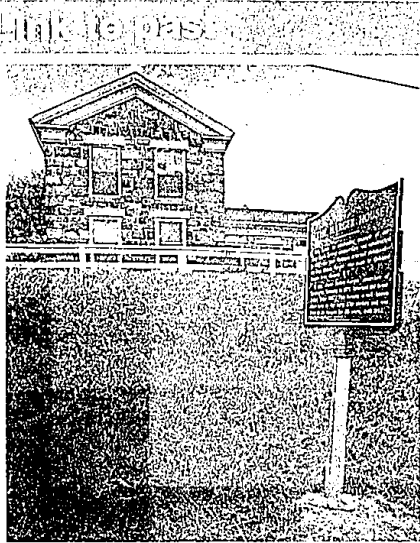
## Harger House fate — in limbo

By Casey Hans staff writer

The old barns with their rotting floor boards are gone, as well as the farm's condemned silo. But the historic Harger House on Halsted Road stands proud on one of 20 acres of the open space for the Hunt Club subdivision to the east. The controversy continues over what will become of the old dairy farm and home of former Farmington Township Supervisor Oscar Seeley Harger. The old stone structure has received repairs, shrubbery trimming and window replacement during the past several months.

Whether it will be sold, leased, relocated or demolished remains an issue more than one year after the debate between community, historical and city groups began.

**THE IMPASSE** weighs on the minds of Farmington Hills city officials, Hills historical commission members and the open space co-owners, who apparently include 60 homeowners and Standard Federal Bank of Troy. The bank rejected the subdivision land when a developer defaulted on a loan. Who controls the fate of the house, owned by the Harger family



The Farmington Hills Historical Commission, which wants the Harger House restored, placed a local historic sign in front of the Halsted Road site last week. The site, however, has not been placed in the city's historic district.

of Farmington Township for 115 years, is still a question.

"It's unclear who has the controlling interest," Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick said. Bank officials said the open space land is owned by the homeowner's association. But it appears the bank still holds a majority of the land and a majority vote on the group's board of directors.

When asked whether Standard Federal Bank has a majority voting interest, Durwood Allen, senior officer and also chairman of the Hunt Club association, said the bank remains a "title holder in fee simple" to the undeveloped property.

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## Foster care home spurs controversy

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Despite strong opposition from neighbors, a Farmington Hills couple has cleared the first hurdle to get a license to operate an adult foster care home in the Old Homestead subdivision.

In a 5-1 vote Monday, Farmington Hills City Council granted a variance to resident Barbara Murchie, 35525 East Lyman, to operate an adult foster care home within 1,500 feet of another licensed group home in the neighborhood. Councilman Ben Marks opposed the variance, fearing it could set a precedent. Councilman Donn Wolf was absent.

"Are we going to be continuously granting variances on the basis of compassion?" Marks asked.

Old Homestead residents met the council's action with angry shouts of "recall, recall." Following Monday's meeting, two Old Homestead residents returned to further reprimand the council for granting a variance.

"You passed this off so fast. And you didn't know the facts," shouted one of the residents. Another resident called council members "bleeding hearts."

**NOT ALL** Old Homestead residents opposed the Murchies' care for an adult foster care home. Some residents supporting the Murchies asked that a license be restricted to only the two current residents.

"I think there can be some benefit from these people," said resident Ann Young, adding that "shutting

'Are we going to be continuously granting (zoning) variances on the basis of compassion?'

— Ben Marks councilman

away" disabled and ill people does not give others the opportunity to learn compassion.

All council members, except Marks, supported limiting the Murchies to caring for the two current residents.

"I don't see anything wrong with allowing these two individuals who are sort of disabled with living there," Mayor Joe Alkateeb said. "If the existing residents are not causing any harm to the existing neighborhood, why not grant a variance to allow them to continue living there?"

Councilwoman Joan Dudley agreed, adding that council is not asking Old Homestead residents to deal with the world's tragedies. "Residents will soon find that this kind of care and love and these kind of people living there won't lower property values," she said.

**IN RESPONSE** to some Old Homestead residents' comments that council should be responsive to their demands, Dudley said, "We

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## Hills shop tied to alleged repair scam

By Casey Hans staff writer

Of three men charged this week with obtaining money under false pretenses in alleged statewide transmission repair scams, two own or manage a Farmington Hills repair shop.

James Schotten and James Dillon, addresses unknown, are owner and manager, respectively, of Independent Transmissions, 22330 Middlebelt, Farmington Hills.

The shop is at the southeast corner of Middlebelt and Nine Mile and was one of 13 shops statewide that were closed Tuesday by state administrative order.

Schotten and Dillon were arraigned before District Court Judge Margaret Schaeffer in 47th District Court in Farmington this week on two counts each of the felony.

**Statewide investigation under way: 7A**

The maximum penalty for each count of obtaining money under false pretenses is five years in prison and a \$2,500 fine if a guilty verdict is rendered.

Schotten was arraigned Tuesday afternoon and Dillon Wednesday morning. They stood mute and not guilty pleas were entered on their behalf. Both were released on \$1,000 bond, pending preliminary examinations in the district court, which are tentatively set for Friday, Aug. 22, according to Schaeffer.

Pre-trial conferences for the two men are scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 20. Criminal complaints were

issued Monday, according to Assistant Attorney General John Walter of the state criminal division, after a three-month undercover investigation by Michigan's Attorney General and Secretary of State. The warrants were signed by Schaeffer.

Called Operation Shift, the investigation prompted civil and criminal charges to be brought against 13

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## Assimilation

For Arab-Americans, it's no easy thing

By Janice Brunson staff writer



'To be a good citizen, I have to get involved.' — Joe Alkateeb Hills mayor

When Joe Alkateeb was elected Farmington Hills mayor last December, it marked the first time an Arab-American has held the position. Alkateeb always knew he would become a public servant. The first thing he recalls hearing after arriving in the United States from Lebanon as a 16-year-old in 1956 was then-President Dwight Eisenhower saying every citizen should make it a personal duty to become a part-time elected official.

Simply put, Alkateeb's philosophy is "Since this is my adopted country, I must be a good citizen. To be a good citizen, I have to get involved." Activist George Khoury of Farmington Hills knows about getting involved. He believes it is the wave of the future for Arab-Americans — namely, involvement in politics and in civic and social organizations. Khoury points to Alkateeb as a prime example "of the whole new crop of bright young men and women" emerging as community leaders. This involvement, Khoury said, is the only way in which Arab-Americans can heighten awareness among the general population and, in so doing, alleviate growing prejudice and incidents of violence directed at the Arab-American community.

**KHOURY KNOWS** the process will be long and frustrating. "It will take years of chipping away before Arabs are truly assimilated into America. But we have learned a great deal from our Zionist friends, and the blacks, over the years," he said. Subtle and overt prejudice aimed at Arab-Americans has increased significantly in recent years, enough so to warrant public hearings conducted by the U.S. House of Representatives sub-committee on justice in Washington, D.C., last month. The hearings were requested by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Three members of Congress — from California, Ohio and West Virginia — joined members of the American Jewish community and others in testifying.

"The problem (of Arab identity) is partly self-made," Alkateeb said. "We don't spend as much time addressing people about (the subject of) Arabs as we should."

Confusion on the issue is not unusual. Americans are frequently unclear about differences in Arab nationality and confuse nationality with the Islamic religion. Until the takeover of the American embassy in Iran, for example, many Americans thought Iranians were of Arab descent until publicity surrounding



'It will take years . . . before Arabs are truly assimilated into America.'

— George Khoury Hills activist

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Watch for these Special Sections Coming Soon!

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**FALL HOME IMPROVEMENT**  
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