Sesquicentennial: say 'yes' to fun, 1E

Regional track, 1D

Memorial Day parade Monday, 3A

Farmington Observer

Volume 98 Number 65 | Thursday, May 21, 1987 | Farmington, Michigan | 88 Pages | Twenty-Five Cents

©1987 Suburban Communications Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

Farmington FOCUS

To write the Observer: 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024. To call: news line, 477-5450; sports line, 591-2312; home delivery, 591-0500; classified ads, 591-0900; display ads, 591-2300.

DO you have a feeling about the different kinds of pedestrian lighting that has been temporarily planted on the south side of Grand River, just west of Farmington Road?

The Downtown Development Authority has authorized temporary installation of at least four kinds of lighting to see how each looks and illuminates the sidewalk.

A decision probably won't be reached at least until the DDA's June 2 meeting. Call comments to the Robert Schultz, administrative aide to the city manager, 474-5500.

MAYOR of what?

Robert Mylod, chairman and chief executive officer of Michigan National Corp., began a press conference Tuesday by introducing Farmington Hills mayor Ben Marks as "the mayor of Southfield."

Marks quickly interrupted: "Farmington Hills." As most of those in attendance laughed, some nervously, Marks added: "That's it, pull the permits. Pull the permits." He then laughed, told Mylod no apologies were necessary, and things proceeded smoothly.

Plans for Michigan National's new Inkster Road headquarters were unveiled Tuesday.

FOOTNOTES: Paul Button of Button's Orchards on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills is one of six Oakland County residents who owns a farm of at least 10 acres and which has been owned by the same family for at least 150 years?

Detroit Edison, state and county officials honored them at a recognition luncheon Friday.

what's inside

Around Farmington	4B
Business	1-2C
Cable connection	3C
Club circuit	2B
Crossword puzzle	15E
Entertainment	6-10D
Obituaries	9B
Opinion	16A
Police/fire calls	12A
Readers' forum	17A
Road watch	4A
Sports	1-5D
Classifieds	Secs. C,E,F
Index	6C
Auto	Secs. C,F
Real estate	2E
Employment	6C

EARLY DEADLINES

Due to the holiday, our offices will be closed Mon., May 25, 1987.

To place your classified ad in the Thurs., May 28th edition, please call Tues., May 26th between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

OAKLAND COUNTY 644-1070
WAYNE CO. 591-0900
ROCHESTER 852-3222

(Real Estate Display for Thurs. Deadline Fri., May 22)

HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE
MEMORIAL DAY

Ex-teacher faces long jail term

'I don't feel the sentence I'm imposing is a fair one. (But) I'm duty-bound to follow that law.'

— Hilda Gage circuit judge

By Casey Hans and Joanne Maliszewski
staff writers

His sister-in-law offered to serve his prison term.

His former employer — a school principal — talked of the young man's good character and anti-drug stance while he was a teacher.

And David Michael Schultz' emotional plea — "I am not a drug dealer — I do not do drugs" — was turned to the deaf ear of a court that was mandated to send him to prison for at least 20 years under current law.

Schultz was sentenced Monday to serve that 20 years in prison at Southern Michigan Prison at Jackson for delivering 10 ounces of cocaine.

David Schultz

The 25-year-old former mathematics teacher at Bloomfield Hills Middle School received the mandatory minimum sentence for the felony offense. His sentence does not allow for early release or parole, according to his attorney, John McDonald of Farmington Hills.

OAKLAND COUNTY Circuit Judge Hilda Gage appeared troubled as she sentenced the Farmington Hills resident: "I don't feel the sentence I'm imposing is a fair one. I have been concerned and troubled since the day of your conviction.

"There's nothing I can do. I'm duty-bound to follow that law."

McDonald said he would appeal Schultz' sentence. Realistically, he said it may take up to one year for the appeal to be heard. He offered no further comment on the case.

McDonald's motion to allow Schultz to be free on a continued $10,000 bond was denied by Gage. McDonald was concerned that Schultz be free during the next two months, while his mother was having heart surgery.

Joyce Todd, Oakland County as-

Please turn to Page 6

Visit to Hills is winner

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

TO PORTAGE Mayor Charles Marschke, Mayor's Exchange Day is anything but boring.

"I really benefit from the cross-fertilization of ideas and the creativity that flows from the staff interaction," he said Friday, one day after touring Farmington Hills with 15 other Portage council members and administrators as part of Mayor's Exchange Day '87.

Mayor Ben Marks, city manager William Costick and other Farmington Hills officials will visit Portage today. The exchanges are part of Michigan Week, May 17-23.

Incorporated as a city in 1963, Portage is a suburb of Kalamazoo.

Please turn to Page 10

photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Riverview councilman Elmer Trombley (left), Riverview mayor Peter Rotteveel and Farmington councilman Richard Tupper watch

Tina Theeke, head of Farmington Community Library's Liberty Street branch, demonstrate capabilities of the library's computer system.

Riverview folks tour Farmington

Visiting dignitaries from Riverview touring Farmington Tuesday liked what they saw.

Riverview Mayor Peter Rotteveel, affectionately known as "Mayor Pete," said he was pleased with the warm reception from Farmington leaders.

He said he also liked the small-town atmosphere Farmington has maintained, despite its populous surroundings.

Officials from the downriver community visited Farmington as part of Mayor Exchange Day, sponsored by the Michigan Municipal League. Farmington officials also visited Riverview this week, in "the tradition of exchanging ideas and making new friends," Farmington Mayor William Hartsock said.

Riverview councilman Elmer Trombley said the children's section of the downtown Farmington Community Library was especially impressive.

The guests met with local leaders Tuesday morning, visited city facilities, met with local library employees and toured Farmington's downtown area, which is being prepared for major renovations this year.

A lunch was also given for the guests.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Farmington Hills Mayor Pro Tem Jan Dolan (left), Portage Mayor Pro Tem Don Overlander, Hills Mayor Ben Marks and Portage Mayor Charles Marschke chat outside the new Farmington Hills Police Facility.

Convict retried after 2 decades

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Two to four weeks before her death, Sharon Merlo told her employer that she feared her estranged husband was suicidal.

"Martha, keep your door locked. John Merlo said he would come over and shoot himself," witness Martha Stanfield testified in Oakland County Circuit Court about the conversation she had with Sharon Merlo.

In 1967, Stanfield was the owner of the Crest Beauty Salon in Farmington Township, where 18-year-old Sharon Merlo was shot to death by her husband John.

John Merlo

Stanfield's testimony was neard during the first 1½ days in the retrial of John Merlo, who was convicted of his wife's death in 1967 and who has served 20 years of a life sentence.

After several appeal attempts, Merlo won a retrial before Circuit Judge Fred Mester.

Please turn to Page 6

Death is called a homicide

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Wayne County Medical Examiner Werner Spitz said this week the 1985 death of Farmington Hills resident Marlene Edwards, whose body was discovered following a 1985 fire in her house on Rhonswood, was a homicide.

"From a fire victim, the carbon monoxide level indicates the death occurred prior to the onset of the fire," he testified in 47th District Court Tuesday. "(Marlene Edwards) was not breathing while the fire was in progress."

There was no carbon monoxide in the lungs showing death by fire, he said. Some type of liquid accelerant was used on the front of her body before the fire occurred, he added.

"She did not die of natural causes."

Oakland County prosecutors asked Spitz to perform a third autopsy on Edwards' body last July, after obtaining a court order to have it exhumed, he testified in the Farmington courtroom of Judge Margaret Schaeffer. Defense attorney Nicholas Smith said he had objected to the third autopsy.

THE CASE charging her husband, James Arnold Edwards, with murder and arson was remanded to 47th District Court by an April 9 order of Circuit Judge David

Please turn to Page 13

Group day care homes limited

By Casey Hans
staff writer

The final chapter was written Monday in a debate involving home child care in Farmington Hills.

For several months, home day care proponents have been lobbying to put a local ordinance on the books to allow their baby sitting services in a residential area.

Those opposing the home day care operations said such homes should be treated as any other business, and that allowing them would bring a liability burden to other homeowners.

A proposed amendment to the city's new day care ordinance was turned down by a split vote of the city council, but lesser changes were approved by a 6-1 vote, with councilman Terry Sever opposing.

Mayor Ben Marks wondered aloud Monday why opponents of home day care had not come forward sooner. Many residents have operated such homes for three or more years, he said.

"Nobody to this day has told me where they (the opponents) were three years ago," he said. "Nobody ever argued about it. Nobody complained about it.

"There's been a semblance of fear. We've drifted away from the issue. Why do we always have to be against something that's not hurting us? I don't think anyone has proven to me that it (home day care) is wrong."

MARKS WAS one of the three council members voting for the proposed changes. He was joined by Joan Dudley and Jan Dolan. Council members Jody Soronen, Donn Wolf, Joe Alkateeb and Sever opposed the motion.

However, a majority agreed on

Please turn to Page 8

Day care providers speak out

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Several women speaking on behalf of home day care said they were insulted and infuriated by innuendos that came out at a Farmington Hills public hearing Monday.

Others simply voiced the need in Farmington Hills for good home day care, including group day care homes for up to 12 children inside subdivisions.

"No matter what you do tonight, they're going to continue to operate," Lynne Strachan, a home day care provider who lives in the Hills, told the council. "There's not anough of us to go around."

A new resident of Farmington Hills told the council it took her six months to locate a home day care facility, and she was "disappointed that my new community is potentially taking away day care."

A West Bloomfield Township resident and former nursery teacher called Farmington Hills local ordi-

Please turn to Page 8