

THE WEEK AHEAD

Think ahead: For all you procrastinators out there, don't forget that tomorrow is Valentine's Day and it comes only once a year.

MONDAY

Meet: The Hills City Council will talk about a Brownfield Development Authority at 5:30 p.m. at city hall.

INDEX

Apartment/E7
Arts/C1
Automotive/H4
Classified/E, G, H
Classified Index/E4
Crossword/E6
Jobs/G1
Malls/C4
Movies/C5
New Homes/E1
Obituaries/A4
Real Estate/E1
Service Guide/H4
Sports/B1
Taste/D1
Travel/C6

Hearing adjourned

BY JONI HUBERD
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Prosecuting and defense attorneys in the trial of Harold David Bloom agree it's time to formally determine whether the 52-year-old Farmington man was insane when he allegedly stabbed his sister to death Dec. 27.

Judge Marla Parker adjourned Bloom's preliminary hearing, held Friday in 47th District Court, until the state completes a forensic examination to confirm a private psychiatrist's finding that Bloom meets the criteria for a plea of insanity. He is charged with first-degree premeditated murder in the death of Susan Carol Disher, 53, of Farmington Hills. Parker agreed to a tentative date for a follow-up hearing at 8:30 a.m. March 24.

"If the court receives a copy of the report prior to that time, we will be in touch with counsel to schedule a hearing within five days," Parker said, noting that's what the law required.

According to Farmington police, Bloom called 911 from

Please see BLOOM, A6

Vagnozzi sets his sights on state House seat

■ It's been known for awhile, but former Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi made it official: he's running for the state House.

BY JONI HUBERD
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Charm. That's how Democratic legislative candidate Aldo Vagnozzi plans to overcome the Farmington/Farmington Hills area's almost overwhelmingly Republican leaning.

Vagnozzi kicked off his campaign for state representative Thursday, with coffee and biscotti at Cafe Cortina in

37TH DISTRICT

Farmington Hills, an event attended by about 30 of his most ardent supporters.

"He wants to do for you in Lansing what he has always done for you in Farmington Hills," said campaign manager Vicki Barnett, who served with Vagnozzi on the Hills City Council. "He will meet the needs of those he was elected to serve."

Prompted by the issue of "home rule" to run against the incumbent, Republican Andrew Raczkowski, Vagnozzi said lawmakers have maintained a steady assault on local governments' rights to

run their own communities. In particular, he cited a bill he said would have prevented Farmington Hills from enforcing a "strict" tobacco ordinance designed to prevent sales to minors.

"That fight is why my campaign is solidly backed by our own two city governments," Vagnozzi said.

Barnett said three-quarters of Farmington and Hills elected officials have publicly supported Vagnozzi's campaign. He served on the Hills City Council for 12 years, four of those as mayor.

Vagnozzi was particularly proud of how local officials led the fight against

Please see ANNOUNCE, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLEY
Announced: Aldo Vagnozzi's announcement was accompanied by coffee and biscotti, an Italian cookie.

Wedded bliss begins at city halls

BY JONI HUBERD
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Of all the services offered by city government — things like street sweeping, pothole repairs, park maintenance and cleaning up goose droppings — one more than most reflects the true, romantic spirit celebrated on Valentine's Day.

As allowed by law, mayors in both Farmington and Farmington Hills have the authority to unite loving couples in the bonds of holy wedlock. But each

has a very different take on how that authority should be used.

"It was kind of hard for me to do at first," admitted Hills Mayor Nancy Bates, explaining she's something of a traditionalist when it comes to marriage. "But I think they're entitled to this service by their city."

Over the course of several mayoral terms, Bates has married about 16 couples. Some have been city employees, others were mixed-faith couples who chose to avoid the entire question of religious ceremony.

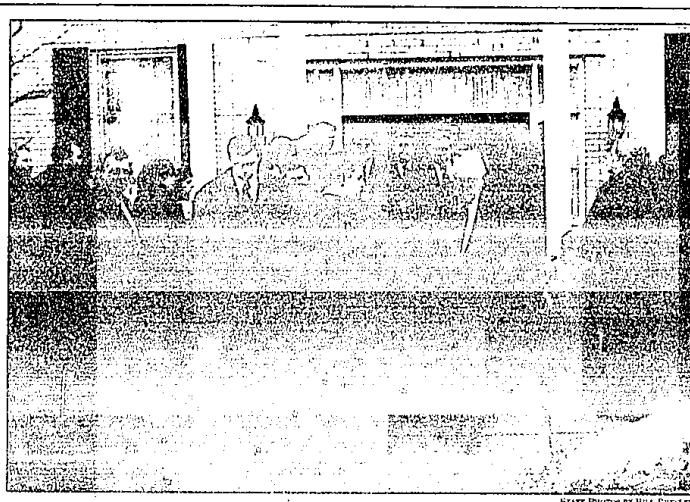
Some couples choose to have both civil and church ceremonies, a practice common in foreign countries, Bates said. Whether the couples have been outfitted in full wedding regalia or T-shirts and shorts, she has enjoyed every ceremony.

When it comes to romance, though, one couple more than most stands out in her memory. They were older folks, and Bates could see how much in love they were by the way they held hands and the looks in their eyes.

"I think you have to be really lonely once to appreciate how wonderful it is to have someone in your life who loves you," Bates said.

Marrying people by the picturesque fountain in front of city hall is one of

Please see BLISS, A6



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLEY
Service: Pallbearers carry the casket of Red Wing hockey great Sid Abel from Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in downtown Farmington Friday morning. A portion of Farmington Road was closed for the funeral procession.

Saying goodbye Hockey greats remember legendary Sid Abel

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

Family, friends and hockey stars alike paid their last respects Friday to Sid Abel, a former Detroit Red Wing player, manager, and announcer known by the nickname "Boat Nose."

Sidney Gerald Abel, 81, of Farmington Hills was laid to rest at Glen Eden Cemetery in Livonia following a funeral at Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in downtown Farmington. He was born Feb. 22, 1918,

in Canada and died Feb. 8 at Botsford General Hospital.

Abel represented the Detroit Red Wings for a good part of the past 60 years as a player, coach, general manager and broadcaster.

He played for 12 seasons with the Wings and achieved fame as a member of Detroit's "Production Line" of the 1950s that included Gordie Howe and Ted Lindsay. He was inducted into the NHL Hall of Fame in 1969.

Please see ABEL, A6



Buddies: Gordie Howe and Bill Gadsby talk following the service.

Goodwill and faith take her to Africa

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

When Farmington resident Sharon Davis visits Africa at the end of February, it won't be to buy souvenirs, to go on safari or to celebrate Black History Month.

She's going to visit Malawi to perform service work for the Lions Club and to meet others who share her religious faith, Bha'i. She and three traveling companions plan to help donate eyeglasses for the Lions.

Located north of Mozambique in southeast Africa, Malawi isn't regarded as a hot travel destination, said Davis, who began taking anti-malaria drugs this week to prepare. Malawi doesn't have the safari appeal of Tanzania and Kenya, the Indian Ocean coast of South Africa, or the exotic draw of Morocco or



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLEY
Ready: Dick Carvel delivered a box of used eyeglasses from the local Lions organization to Betty Alexander and Sharon Davis.

Egypt. And she said she doesn't even think about taking a dip in scenic Lake Malawi — it's full of enough parasites to make the uninitiated sick.

Parasites and deadly diseases aside, Davis said she's looking forward to her trip to Malawi, which won't be her first trip abroad. So far she's visited South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, Israel and Mexico. She would like to visit Europe and West Africa in the future.

The driving force behind her travels is her desire to meet and help people combined with an insatiable wanderlust. She said she was also particularly drawn to the "smiling faces and happy hearts" phrase used to describe Malawi people.

"I want to be a part of that," Davis said. "I also want to meet some more Bha'i friends in that part of the world." Flexibility and adaptability are vital traits to have when visiting foreign lands, Davis said.

Please see DAVIS, A6

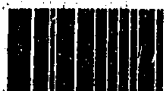
Malawi facts

A landlocked African country located in southeastern Africa and is roughly the size of Pennsylvania. Lake Malawi, formerly called Lake Nyasa, takes up most of the country's eastern border.

- Population: 10,000,416
- Capital: Lilongwe, population 260,000
- Largest city: Blantyre, population 399,000
- Languages: English and Chichewa
- Religions: Christian, 75 percent; Islam, 20 percent
- Agriculture: Tobacco, sugar cane, cotton and tea
- Natural resources: Limestone, uranium, coal and bauxite
- Exports: Tobacco, coffee, tea, sugar, peanuts and wood products
- Major trading partners: United Kingdom, United States, Japan and Germany

Source: Time Atlantic, 2000

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