



Lawn statement: Adeline Stremmer lets her feelings be known about new development with a lawn sign in front of her Old Colony Farm home.

Resident takes developer to task for backyard woes

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Her backyard view has become a sore sight for Adeline Stremmer's eyes.

Where trees once adorned the end of her rear yard a new house being built looms large in the Old Colony Farms subdivision south of 10 Mile and west of Inkster. Not only that, when she looks out her window instead of flowers and natural beauty, Stremmer sees trucks, cement mixers and, sometimes, even worse.

Adeline and her daughter were having lunch on a Saturday when she glanced out her window and saw a man — presumably a construction worker — urinating against the side of the new building.

"And it happened again yesterday," Adeline said.

Her rage spilled over against the developer, Steven Schafer of Phoenix Land Development, at Monday's Farmington Hills City Council meeting. Schafer was before the council to get approval for an unrelated 26-lot development north of 10 Mile and east of Orchard Lake. Stremmer spoke out against the developer after his presentation during a public hearing.

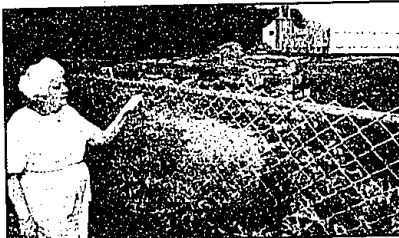
"This man, what he told you is nothing but hogwash," Stremmer said.

"He's created this hell on earth for us. We cannot enjoy our home. We haven't been able to use our yard two years now because of the noise."

At one point, Schafer responded to Stremmer by telling her his Pine Meadows development is not on her property.

"You don't step on our property; You destroy it," Stremmer said.

Stremmer realizes she has no course of action, but to complain. The developer owns the



Backyard business: Stremmer points to construction, which she said causes noise and unsightly construction trucks outside her back yard.

land — bought from the Bernadine Sisters — and the city approved the site plan.

She feels longtime residents are left out of the equation once developers get the go-ahead on such projects.

Like when contractors sweep the street, it spews dust into the air, Stremmer and her husband also complain of fumes from the construction trucks.

Stremmer has taken her cause to the airwaves, being interviewed on WJLB-FM's "Drew and Mike Show."

"They were very very respectful," said Stremmer about the raucous pair. "The things I did say were true . . . There was nothing raunchy."

Her pleas to council have not gone unheard, either.

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi visited the home and said the setback is very close to her back yard.

"With the new house that is being built, when the sun shines, the shadow covers the whole house," Vagnozzi said.

"It affects them."

Councilman Torrey Sevor added, "I think you need to listen to what this lady is saying."

I think you need to be sensitive to the way the development is being done and be sensitive to the residents."

The developer said he has strict rules for contractors in terms of noise and disorderly behavior. He's urged Stremmer to call police when construction works start too early. City ordinance limits construction 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with no work allowed on Sundays and holidays.

A provision in the development calls for trees to be planted to act as a buffer.

"I would like to get closure with Mrs. Stremmer, but we're scared to set foot on her property until we have some coherent dialogue."

Otherwise, Schafer sees the development as progress, with 62 new residents eager to live in Farmington Hills.

That doesn't sway Stremmer, though.

"To develop their property, that's fine," she said. "To not consider the people on the other side of the fence from them is wrong."

Dozen take petitions for Hills council seats

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Incumbents are ready to sign on for another term while others appear to be awaiting a sign.

Then there's April Combs, who just wants somebody to sign.

Combs is one of 12 people who have taken out nominating petitions for Farmington Hills City Council. Only two petitions have been taken out for the mayor's race, one by incumbent Aldo Vagnozzi and another by a person who would not leave their name.

Potential candidates have until 4 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 26, to turn them into the City Clerk's office.

"I noticed I have to have 151 signatures on the petition," said Combs, who is a U.S. Postal Service Customer Service representative. "I don't have that yet. I'm working on it. If I don't have 150 signatures by the deadline, I'll have to drop out."

So far, Combs has 20 signatures. She plans to attend some social functions to garner the rest of the John Hancock.

"So I have a long way to go," said Hills resident who lives on 14 Mile Road.

If successful in the signature department, this would be

"I noticed I have to have (151) signatures on the petition. I don't have that yet. I'm working on it."

April Combs
—council hopeful

Combs' first run for political office. Other petition-takers have various degrees of involvement in the political landscape.

Those include incumbent council members Cheryl Oliverio, Jon Grant and Jerry Ellis, who intend to run as well as Dennis Fitzgerald and Massio Kurzeja, who have made unsuccessful bids for council seats in the past.

"We're giving it real serious thought," said Fitzgerald, the former parks and recreation chairman who ran unsuccessfully for council in 1995.

Disappointment from losing last time is not making Fitzgerald shy from at least considering another try, though.

"Nobody likes to put that amount of effort into something and come out on the short end," he said. "I still I have something to offer. I think there is a vision I

have for the city and what the council should and could do more for its citizens."

Kurzeja lost out to Jerry Ellis in a special election to fill the council term of Aldo Vagnozzi, who was elected mayor.

"Well people kept asking me to run and I kept saying, 'I don't know, I don't know,'" said Kurzeja, who is longtime community activist in the Old Town area. "As issues continued to come up on density and representation of the older areas . . . I said, 'If you get me the signatures, I will run.'"

"I was very hesitant at first because I felt I did the best I could the last time. I'm not a debater."

Another pool involves those who have taken out nominating petitions, but are keeping mum about their plans.

Ron Oliverio won't divulge for whom his petition is intended, only to say it's not for him.

"I was asked to run for council this year, but it would've been a circus," said Ron, referring to his former wife Cheryl's candidacy.

"It would've been counterproductive to have two people with the same last names running. It would also be confusing to people."

Hills hotel room gets trashed as late-night party turns rowdy

Late-night revelers, taking a page from touring rock'n'roll bands, destroyed a hotel room at the Red Roof Inn in Farmington Hills.

Hills police arrested one man and have other suspects in the case.

A Red Roof employee found a room that had been occupied by a group partying extensively early morning July 26. Damage included a smashed front window, shattered lamp and mirror, busted phone, curtains yanked out of the wall, pizza smeared on the wall and a broken cable TV box.

The damage estimate was not available, but believed to be more than \$1,000.

Police found a trail of blood in the hotel room

bathroom, which later led to one arrest in the case.

The hotel employee said she received several noise complaints and warned the occupants they'd be told to leave. She discovered the damage after hearing tires squeal and seeing a group of white males running from the scene.

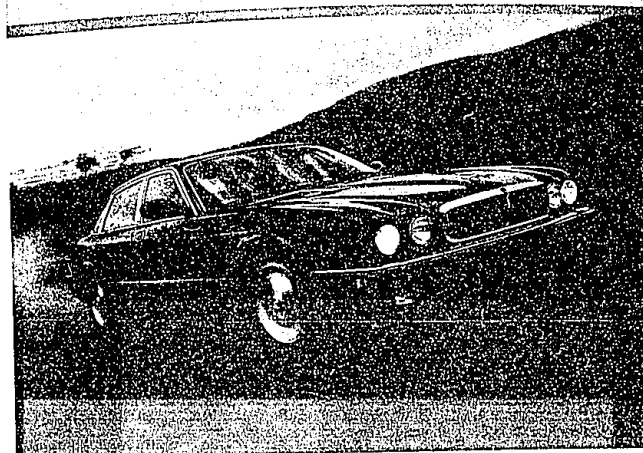
Police stopped a 1986 Ford Mustang on east-bound M-6 on a possible drunken driving incident and noticed the driver's hand was bleeding.

The driver, a Detroit man, 26, said he cut himself after punching the window at a party he'd just left at the Red Roof Inn. He said he lashed out on the window in anger when someone woke him up after he'd passed out drunk. Two passengers were also in the vehicle.

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RECREATION NEWS

Each week the Recreation Division of the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services presents a synopsis of upcoming activities. For further information regarding programs, contact the recreation office at 473-9570. Pre-registration is required for most activities. For matters regarding Farmington Hills City Council agenda items, call the news line at 473-9532.

RECREATION EQUIPMENT RENTALS
An assortment of recreation equipment is ready for your picnic, party or special event. Equipment is available from May to September. A separate \$20 deposit is required. Equipment available for rental are picnic packs, volleyball sets, tug-of-war rope, parachute, baseball net and dunk tank. Reservations must be made in advance by calling 473-9570.

OPEN GYM OFFERINGS
The William Costick Activities Center gym is open, with locker rooms and showers available. Please bring correct change and locks for lockers. Days and hours are:

■ Thursday - Adult Basketball - 7-9 p.m.

■ Sunday - Adult Basketball - 9-11 a.m.; Adult Volleyball - 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; and Teen Basketball - 1-3 p.m.

The fee for two-hour session residents is \$2 for 17 and under, and \$3 for 18 and over. Fee is \$2 more for non-residents.

HORSEBACK RIDING LESSONS, CAMP

Master the basics of riding at Berwyck Saddle Club, with a full range of lessons, including English Beginner, Intermediate

and Advance Jumping, that focus on individual attention. Class meets once a week for one hour and includes a five-week membership. Minimum age is 8. The fee is \$100 for the five-week session. Summer camps are also available. Call 473-9570 for class times and camp dates.

OPEN SKATE

The Farmington Hills Ice Arena invites participants to join open skating. Fee is \$3 for Farmington Hills residents and \$5 for non-residents. Skate rental is \$2 per person. For specific days and hours call 478-8800.

OUTDOOR CONCERTS
Free Concerts are held at Heritage Park at 8 p.m. on the following Thursdays: July 24, Jim "Knight" Kuckuliy; and July 31, Novi Community Band.

INKWELL

Send Inkwell items to: Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335; or fax them to: 248-477-9722.

LOCAL STUDENT WINS PRIZE

Christopher M. Riley of Lowell Middle School in Farmington participated in the Children's Contest in the Detroit Institute of Arts' Family Art Game, and won a 35 mm camera — complete with film.

The 20th annual edition of the

DIA contest was titled "You've Still Got to Have Art."

The contest invites the public to learn about art and to answer questions related to the theme. This special edition celebrated two decades of bringing art into the lives of people across the state in a way that is easy to understand.

Christopher was among 40 winners chosen at random from the 8,500 correct entries in the

Children's Contest.

WRITE STUFF

Darren King of Farmington Hills won third place for writing for his piece, "Cries from the Darkness," in the High School Division of the 1997 May Family National Art and Writing Contest sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. King attends Birmingham Detroit Country Day.

*Lease per month based on 1997 Jaguar XJ6 base MSRP of \$55,500 including transportation, excluding financing, registration and taxes. Lessee required credit of 680 or more. No security deposit required. Options not included in lease price. Lessee responsible for excess wear and tear and 8.9¢ per mile for miles in excess of 10,000. See dealer for details. Subject to credit approval and restrictions. Take your usual drivers from dealer and the MSRP. Leasehold. The monthly lease payments of \$699.81 total \$20,994.00. Lessee pays taxes, title and license without dealer service. **Cash due at signing includes taxes, title, license and registration. Excludes insurance. See dealer for details. ©1997 Jaguar Cars.