

Smith is new Observer staffer

Veteran reporter Tim Smith has joined the Farmington Observer & Eccentric staff.

Smith, who began with the Observer & Eccentric more than 11 years ago, has transferred from the West Bloomfield-Lakes Eccentric staff.

He replaces William Coutant, who left the staff in June when he moved to Portland, Ore.

"Tim's background and temperament will fit well in Farmington," said Dave Varga, community editor. "We're pleased to have a reporter with his experience and award-winning skills join our staff."

Smith's past has a Farmington-area flavor — attending grade school at the former Edgewood Elementary School in Farmington Hills. He is a 1974 graduate of Clarencenville High School.

Smith earned a bachelor of arts degree in mass communications from Wayne State University.

In 1988, Smith was hired as a staff writer at the Southfield Eccentric, where he worked for five years before transferring to the West Bloomfield paper.

Prompted by the premature birth of his daughter Elizabeth at just 26 weeks, Smith put together an award-winning series on so-called micro-preemies that ran in the Oakland County O&E newspapers, including Farmington.

His work on the series earned Smith a first place in the 1996 Michigan Press Association contest and nomination as one of three finalists for 1996 Journalist of the Year from the Society of Professional Journalists-Detroit chapter. He is now writing a book on the subject.

Education has been a primary beat for most of his O&E career, netting School Bell Awards in 1988 and 1997 from the Michigan Education Association as well as a third place prize in the 1995 Suburban Newspapers of America competition.

Smith, 40, lives in Livonia with his wife, Donna, and daughter, Elizabeth, 2.



Tim Smith

Suspect's bond cut to \$250,000

BY GREG KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

For a while, it was the affluent suburb on trial at Tuesday's pretrial exam of Antonio McKelton, the man accused of helping rob Tapper's Fine Diamonds and Jewelry in May.

"Why all this?" asked McKelton's attorney Elbert Hatchett, referring to the numerous police officers in and around the 48th District courtroom of Judge Gus Cifelli.

"I must say I am amazed at the presence of police officers in every corner of the room. I have never seen such security," Hatchett said.

"Why a million dollar bond?" he also questioned. "Anywhere else, the bond would not be so high. I don't want to think this is a local brand of justice."

Eventually, Cifelli set bond at \$250,000 and bound McKelton over to circuit court on counts of armed robbery, carrying a concealed weapon and using a weapon in commission of a felony.

Hatchett said McKelton has been painted with "the persona of John Dillinger."

During the two-hour proceedings, Hatchett raised few objections and asked few questions of the witnesses called by Oakland County assistant prosecutor Paul Walton, who outlined the case against McKelton.

Hatchett implied that McKelton was getting special and unfair treatment because the crime occurred in affluent West Bloomfield. And he said the bond and treatment should be the same if the robbery occurred "at Tapper's or a (pool room) in Pontiac."

Walton disagreed with the request for a lower bond, asking that McKelton be denied bond

altogether.

He (McKelton) chose to run on twenty roads at 90 mph," Walton said of the high-speed chase that followed the robbery at Tapper's. "His conduct at Tapper's also indicated a willingness to put at risk several bystanders."

According to Tapper's co-owner Steven Tapper, who was called as a witness, two men entered the store in Orchard Mall on Orchard Lake at about 11 a.m. on Wednesday, May 21.

One man was wearing a ski mask, another had on a clown mask.

"I was just turning around and walking out of the office when I saw two masked men enter the store," Tapper said. "I yelled 'Hey,' somehow thinking I could scare them."

One of the men pointed a gun at Tapper while the other smashed a jewelry case, snatching up \$206,000 worth of items.

Tapper backed into his office where he called police.

Both men fled to a black Ford Thunderbird. But as they exited the parking lot they were met by West Bloomfield officer John Truitt who was answering the robbery alarm.

Truitt said the driver looked directly at him, "surprised." The Thunderbird drove north on Orchard Lake. Then Tapper's employees rushed out of the mall and pointed to the fleeing car.

Truitt gave chase, following the car to Walnut Lake and east to Middlebelt. But as he pulled up behind the car at the intersection light, it raced away.

Reaching speeds of 90 mph, "I thought someone was going to get killed," Truitt said.

The Thunderbird failed to make the northbound turn at Inkster and the car slammed into a roadside ditch. The two men bailed out and ran in different

directions. Truitt chased the passenger but lost him between some houses on Walnut Lake.

An investigation of the car turned up some jewelry, two masks, some gloves and a pair of pants with McKelton's Michigan photo ID in a pocket. A 9 mm Smith and Wesson handgun was found in the grass next to the car.

Karen Dutcher of the Michigan State Police crime lab testified that a fingerprint belonging to McKelton was found on the gun's bullet clip.

Despite a massive manhunt, the two men escaped from the scene. But McKelton was arrested Tuesday, July 8 in Detroit. The second man is still at large.

When McKelton was arraigned in 48th District Court, bond was set at \$1 million cash and McKelton was lodged at the Oakland County Jail.

Hatchett said that McKelton faced as little as five years in prison on those charges, which made the high bond excessive.

Walton said McKelton demonstrated he would flee "and police scoured the streets for months" looking for him.

Hatchett vigorously objected when Walton attempted to link McKelton to other robberies and a murder of an armored car driver in Farmington Hills in November 1996.

"If you have those cases, file them," Hatchett said. He portrayed McKelton as a businessman and a family man, supported in court by his wife and other relatives and friends who sat in the back of the courtroom.

Hatchett said he would address the evidence against McKelton when the case goes to trial in Oakland County Circuit Court.

An arraignment date has not been set.

Prestige Dry Cleaners

30% OFF
INCOMING DRY CLEANING ORDER
Excludes leather, suede & wedding gowns.
This Coupon may be used up to 4 times
1 2 3 4
With Coupon • Expires 8-9-97

79¢
LAUNDERED SHIRTS
No Limit
No Minimum
This Coupon may be used up to 4 times
1 2 3 4
With Coupon • Expires 8-9-97

37563 Five Mile at Newburgh (Livonia)
(313) 464-0093

17126 Farmington Rd. at 1 Mile (Livonia)
(313) 261-3166

18219 Newburgh at 7 Mile (Livonia)
(313) 462-2471

'Cigar Night' benefit

The Michigan Chapter of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation will host a "Hunt Club Cigar Night" on Monday, Aug. 11 at the private Hunt Club in Farmington, featuring fine cigars by Churchill's Ltd.

This evening of cigars, food, wine and spirits is \$150 per person, which includes a silent auction and a steak, crab leg, shrimp or chicken dinner. Guests are also invited to play cards after dinner.

Reservations are required by Aug. 5. Call 737-0900.

The 300-foot frontage to Elkar Equities, Inc., as long as the money will go into the capital projects fund and be earmarked for new computers. Property in the Schroeder Farms and Franklin Forest subdivisions, sold in May, brought in about \$293,000, said assistant superintendent for business and finance Cheryl Cannon.

All of the parcel sales are pending final closings, said Cannon, who located the lots — mostly in residential areas — during an inventory over the past year.

These are all excess lots that the district doesn't have need of," she said. "They are too small to do anything with."

The transaction leaves only one parcel available for sale, a single subdivision lot on Sybil Court that is not hooked up to water and sewer.

"So we have to wait and see if any water and sewer is going to be installed in there," Cannon said Wednesday.

There are two larger parcels that the district plans on holding onto for a while. One is an 18.8-acre tract at 11 Mile-Halsted

District's land sale to fund computer needs

Cheryl Cannon.

All of the parcel sales are pending final closings, said Cannon, who located the lots — mostly in residential areas — during an inventory over the past year.

These are all excess lots that the district doesn't have need of," she said. "They are too small to do anything with."

The transaction leaves only one parcel available for sale, a single subdivision lot on Sybil Court that is not hooked up to water and sewer.

"So we have to wait and see if any water and sewer is going to be installed in there," Cannon said Wednesday.

There are two larger parcels that the district plans on holding onto for a while. One is an 18.8-acre tract at 11 Mile-Halsted

near Nine Mile-Drake roads.

According to Superintendent Robert Maxfield, it is not yet guaranteed that the money brought in by the property sales will go for the purchase of computers. Much depends on the result of the Sept. 16 bond issue, when voters will decide a two-part package including technological infrastructure such as wiring and servers.

"If the bond issue is successful," Maxfield said after the meeting, "we will go forward full-bore" on buying computers. "If not? Then we're going to have to look for other purposes for that capital projects fund."

In that scenario, Maxfield said that money would need to be freed up for making basic improvements to buildings.

READER SERVICE

HOW TO REACH US

- Newsroom: 248-477-5450
- Newsroom fax: 248-477-9722
- Nightline/Sports: 313-953-2141
- Reader Comment Line: 313-953-2042
- Classified Advertising: 313-591-0900
- Display Advertising: 313-591-2300
- Home Delivery: 248-901-4716
- Cable TV Weekly: 313-953-2190

HOMELINE: 313-953-2020

- Open houses and new developments in your area.
- Free real estate seminar information.
- Current mortgage rates.

✓ CLASSIFIED AFTER HOURS: 313-591-0900

- Place classified ads at your convenience.

✓ CIRCULATION AFTER HOURS
OAKLAND COUNTY: 248-901-4716

- Request subscriptions at your convenience.

FAX LINE: 313-953-2288

- You can use MasterCard or Visa to access the following information from our classified ads. This service is available by noon Wednesday and Friday:
- Item No. 9402: Looking for a place to rent or someone to share an apartment with? Get a listing of our rental classifieds. Cost: \$5.95.
- Item No. 9800: Recreation: boats, motorcycles, campers, airplanes, etc. Cost: \$5.95.
- Item No. 9822: Vehicles: Used trucks, vans and all makes of automobiles. Cost: \$39.95.

MO&E ON-LINE: 248-644-1100

- You can access On-Line with just about any communications software—PC or Macintosh. On-Line users can:
- Send and receive unlimited email.
- Access all features of the Internet—Telnet, Gopher, WWW and more.
- Read electronic editions of the the Observer & Eccentric newspapers.
- Chat with users across town or across the country.

If you need help signing on to our service, just call the O & E On-Line Hotline: 313-953-2266

TAMMIE GRAY / STAFF ARTIST

LOOSE LOWER DENTURES? PARTIALS?

PERHAPS IMPLANTS ARE THE ANSWER!

LIVONIA VILLAGE DENTAL ASSOCIATES

HERBERT GARDNER, DDS
(248) 478-2110

FOX MANOR

ON THE LAKE

2350 WATKINS LAKE ROAD • WATERFORD

Gracious Living For Seniors

INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR SENIORS AT IT'S BEST!

- 1 & 2 Bedroom Apartments
- Planned Daytime & Evening Activities
- Fitness Room • Beauty / Barber Shop
- Spacious Grounds On Scott Lake
- Dining Room
- 24-Hour Security
- Chapel Reflection Area
- Scheduled Transportation
- Continued Care Available On Campus if Needed

Contact: Sister Virginia Berak, O.P.
At 248-674-9590

DOMINICAN SISTERS OF OXFORD, MICHIGAN

Warehouse Outlet

July 24, 25 & 26th

TRUCKLOAD CLEARANCE

BUY RIGHT OFF THE TRUCK!

SAVE 50% 70% OFF

3-DAYS ONLY!

From Dressmakers, Crocheting, Computers, Books, Toys, Baby Items & Accessories, Linens, Kitchen Accessories, Lingerie, & Much More!

drapery boutique

12119 LEVAN between Plymouth Rd. & the Jeffries Freeway

Farmington Observer

(NPS 187 640)

Published every Sunday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48307-0910. Periodicals postage paid at Farmington, MI. Second-class postage paid at Observer & Eccentric, Newspapers 805 E. Maple, Farmington MI 48307-0910. Telephone 644-1100

ONE YEAR (in Oakland County)	SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Home Delivery	per copy 75¢
Newsstand	per copy 40¢
Mail	per year \$45.00

All advertising published in the Farmington Observer is subject to the conditions stated in the applicable rate card, copies of which are available from the advertising department, 2341 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48325 (248) 464-1100. The Farmington Observer reserves the right not to accept an advertiser's order. Observed & Eccentric assumes no liability for loss of advertising material and only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance of the advertiser's order.

CARTOON NETWORK

FREE CARTOON NETWORK COOL PRIZES To the First 1000 Kids!

BIG TOONS ON THE BIG SCREEN. ON SELECTED SATURDAYS SEE A CARTOON NETWORK WORLD PREMIERE TOON PLUS A FULL LENGTH FEATURE FILM.

REGISTER TO WIN A FREE TRIP TO LOS ANGELES! AT THIS GENERAL CINEMA THEATRE

NOVI TOWN CENTER CINEMA

NOVI TOWN CENTER
344-0078

TIME WARNER COMMUNICATIONS

The Farmington Observer

QUALITY PRINTING

CRC MP&E SNA