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IN THE PAPER TODAY

A leg up: After four years, an injury that almost cost Chuck Firment his right leg, seems to have healed enough for him to laugh just a little bit louder. /7A

OPINION

Welcome the foos: Here's some unsolicited advice for Walled Lake school officials the next time they try for a bond issue. /10A

COMMUNITY LIFE

Hear and now: Some state programs that help the hearing-impaired have been eliminated. /13A

All about art: Guest columnist Nan Reid, a Farmington resident, talks about a new organization, the Farmington Community Arts Council. /13A

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Light bright: Metro Detroit is turned on to holiday light displays. The shows make for an inexpensive family evening out and a way to brighten the season. /1B

SPORTS

In the swim: Mercy High School, led by senior Bethany Budde, placed 10th in the Class A girls swimming and diving finals. /1C

Bound for the Dome: The Catholic Central football team is headed to the Silverdome to play Holt for the Class AA championship. /1C

AT HOME

Something old: As the third annual Holiday Antiques Show at The Community House in Birmingham draws near, area residents show how to be at home with antique furniture and accessories. /D

SPECIAL SECTIONS

The Perfect Gift: Ideas for everyone on your list are in the Observer's holiday gift guide included among today's newspaper inserts.

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Condos pegged for historic area



How do you make the new fit in with the old? Farmington city planners, historical types and developers are grappling with a solution in a proposed condominium site near downtown.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Residents in Farmington's historical district residents could be looking at something new. A Farmington Hills developer has requested a planned unit development on the southeast corner of Adams and Grace streets. A six-unit attached condominium would be

built there. Two older homes — including a 100-year old house — are for sale on two lots. Both would be demolished to make room for the condominiums. Residents who live within 300 feet of the proposed condominium will be notified. A public hearing is set for 8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 11, at Farmington City Hall.

Afterward, Planning Commission officials are expected to review site plans. If approved, ground-breaking could take place in early spring. Timely Construction of Farmington Hills is making the proposal. Company representatives have discussed their plans with some nearby residents and Salem Church officials. Also, Timely Construction and architect John Holowicki have been working with Farmington Historical Commission members. For only six condos, there's perhaps been six times as much negoti-

ations and discussions. The reason is simple: New developments, especially in historical areas, can turn into thorny issues. "It can be a very difficult task," said Bill Genna, who is president of Timely Construction. "We found the Historical Commission to be very friendly and helpful." "We didn't go to them to tell them what we wanted but to ask for their advice." Each two-story unit will be 1,020-

See CONDOS, 9A

Movie cameras roll in Farmington Hills



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LAMMIEUX

Locale is local: Writer/director Paul Cuschieri, who grew up in Farmington Hills, directs a scene in Heritage Park as George Lieber shoots it.

That's a wrap

Film's backdrop has local feel

BY MATT JACHIMAN
STAFF WRITER
A local firm is aiming for big-screen success with a small-budget movie. Paul Cuschieri and Carl Lang formed The Kid Stays Productions earlier this year to film and produce "Right of Refusal," the story of a second-generation Arab American caught between two cultures against the backdrop of the Persian Gulf War. The story is being filmed in locations around metropolitan Detroit, including two recently in Livonia. Cuschieri, of Farmington, wrote and is directing the movie; Lang, of Livonia, is the producer. "They're the new kids on the block in this area," said Cuschieri of Arab Americans, adding that

the experiences of a close friend who was born in Iraq inspired him to write the script. "He's living this film." The former philosophy student stressed, however, that "Right of Refusal" is a character study with universal themes of responsibility, conflict and obligations to family and self. Filming is scheduled to be completed early next month, and the two are aiming for the Sundance Film Festival at the end of January and the 1896 festival circuit. The official budget for the black-and-white movie is \$35,000. Cuschieri, Lang and a cast and crew of about 40 filmed two scenes



Quiet on the set: "Right of Refusal" filming in Livonia.

See FILM, 3A

Rape case delayed again

BY JILL HOCKMAN
STAFF WRITER

A preliminary exam for two teenage boys charged in the rape of a 15-year-old Farmington girl was postponed Monday after the boys' lawyers asked for more time to review the case.

Jeremy Liszewski, 17, of Farmington Hills, and Anthony Palushaj, 18, of Novi, are charged with one count each of first-degree and third-degree criminal sexual conduct.

The preliminary exam was rescheduled for 8:30 a.m. Jan. 22 before 47th District Court Judge Maria Parker. During the exam, Parker will review evidence, hear testimony and then determine whether there is enough evidence to send the case to Oakland County Circuit Court for a trial.

The victim was forced to have oral sex and intercourse during a Farmington house party on May 13, 1994, according to police reports.

Liszewski and Palushaj were arraigned on the rape charges on Nov. 7 more than a year after the incident. Farmington police blamed a long wait for DNA test results for the delay in presenting the case to the Oakland County prosecutor.

On Monday, Richard Luitel, Liszewski's attorney, asked Parker for more time to evaluate DNA-evidence in the case. Palushaj's lawyer, Barry Resnick, said he also needed more time to prepare for the case. Prosecutor John Shkarjian agreed to the postponement.

According to police reports, the girl was babysitting two half-sisters in Meadows subdivision north of Eight Mile Road last year when two female friends arrived. They were followed by three boys who came with beer. At least 13 more teenagers arrived at the house. The victim repeatedly asked them to leave, according to police reports.

A male forced the girl to have oral sex in the basement, police reports said. She was penetrated in a bedroom, where she had passed out after drinking. She recalls being held down as someone pulled off her pants.

The rape was reported to police the next day. Police found used condoms and other evidence at the house.

Police asked five suspects to take polygraph tests and give blood samples. Police have said the evidence they found implicates Liszewski and Palushaj, and no one else is expected to be charged.

See TOYS, 6A

'Toys for Tots' rekindles holiday glow for kids

BY DIANE HANBON
SPECIAL WRITER

If not for the generosity, time and talent of the Marine Corps, corporations, businesses and individuals who donate, there would be tens of thousands of toy tots in our very own communities whose eyes would not be all aglow this holiday season.

The 48th-annual Toys for Tots campaign will get under way on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23, this year and will be putting new toys into the hands and smiles onto the faces of needy youngsters from infants to 12 years old.

"The need has become greater, unfortunately," said Gunnery Sgt. Winifred Little, public relations coordinator for the Southeastern Michigan Toys for

Tots. "But, we do our best to rise to the occasion." Last year alone, the southeastern region collected and distributed more than 109,000 toys. "We give one toy per child. Even in doing so, there are still going to be some children that are left out," noted Little. Chairman of the board Gary Naylor believes the need continues to grow because, "We're getting more people that are familiar with the program and more people that are requesting the toys." Toys for Tots is a community-based nationwide program that was instituted by the Marines nearly a half-century ago. As the program grew, the reserve Marine Corps was enlisted and now involves the efforts of many individuals and businesses in each local community.

"We're just the hub," explained Little. "We're the people that put the program together and run it. But it's actually southeastern Michigan that makes it happen. The generous people out there will donate what they can and get the job done." With a staff of only 25 people, it takes an army of volunteers to publicize the event, screen applicants and to collect, sort, transport and deliver those thousands upon thousands of toys. Rebecca Yarbrough, has been involved with the program for 15 years and was on the board of directors last year. Two years ago she teamed up with Ed Sytama, another long-time volunteer with Toys for Tots, to form the Novi/Northville Coalition to