

# Former Farmington engineer loses battle with cancer

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His family members and friends did everything they could to come to Stephen Crane's aid. But in the end, the Farmington engineer who suffered from a rare form of Leukemia, had to rely on a roll of the dice.

Last week the 28-year-old lost the gamble, but not without a two-and-a-half-year long fight.

"My Friends Care," a non-profit group of family friends, organized to raise funds for medical costs not covered by insurance and bone marrow drives to find a lifesaving match. But despite their efforts, no complete matches were found. So Stephen of West Bloomfield opted to have a 50 percent match bone marrow transplant with his father, Robert G. Crane, 63, as donor.

Stephen suffered from a rare form of

blood cancer, known as Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia. He learned of his illness in June 1996 when he felt tired and had a swollen ankle.

In the chronic phase of his disease for two years, Stephen spent this summer in South Carolina undergoing intensive radiation and chemotherapy before receiving a bone marrow transplant in July. His doctors at Harper Hospital in Detroit recommended the Palmetto Richland Memorial Hospital where they had "great success" with partial match transplants, Jill said.

"You never know when you're going to go into the acute phase," and, Jill said, sometimes transplants can't be done once the disease reaches that stage. "He knew he would have to take the chance and it looked like it would be okay."

Stephen made it through the 100-day, post-marrow transplant waiting period, living in South Carolina to be close to the hospital in case there were complications.

His biopsies showed the Leukemia was gone so he returned to West Bloomfield with his mother in October. But it takes about a year for the new immune system to begin functioning correctly, Jill said.

"We had to be very careful of what he ate—the people he was around," Crane said. "We tried to remain hopeful. That's all you can do."

On Nov. 16, Stephen was in pain, so he was admitted to Harper where he stayed until his passing Monday, Nov. 30.

"You have so much hope that it's going to work and then it doesn't," said Barbara Smith, one of 10 family friends to organize "My Friends Care" which set up fund-raisers and bone marrow drives.

"Steven really faced everything really bravely," Smith said. "He was told from the beginning some of the treatments he would have could kill him."

Results of an autopsy are pending.

but Jill said, Stephen died after his kidneys and liver failed.

"Through-out the disease, Jill said, her son never complained.

"He was a very strong, private individual," she said.

"I know that he tried to stay active," said Smith of Farmington Hills. "I think he was feeling pretty well."

The West Bloomfield High School graduate and a graduate of Northwestern University worked until this spring as an engineer at Northern Ampower Corp. in Farmington.

"Whenever somebody dies, all kinds of



Stephen Crane

good things are said about them," said his former employer Tom Bucansy. "In the case of Steve, he was genuinely a really nice guy."


Not only was Stephen well liked, Bucansy said, but extremely competent in his job.

"Even for selfish reasons, I was hoping he would get over this and come back to our company," he said. "I'll hope her son's passing will be a beacon for others to get involved."

"I hope that everyone will register for the bone marrow national registry because they can save somebody's life," Jill said.

A memorial service was held at Orchard Lake Community Church Dec. 5. Donations in honor of Crane should be made to the Karmanos Cancer Institute.

To contact Karmanos, call (800) 527-6266. For more information on the National Bone Marrow Registry, call the American Red Cross at (313) 833-4440.



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The following are police and fire incidents that occurred in Farmington and Farmington Hills during the past week.

### EMBEZZLEMENT

#### In Farmington Hills:

Police arrested a 31-year-old Detroit woman after the Kmart employee was seen stealing a CD player, CDs, portable clock and other items from the store on Orchard Lake Dec. 8. The woman admitted stealing the goods and offered to pay for them. She said she also stole medicine for her infant.

7-8. During the same night, a cellular phone was stolen after a door window was shattered on a 1996 Ford Explorer at the apartment complex.

### THEFT

#### In Farmington Hills:

Two laptop computers worth \$4,600 were stolen from a trailer at a construction site on Drake Road Dec. 8.

Two rings and two bracelets were stolen from a room at the Botsford Inn on Grand River Dec. 8.

### DRUNKEN DRIVING

#### In Farmington Hills:

Police arrested a Waterford man, 35, for drunken driving on Emmett and Inkster Dec. 7. Police stopped the 1997 Dodge pickup after it ran a stop sign. The driver had to be taken to Botsford Hospital to have blood drawn. He continued to be belligerent in the emergency room.

Police arrested a South Lyon woman, 23, for drunken driving on Grand River and Jacksonville Dec. 8. The driver had a blood alcohol level of .16 percent.

### BREAK-INS

#### In Farmington Hills:

A thief broke the passenger window and stole a cellular phone from a 1996 Mercedes-Benz parked at Kendallwood Apartments Dec.

**Farmington Observer**


(800) 527-6266

Published every Sunday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Main, Farmington, MI 48030-0110. Periodical postage paid at Farmington, MI. Second-class postage paid at Farmington, MI. Postmaster: Send address changes to Observer & Eccentric, Newspapers, 805 E. Main, Farmington, MI 48030-0110. Telephone: (248) 442-2531.

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