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Farmington Observer

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farmington FOCUS

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SHE came on board three weeks before Election Day. But things just now are settling down for Farmington Hills' new deputy clerk, Sandy Gadd, chosen by city clerk Kathy Dorman from 75 applicants. Former Oak Park deputy clerk for six years, Gadd wanted to come to Farmington Hills to expand her responsibilities in a larger city. "She was familiar already with punch-card elections and computer equipment — that was a plus," said Dorman, deputy clerk until her promotion in August.

Gadd's job will be both administrative and clerical. She'll handle everything from employee relations to vehicle inventory, Dorman said.

Certified two years ago, Gadd was the first deputy clerk in Michigan admitted to the International Institute of Municipal Clerks Academy for Advanced Education, which provides advanced educational opportunities. "I've been so busy with elections, I haven't had time to catch my breath," Gadd said Tuesday. "Everyone has been real nice."

The Detroit resident and her husband, Don, have two children.

Memory lane

25 years ago:

Plans are being made for public open houses at the new City of Farmington Municipal Building on Liberty the first weekend in December, city manager John Dinan announced. On Nov. 18, Farmington Public Schools voters will decide on a \$5 million bond issue for new school construction and two separate operating millage proposals asking for \$5 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation. — Farmington Enterprise, Nov. 14, 1963

Rape suspect 'pleasant guy'

By Dave Varga and Jeff Counts staff writers

When "Steve" was hanging around the West Bloomfield two-story colonial home where he lived in a rented room, he was a "pleasant looking guy" who would play Frisbee with his landlady's dog, said a neighbor.

The same man, Steven Allen Szeman Jr., 25, was charged by the Oakland County prosecutor's office on Friday with raping eight women in Oakland County from April 1987 to March 1988. He is being held in a Cleveland area jail where he faces trial in connection with a Nov. 10 rape there. Authorities said they expect Szeman to be returned to Michigan by Jan. 1 to face 36 charges of sexual assault and 10 charges of robbery resulting from attacks on 10 women.

Szeman had a girlfriend, whom he was involved with for four years — during the time of the Oakland County rapes, according to police.

Szeman told officials he was attracted by his

victims' "body language," according to L. Brooks Patterson, county prosecutor. "As far as I'm concerned (that's) a crook because a 13-year-old girl does not crude a body language."

THE VICTIMS RANGED in age from that teenager to a 61-year-old. Szeman told authorities he selected the women at random and stalked them.

"He was a good looking guy who didn't look like he needed to do that," said the neighbor who declined to be identified.

"I met him twice, and after that he would wave to me," she said.

She said he came over once to ask if he could use the driveway to park his car and again to try selling an Amway water softener.

"The street is real narrow and hard to park cars on it," she said. "They had a lot of cars in the driveway where he was living and there wasn't room."

"He seemed real nice and pleasant," she said. "I just couldn't believe it when the police came around asking questions about him. I just never associated him with the Oakland County rapist."

"He'd wave at me. There was nothing threatening or forward about him," she said.

He told us he would be in the neighborhood for six months and then go back to Ohio, she said.

She said she was never frightened of him. "He was the type of person I would have let in to use the phone," she said.

But apart from the two times they met, the woman said Szeman didn't make himself well known in the neighborhood.

THE WARRANTS ISSUED charge Szeman in three sexual assaults in Bloomfield Township, three in Farmington Hills, two in Birmingham and one in Independence Township. In each rape case, there were several counts of criminal sexual conduct.

Szeman was also charged with robbing or trying to rob eight of the nine women who were sexually assaulted. He is also charged with robbing a 10th woman, a West Bloomfield resident, who fought off an attack.



Steve Szeman rape suspect

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Crime group clicked

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Identifying a man charged in the rape of an Ohio woman as the prime suspect in 12 sexual assaults in Oakland County since April 1987 has spelled success for a year-old police task force representing the local communities.

"This is the first time a task force worked like a textbook," said County prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, instrumental in the unsuccessful Oakland County child killer task force of the mid-'70s.

Team work and adept communications were key in identifying the Ohio man, Steve Szeman, 25, formerly of West Bloomfield Township, as the prime suspect in 12 rapes and three attempted rapes linked to Oakland County's serial rapist, who struck between April 1987 and March 1988, Patterson said.

Good communications and relationships with police authorities in

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Let's truly be thankful

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Take politics out of mayor vote, Hills told

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Former Farmington Hills charter commissioner Richard Frankel is urging the city council to avoid making its annual reorganization a political battle.

"No one has ever asked me so I thought I'd say a few things," said Frankel, one of nine commissioners who drafted the city's charter more than 15 years ago.

Frankel spoke to the Farmington Hills City Council council last week as members prepared for the annual reorganization and election of mayor and mayor pro tem tonight at 7:30.

"I hope you finally reach a point where you wouldn't make a partisan issue or a political issue . . ." Frankel said, referring to the mayor and mayor pro tem's election.

Traditionally, the council unanimously elects the mayor pro tem as mayor. Generally, it's the election of mayor pro tem that is contentious and often political. Mayor pro tem Terry Sever is expected to take over the reins of leadership from outgoing Mayor Jody Soronen Jan. 1.

Frankel reminded the council that the original intent behind the city charter was to have a city led by a strong city manager and the city

council serving as a legislative body. The positions of mayor and mayor pro tem "ceremonial and honorary. Sometimes, it's been true and sometimes it hasn't," Frankel said.

SOME COUNCIL members Monday were battling words at each other about the anti-partisan elections.

The only contenders for the mayor pro tem post are councilwoman Jean Fox and councilman Aldo Vagnozzi, Vagnozzi said, adding he is, however, not a candidate. Other council members, Ben Marks, Joe Alkateeb, Sever and Soronen have served in that post.

But Alkateeb appeared irritated by Vagnozzi's comments. "Why did you decide the only possible contenders for the office of mayor pro tem are Mrs. Fox and you?" He suggested others should also be considered for the post.

Sever answered any questions about member Jan Dolan, newly elected to the state House, 69th District, participating in the council's annual reorganization. "I have no problem with that. Her decision is based on the past, not the future," he said.

The council will replace Dolan Monday, Dec. 12. Dolan will resign following the council's last meeting of the year, Monday, Dec. 19.

Reminder...

Your Observer Carrier will be stopping by this week to collect for the month. Please have the money ready and be sure to get your receipt. It's worth a \$2.00 discount on the next classified advertisement you place in your hometown newspaper.

Young hero!

Boy saves niece from house fire

... he grabbed the baby, crawled to the stairs and while kind of stooped over, carried her down.'

— Sarah Ryan of son Billy

One-year-old Tiffanie was asleep in her 15-year-old uncle Arthur's room when he smelled smoke while watching television about 7:40 p.m.

When the teenager opened the door to an adjacent bedroom and

Holiday hours set

Several closings are scheduled in Friday will be collected Saturday observance of Thanksgiving Thursday, Nov. 24.

Trash collection in Farmington Farmington Hills City Hall, the 47th District Court and the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce will be closed Thursday and Friday. The Farmington Observer and all banking institutions also will be closed Thursday.

The Observer will be open Friday. Banks may have limited hours that day so call ahead.

In Farmington Hills, trash normally collected on Thursday will be collected on Friday this week only. Trash normally collected on

Farmington Hills City Hall, will not be affected.

The Farmington Community Library will be closed Thursday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday.

The U.S. Postal Service will operate on a holiday schedule Thursday. There will be no window, post office box service or residential/business mail delivery. Normal holiday mail collections will be made and special delivery and Express Mail service will be provided. Normal mail service will be resumed Friday.

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