

Soaring opportunity  
has few takers, 1D



Wrestling  
results, 1C

Students fight drugs  
the Warner Way, 3A

# Farmington Observer

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## farmington FOCUS

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**I**S cable TV in the Farmington Hills City Council's future? Council members have directed City Manager William Costick to analyze what it would cost to cablecast their Monday night meetings.

If the cost is right, councilwoman Jean Fox thinks cablecasting will provide "more understanding" of city government.

Councilman Joe Alkateeb is concerned it might "invite grandstanding" among council members.

**SPEAKING** of councilman Alkateeb, he said at a recent study session that his cultural ties are partly why he's so emotional:

"There is not one single person at this table who does not love Farmington Hills with a great deal of compassion. Maybe I have more compassion than the rest of you because I'm from the Middle East and that's the way we're brought up."

## Memory lane

25 years ago:

• In a brief ceremony at the beginning of the regular city council meeting, the council meeting room of the new city municipal building was officially dedicated to the memory of the late president John F. Kennedy.

• The Farmington Township Fire Department's annual report revealed that in 1963 the volunteer firemen responded to a record 461 calls.

— Farmington Enterprise, Feb. 20, 1964

## what's inside

Business briefs . . . 6B  
Classifieds . . . Secs. C, E, F  
Index . . . 9E  
Auto . . . Secs. C, F  
Real estate . . . Sec. E  
Employment . . . Secs. E, F  
Creative living . . . Sec. E  
Crossword puzzles . . . 2E  
Entertainment . . . 5D  
Obituaries . . . 4C  
On the agenda . . . 6A  
Police/fire calls . . . 4A  
Sports . . . Sec. C  
Street scene . . . Sec. D  
Taste . . . Sec. B

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## Officer kills suspect in armed robberies

Quiet Hills street rocked: 4A

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

A suspected armed robber and crack cocaine addict shouting that he wanted to die was shot and killed by a Farmington Hills patrolman Saturday night.

Police say the patrolman, a five-year department veteran, feared for his life when the man drove toward him on a dead-end residential road. "Kill me, I want to die," yelled Cecil Shelby Wilson, 42, of Marshall, Mo., moments before he was killed with a single shot from the officer's 12-gauge pump shotgun, according to police.

A loaded black pellet gun, identical in appearance to a 9mm semiautomatic pistol, was found on the passenger seat of the dead man's car, lying next to his outstretched right arm. The shooting took place at 7:35 p.m. on Albion, southwest of Grand River and Middlebelt, police said.

"Based on our preliminary investigation, it's our opinion at this time it

**'The officer feared for his life not only from the accelerating vehicle but because the driver was a suspect in several armed robberies.'**

— Chief William Dwyer

was a justifiable shooting," Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer announced at a press conference Sunday afternoon.

"The officer feared for his life not only from the accelerating vehicle but because the driver was a suspect in several armed robberies," Dwyer said.

WHEN AN officer decides to shoot, he's not going to shoot out of fear, Dwyer said. "He's going to take proper action as far as safety, not only for his life but for any other persons who may be in the area."

The 34-year-old officer had followed Wilson onto Albion after

learning that a car matching Wilson's had been chased but lost by Livonia police.

The officer, also armed with a .357-caliber Magnum service revolver, had never before fired a weapon in the line of duty. Dwyer said he won't identify him until the department investigation is complete.

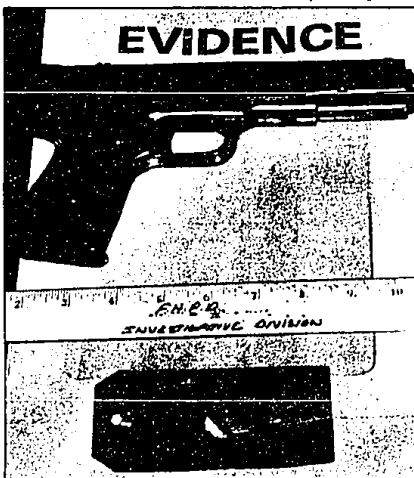
The final investigative report will be presented to the Oakland County prosecutor for review within 10 days, Dwyer said.

Wilson, a distinctive 6-5 and 450 pounds, was dead on arrival at 8:12 p.m. Saturday at Bostford General Hospital, Farmington Hills. An autopsy this morning will include toxicology tests to determine if cocaine was in his bloodstream.

ACCORDING to police:

Wilson apparently returned to Michigan about Feb. 5 to resume work in the service department at a Grand Rapids car dealership, Orson Coe Pontiac, where he had worked last fall. He reported to work last Monday but not after that.

Please turn to Page 4



Staff photo by Bob Sklar

This pellet gun, identical in appearance to a 9mm semiautomatic pistol, was found next to the victim inside the car he was driving, police said.

## Speedy trial at issue in murder case

By Janice Brunson  
staff writer

Jon Vermeulen's right to a speedy trial in the shooting death of his second wife may have been denied, according to legal professionals familiar with the case.

They also suggest the Farmington Hills man, awaiting trial nearly 38 months on charges of premeditated murder, should be free on bond until trial. A decorated Vietnam veteran, he has no previous criminal record.

Vermeulen, 45, has been held without bond since being charged with first-degree murder and felony firearms possession Dec. 19, 1985, in the shooting death of Urine "Renae"

Lewis, 24, a naturalized citizen from Yugoslavia.

Vermeulen has maintained that Lewis' death was a tragic accident during a failed suicide attempt when he shot himself twice in the chest in the couple's two-bedroom unit at Mulwood Apartments, Grand River and Drake.

Lewis was shot once in the upper body with a slug from a .44-caliber Magnum revolver that had been issued to Vermeulen while he was serving in the Army Special Forces in Vietnam.

The couple had married six weeks earlier, while Vermeulen was still legally wed to his wife of 21 years,

Sharon, who has since moved out of state.

The trial is set for today in Oakland County Circuit Court, but Judge Fred M. Mester is expected to adjourn proceedings until the Michigan Supreme Court rules on the issue of marital privilege in the case. The high court heard oral arguments last April.

Two weeks ago, Mester quashed an agreement between prosecutors and Vermeulen's defense attorney, in which Vermeulen would unconditionally waive marital privilege, thereby bringing the case to immediate trial.

MESTER'S REFUSAL to set an

immediate trial date is "highly unusual," according to a letter written by U.S. District Judge Averil Colm that was printed Feb. 9 in an Oakland County daily newspaper.

"It is highly unusual to get a final decision on a point of evidence from the Supreme Court before a trial takes place. Most often, the trial judge decides one way or the other at a trial and the parties simply live with the decision and ask for review, if appropriate, after the jury's verdict," Cohen's letter said.

Meanwhile, Vermeulen is a beaten man.

"I can't take anymore," he said by

Please turn to Page 3



Jon Vermeulen

## Local A&P to stay put

By Casey Hane  
staff writer

Officials from both A&P and Farmer Jack say the A&P Say-A-Center store in downtown Farmington will stay open, following a merger of the two companies and a consolidation under the "Farmer Jack" name.

A spokesman from the New Jersey-based A&P insisted last week

no stores will close, even though a two-year-old Farmer Jack superstore sits at Nine Mile and Farmington roads.

The merger and name change would place two Farmer Jack stores half a mile from each other. "We intend to have everything we have now," Michael Rourke, A&P vice president of corporate affairs said about the overall Detroit market last week.

"It will still be a very, very competitive market. We intend to grow and to increase the market share and you have to be very competitive to do that."

THE GREAT Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., controlled by the Tengelmann Group, a German investment company, acquired Borman's Inc., Farmer Jack parent company, for \$76 million last month.

Thirty-seven A&P stores, including the recently renovated one in downtown Farmington, will do business under the Farmer Jack name to cash in on customer loyalty when it merges with the Detroit area's largest grocery chain, the supermarket giant said in a statement.

After the merger, A&P will oper-

Please turn to Page 2

## Patterson may prosecute rape suspect

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

If the man accused of being Oakland County's serial rapist is tried in Michigan, former Oakland County prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson may prosecute the first of nine cases against him.

"If and when one of the cases has to be tried, I've indicated to Brooks that I intend to seek court approval to appoint him a special assist-

ant prosecutor to try one of the nine cases," Oakland County prosecutor Richard Thompson said Friday.

Steven A. Szeman Jr., 25, the former West Bloomfield resident accused of being the ski-masked rapist, will be sentenced Friday in Ohio for rape, robbery and assault.

The Rocky River, Ohio, resident pleaded guilty Jan. 4 to four counts of rape, one count of aggravated robbery and one count of felon-

ous assault involving a 24-year-old woman in North Olmsted, Ohio, Nov. 10.

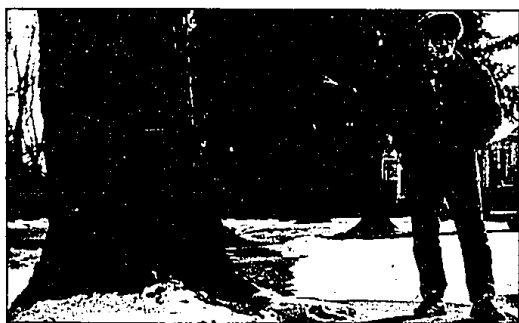
A trash hauling company salesman, Szeman will be sentenced before Judge James J. McMonagle of the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas in the Cleveland Justice Center.

OAKLAND COUNTY investigators linked Szeman to several local attacks via fingerprints found on a Farmington Hills victim's

wallet, blood-semen samples and personal property found in his possession that belonged to some of the victims.

The wallet — as well as a purse, credit cards and undergarments — belong to a March 31 victim in Farmington Hills. They were found April 2 in a dumpster in Westlake, Ohio (3 1/4 miles from Szeman's Rocky River townhouse).

Please turn to Page 3



RANDY DONST/staff photographer

Farmington resident Harold Waack, house. The root system is causing the sidewalk in front of his

## Farmington trees do job on sidewalks

By Casey Hane  
staff writer

An issue sprouting from a hearing last week has prompted Farmington city officials to look at a policy for handling large, mature trees in the city's right of way.

Many trees in the right of way are growing too close to sidewalks and causing them to crack. Farmington's city manager says the problem will branch into other neighborhoods as the city continues to age.

The issue involves not only sidewalk maintenance costs, but liability as well. "We're going to find more of this . . . as the community gets older," said city manager Robert Deadman. "Do we strip this community of trees, or do we accept the responsibility? This situation is throughout Farm-

Park, and will be in others (subdivisions) in the future.

"It's a dilemma."

THE ISSUE was raised after Floral Park resident Harold Waack told the city council he doesn't mind paying the recent \$77 sidewalk assessment, but that the other problem should be handled.

"There's no question it needed to be replaced, but let's do it one time, guys," he said. Waack has a large tree abutting and growing under his sidewalk, which has been raised and narrowed to accommodate the large roots.

Waack said the sidewalk cracks every time it is repaired, and that the walkway gets nar-

Please turn to Page 6