

Continuing on with a look back at the community

By RICHARD PEARL
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1999

Two Farmington Public School board members, Linda Eberg and Gary Sharp, filed for re-election.

The undefeated Farmington Soccer Club's Fury '85 won the national under-14 championship.

April

Compaware said it had reached an agreement in principle to move its headquarters to Detroit, but Hills city officials said the move wouldn't be devastating.

Matthew Wade, the Hills man involved in an Internet romance that led to the suicide of a French woman, was charged with misdemeanor marijuana possession after Oakland County prosecutors rejected an assisted-suicide charge. He would plead guilty in May.

Despite district efforts, only

slightly more juniors in 1999 took the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test than in '98.

Time Warner proposed adding digital cable television and high-speed Internet access in its 15-year, \$15-million bid for a new contract with the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission.

Farmington Observer reporter Tim Smith's first book, "Miracle Birth Stories of Very Premature Babies - Little Thumbs Up," was published and he was named *Observer & Eccentric* Journalist of the Year for 1998.

Dr. Raymond F. Schroeder hung up his stethoscope after 44 years as an osteopath in downtown Farmington while Al O'Connor, a 25-year Hills resident, attributed his 104 years to having a whiskey highball each day.

In sports news, Nick Williams, a former Harrison football standout, became the school's first player ever taken in the National Football League draft (16th round, Philadelphia Eagles); Mercy High's girls golf team won its third straight Oakland County championship and the Farmington unified team won the Division I title.

May

The I-275 reconstruction began in earnest, with southbound lanes closed for new pavement and motorists being rerouted.

Farmington schools superintendent Bob Maxfield and Hills Chief Bill Dwyer warned students of crackdowns on anyone making threats even remotely related to the Columbine High massacre in Colorado. However, some students didn't get the message and were suspended.

Botsford Hospital announced it will purchase the historic Botsford Inn on Grand River for \$1.4 million.

Robert Broad's fourth metro-Detroit outlet opened on Grand River in Farmington.

Sharon Hain-Gaber, co-owner of Hearts & Roses Florist at

We will continue our look back in Thursday's Observer

Farmington Hills, won the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce 1999 Athena Award.

Hills council members considered a charter amendment that, for the first time in 25 years, would increase their salaries: To \$5,000 from \$1,800 for council members, to \$7,500 from \$2,700 for mayor.

Higher water and sewerage rates, stemming from Detroit Water and Sewerage increases, were announced for Hills residents and businesses.

In sports, Mercy's golfers won the Detroit Catholic League girls golf title; Farmington High's girls soccer team won their first district championship in a decade; North Farmington won its third consecutive Western Lakes Activities Association boys tennis title and its second straight regional crown and Harrison won its third Western Lakes Activities Association baseball championship in the last five seasons.

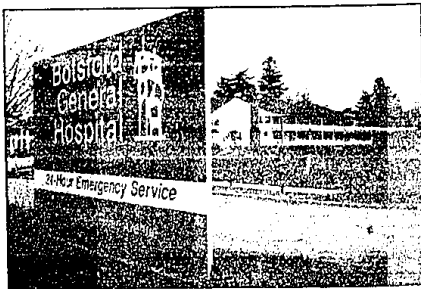
June

The two cities said sad goodbyes to old friends: Judge Michael Hand, Farmington's first district judge, died at age 80; and retired Hills deputy police chief M.J. Spencer, 59, died of a heart attack.

The refurbished M-5 state highway became the Keith Deacon Memorial Highway in honor of the late former city official who championed interchange improvements, while a new sign displayed the new name of the stately, historic building on Grand River: "Governor Warner Mansion... Home of Farmington History."

The Hills council unanimously passed a \$38.8-million general fund budget for 1999-2000.

Farmington's city council approved for 1999-2000 a \$9.4-million budget while noting the property millage tax rate held steady again. The council also



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL ECKHART

Bought: Botsford Hospital bought the historic Botsford Inn in 1999, giving it a new lease on life.

passed along higher water and sewer rates.

Farmington school board incumbents Linda Eberg and Gary Sharp were re-elected despite low voter turnout. In the Clarenceville schools, Sharon Simpson of the Hills ousted incumbent Ron Silye.

An Oakland County circuit court judge ordered a Hills couple to take down a 13-foot-tall backyard playhouse.

The 99 Cent Store in the Downtown Farmington Center closed, making way for a Great Harvest Bread Company outlet.

A Hills group organized by carpenter Dean Unick welcomed its first Kosovar refugee family.

In sports, Mercy High's golfers won their first-ever state championship; North Farmington's Brad Jaffe won the Division II boys No. 1 singles tennis state championship and his team finished second overall.

July

About 4,000 attended Farmington Hills' second annual fireworks show at Founders Sports Park on July 4 to kick off the Founders Festival.

Farmington's city council

announced it will purchase the Farmington Civic Theatre from owner Greg Hohler for \$316,500 and that i.K.A. Inc. of Wixom will run it.

In golf competitions, Andrew Ponke of Farmington Hills shot a 74 to lead the first 18 holes and was declared winner of the 1999 *Observer & Eccentric* Golf Tournament when the second day was rained out. Matt Lee of Farmington Hills, 15, won a sudden-death playoff to take the 1999 Optimist Junior Golf state tournament championship.

Farmington building permits rose 30 percent, largely due to homeowners choosing to stay and remodel. The city's Public Safety Department unveiled its \$830,000 renovation.

Latest U.S. Census estimates said Farmington Hills' population grew by 5,170 to 79,784 between 1990-98, while Farmington's dipped 2.2 percent to 9,945, a loss of 225.

Leslie Reinhold, a 19-year-old Michigan State University journalism major from Saginaw, was chosen the new Miss Farmington/Oakland County in the 26th such pageant.

March

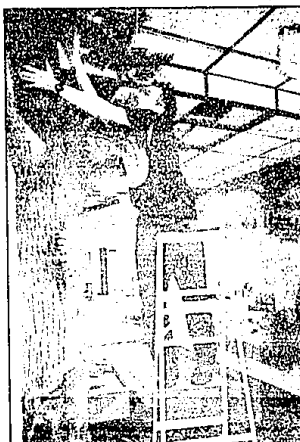
Both cities began studying renovating or replacing the existing 47th District Court building.

Residents along I-275 failed to get the Michigan Department of Transportation to either curb noise from freeway traffic or modify reconstruction plans.

The planned \$72.8 million retail/residential development at 14 Mile/Northwestern/Orchard Lake was further delayed by property-price disputes.

Rumors spread that Compaware would leave the Hills for Detroit and the MedMax retail outlet on Orchard Lake Road south of 13 Mile closed.

Improve: The Farmington Community Library board's first improvement program under a voter-approved bond issue was the downtown Farmington branch. Here work is being completed on the children's section. Other improvements included new computers and windows.



Warner from page A1

on the first mansion committee is Jim McGlinchy, who co-chairs with Penny Lehto the Warner Mansion Development Committee - established in October 1997.

"Everybody is working for the same purpose," said an elated McGlinchy, after the council meeting. "To enhance the mansion and increase its utilization, and raise funds. We look at it as a very, very positive development."

"It's an endorsement by the city council that we've done fairly well."

Councilwoman JoAnne McShane and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Mitchell, who were founding members of the ad hoc committee, will continue on the official city committee.

McShane said the formation of an official committee is important because it gives it clout, at a public spotlight on the former home of Gov. Fred Warner is a high priority.

"It's important now because (as a city committee) they have the legal authority to go after funding, set policies and determine programming," McShane said.

Councilman Arnold Campbell echoed McShane, noting that the committee formation "gives them some credence. ... Now, it's an official committee of the city

where before it was just a volunteer ad hoc committee. I think that should help."

"And it will raise awareness that there is a committee to generate funds."

During the meeting, McShane and others congratulated members of the ad hoc museum development committee and historical commission for their work on behalf of the Warner Mansion. Several, including McGlinchy, were seated in the audience.

"I'm very proud, very thankful of all the hard work you've done," McShane said.

Development of a "Friends of the Mansion" program was viewed one of the top accomplishments of the museum development committee. But also since late 1997, use of the mansion and grounds has escalated to include weddings, special events (such as a 1999 concert by contemporary Christian musician Rufus Harris), photography and other community gatherings.

This year, it is hoped that Farmington Public Schools will further incorporate Warner Mansion lessons and tours into its history curriculum.

According to Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff's report to council members, operation and maintenance of the mansion "has grown to the extent that it

now requires a full independent committee."

Lauhoff added that the formation of the committee "would relieve the historical commission of its responsibilities for the mansion operations."

Due to enable a smooth transition of responsibilities, the historical commission will still handle funds (estimated at \$30,000) for mansion operations through 2000. Beginning next year, that task would move over to the new committee.

Membership also will be familiar. Besides McGlinchy, Lehto, McShane and Mitchell, the new committee is expected to include John Anhut, Dick Carvell, Edwin Eggleston, David Hales, Mike Harrison, Nancy Leonard, William Lindblad and Denise Tawyea. Carvell and Leonard are longtime docents at the museum and members of the historical commission.

Meanwhile, Allen Abdou, Anhut, Carvell, Eggleston, Hales, Harrison, Lindblad and Tawyea were among members of the Warner Mansion Development Committee.

Lauhoff emphasized that the historical commission itself will remain.

"Their primary responsibility was never the mansion," Lauhoff said. "They are charged with overseeing (maintenance of his-

Bench warrant issued for woman

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A Detroit woman who allegedly attempted to defraud a local bank remains free on bond, despite a missed court appearance Jan. 5.

The woman called the court to say she wouldn't be able to make her preliminary exam hearing because she was having trouble finding transportation, Farmington Hills Police Detective Dave Stasch said.

"A bench warrant was issued for her arrest," he added.

Authorities said the woman tried to withdraw \$16,000 from her account at Huntington Bank on 12 Mile Road, after depositing a fraudulent check for more than \$25,000 the previous day. According to an incident report

filed at the Hills Police Department, the woman told a teller she had closed her account at another branch and been given four certified checks because that bank didn't have enough funds to cover the whole amount.

She said she'd come to the Hills branch hoping they would have the cash. The bank manager told police she became suspicious when she saw the recent large deposit.

A Huntington Bank security officer confirmed the check was fraudulent, drawn on a Bank One account. Police found \$9,760 in cash on the woman when she was arrested in the bank lobby. A spokesperson for Bank One couldn't comment on this specific case, because it's under investigation. But Mary Kay Bean said Bank One considers protecting customers from fraud a "high

priority."

It can't be easy. In 1997, banks reported more than \$10 billion in fraudulent checks.

"We use a number of techniques to prevent forged or fraudulent checks," Bean said. "We train our tellers in how to look for them."

Customers can do their part as well, by protecting checkbooks, properly storing new and canceled checks and removing ATM receipts, rather than leaving them at the machine. Bean advises folks to be very careful about sharing checking account information and says people should only give their account numbers to reputable vendors, when doing business by phone or through the Internet.

"Everybody needs to be vigilant," she said.

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