

IN THE PAPER TODAY

It's a New Year: The secret to weight-loss success is often in the mind. Read helpful suggestions from Weight Watchers and Botsford Hospital's new Solutions program. See HomeTown Life on Page C-5.



Honored as one of the best Lifestyle sections in Michigan

Murder conspiracy trial delayed

By TIM SMITH
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The trial date in the murder-filicide case of defendant Lisa McIntosh again has been pushed back. According to Oakland County Circuit Court spokeswoman Libby Evans, the case was adjourned by attorney request from Dec. 15 until 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 6. The latest adjournment followed one requested by defense attorneys in October.

Originally, the case was assigned to Oakland Circuit Judge Jessica Cooper. But with Cooper's November election to the Michigan Court of Appeals, the McIntosh case will be tried by another judge. Cooper's final day on the bench in Pontiac is Friday.

"Once she won the election she was not going to be able to preside over the trial," said Gregory Townsend, the Oakland County assistant prosecutor assigned to the case. "She wasn't even doing guilty pleas because she was not going to be around to do the sentencing. She also took herself off of criminal cases."

"I don't have a problem with it. The new judge will have to try it," McIntosh, a Westland resident, is awaiting trial on a felony charge of conspiracy to commit murder. She was bound over for trial by 47th District Judge Frederick Harris during a

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Mon-Fri 2:30-5:30 to pick up
6th-grader in Bloomfield take
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STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BAZZELL

Quick-thinking Hills boy helps save dad's life

By JONI HUBBED
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Kevin Penny and his father, Mark, don't remember much about the morning of Nov. 19, but they'll soon have something to remind them.

On Jan. 8, Kevin will receive a life-saving award from the Farmington Hills Fire Department, recognizing the calm, level-headed actions that helped save his father's life. Kevin is 6 years old, a first-grader at Wooddale Elementary.

The night before had been a sleep-over celebration of brother Kyle's 4th birthday. The party guests woke

up early to play with Kyle's new toys, and Mark joined them, apparently not realizing he was growing more and more ill.

"Mark doesn't have any memory from six to nine, as his glucose was dropping," his wife, Jeanette said. "It's that insidious part of the disease."

Mark was diagnosed with diabetes before the Pennys married. Their children have always known Dad takes insulin shots twice a day and can't eat sweets.

On that Sunday morning, they learned what happens when Dad's blood sugar plummets to dangerously low levels.

Jeanette was in a guest bedroom helping her sister, who was visiting from England.

"Kevin came in and got me right away. He said, 'I tried to wake Daddy up. He fainted. I can't get him up,'" Jeanette recalled.

At first, she thought Mark might be playing a game with the kids. But when she saw him prone on the kitchen floor, blood flowing from his mouth, Jeanette knew her husband was in trouble.

She dialed 9-1-1, and emergency help arrived within minutes. Mark didn't regain consciousness until

Please see KEVIN, A5

Lifesaver: Six-year-old Kevin Penny will receive a life-saving award from the Farmington Hills Fire Department Monday night, for the quick action he took when his father collapsed last November.

Craft store is on the move

By TIM SMITH
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The owner of downtown Farmington retailer Deb's Crafts is planning on shutting down her Grand River store and operating a streamlined business out of her home.

"It was a hard decision to make, believe me," said Deb Watson, who split the last five years based out of two different locations downtown.

Watson is now conducting a half-off sale of most of her store's inventory and will end her stay as of March 1, when her lease with Farmington Holding Co. runs out.

After that, she will work out of her Farmington home, creating custom-made gift baskets and teddy bears. She intends to keep working with several corporate clients and taking orders via the Internet.

An announcement of Watson's move was made during Wednesday's Farmington Downtown Development Authority meeting.

In the report from DDA Executive Director Judy Downey, she described Watson as "a key retailer for going out and getting the job done" in the downtown retail district.

The combination of high rent and long hours took a toll on Watson, who now wants to attend real estate classes and even take a vacation once in a while.

Also, the last few years have been tough on her from a health standpoint, having to overcome a bout with

Please see DEB'S, A3

Automatic weapon used in Hills holdup

By JONI HUBBED
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills Police say two masked men, armed with a semi-automatic weapon, stormed into Pizza Hut on 10 Mile Road and left with nearly \$1,400 from the store's safe.

According to a police report, they hit the store just before closing time.

The suspects walked in shortly after 10 p.m. Friday evening, brandished the weapon and ordered six employees and the store manager to the floor. Asked whether they wanted to have the registers opened, the thieves said they wanted to get into the safe.

An employee opened it for them, and they placed the cash in a blue and white plastic bag. One of the suspects

pulled a nearby phone from the wall.

Employees also told police that one of the suspects slipped, fell and dropped what appeared to be a second weapon, a .38 caliber handgun. He quickly picked it up again as they made their escape.

Employees said the two men left on foot. There was no sign of a getaway vehicle.

Both were black, between 5-foot-11 and 6-foot tall, with thin build. One was wearing a red FUBU shirt, a face mask, blue pants and black skull cap; the other was dressed in a red and black sweater and black pants and wore a scarf to hide his face.

Anyone with information about the robbery is asked to call the Hills Police Department, 473-9660.

Election, zoning, I-275 were big news stories in the Hills

By JONI HUBBED
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Whether it was the start of the new millennium or just the end of the old one, 2000 was a year of change and controversy in Farmington Hills.

While two well-known and beloved businesses — Blakney's restaurant on Grand River and Sanders sweet shop on 12 Mile Road — closed their doors, several others made the city their new home. Busch's market has opened at Grand River and Drake, as has a newly remodeled Kroger on 10 Mile Road. The former Crowley's department store was demolished last year and will be replaced by a Farmer Jack.

The streetscape on Grand River changed dramatically with the demolition of an abandoned boat yard and several other businesses, to make way for a proposed new shopping center. The city's first tattoo parlor opened in April, in a strip mall near 12 Mile and Orchard Lake roads. The show went on for the Farmington Players, who moved into temporary quarters at Borders while their historic barn is being replaced by a

new theater building. Their plans to use the facility as a base for more community outreach fits well with the city's Cultural Arts Master Plan, finalized and approved late in the year.

City officials closed out their year by inkling a franchise agreement with Time Warner cable, ending nearly three years of contentious negotiations, and approving plans to sell bonds for a new 47th District Court building on the municipal campus. Throughout the year, they struggled with state officials over local contributions for tax abatements and issues related to local control or "home rule."

A push to involve youth in government led to the establishment of a youth advisory council, spearheaded by students David Kinchen and Arceel Al-Jawahri, both of whom attended the 2000 National League of Cities conference in Boston. Kinchen and Al-Jawahri were also elected governor of Boys and Girls State, a mock government event sponsored by the American Legion.

Students from Harrison, Farmington and North Farmington High Schools

Please see IN THE HILLS, A3

Fire and ice not nice



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BAZZELL

Hot spots: Farmington Hills firefighters battled a blaze that caused \$150,000 in damage to a home in the 29000 block of Grayfield early Tuesday afternoon. No one was at home when the fire started; investigators are still trying to determine the cause.