

Farmington Observer & Centric

Volume 87 Number 58

Monday, May 10, 1976

Farmington, Michigan

10 Pages

Twenty Five Cents

Cops confront city over contract terms

By RON GARENSKI

If Farmington Hills police officers win their case against the city in Oakland County Circuit Court, it would cost taxpayers an additional \$500,000 to meet their pay demands.

The Hills patrolmen have taken the city to court over a clause in their contract dealing with cost-of-living benefits.

If Circuit Court Judge Robert Tempkin rules in their favor, each officer's salary would increase by \$4,000, retroactive to the signing of the contract in 1972.

This means that top pay for patrolmen would increase from \$17,000 to \$21,000. Starting pay for a Hills policeman is \$14,000.

"Presently, our police rank among the top paid men in the state. If this case prevails, they will rank among the top in the United States," says Hills City Manager George Majors.

"Obviously that is not the intent of their contract as far as we are concerned. They are making good money right now, but they want an additional \$4,000 on top of that \$17,000."

THE PROBLEM between the city and the police officers started with approval of their present contract.

After the contract was approved in 1972, police officers said certain cost-of-living clauses could be interpreted differently.

"If read in a certain way, it has the effect of doubling cost-of-living benefits," Majors says, "but definitely that was not

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our intent when we wrote the contract.

So the city later offered an amendment to the contract that would take care of this cost-of-living confusion. The command officers signed the amendment about a year ago, but the patrol officers didn't.

So both parties went to court to have the situation clarified.

The case now is in Oakland County Circuit Court, but has been suspended until June 7," Majors explained.

"The way I see it, no one in their right mind would award the patrolmen the decision they are looking for," he continued.

"They want more money, but we aren't in a position to give it to them and that wasn't the city's initial intent when it presented the contract to the officers."

Salaries for the Hills Police Department are the biggest single expense in the city's budget.

The Farmington Hills budget totals \$33 million. Of that amount, 23 per cent of

\$149 million pays police employees, Majors said.

"INCREASING THEIR salaries by \$4,000 would take a lot out of the city's budget. Since it already is the biggest expense, \$500,000 would make their portion of the budget even larger."

"The police officers are members of Teamsters Local 314," he added. "They have brought in the big gun lawyers from their national union to assist them in their battle with the city."

"I feel the judge will rule in our favor because this cost-of-living increase would be too much for the city," the city manager said.

"Since it wasn't the city's intent when the contract was written, and since the command officers have approved the amendment to the contract, the city should fair well in court when the case resumes in June."



Spring fix up

Grand River continues to get its facelift in the City of Farmington as these workers labor to fix the curbs. The city's main thoroughfare is

being refurbished as one of the city's major street improvement projects. (Photo by Cyd Abatti)

Electrocution spurs action to protect kids in classroom

The electrocution of an East Junior High School student has spurred state legislators to introduce a bill requiring safer classrooms for students.

Action sought on expressway entrance ramp

Maple Street residents in the City of Farmington would like to have their street paved only if the state department of highways would cooperate.

Presently, city officials are contemplating paving the stretch between Grand River and the I-96 expressway. Residents, however, fear an already bad situation will be made worse if their street is paved with concrete.

"An entranceway to the I-96 expressway located on Freedom at the south end of Maple has made the street a driveway for vehicles wishing to enter the expressway, according to residents."

Adding to their problem is a "No Right" turn sign on Freedom, which causes east-bound drivers, wishing to enter the expressway, to first turn onto Maple.

"I'll betcha I have 30 or 40 cars a day turn around in my driveway as they can get on the expressway," said one disgruntled resident at last week's public hearing.

AT TIMES I'VE counted as many as 60 cars in a day. Some of them use my lawn to complete their circle," he continued.

Dog saves Hills couple

A barking dog saved Mr. and Mrs. James Szczesniak of Farmington Hills from being trapped inside their burning home.

The Szczesniaks, 35784 Congress, were awakened early Thursday morning by their dog's distressed barking.

The couple crawled out of the house, and fire officials said, they were fortunate to escape alive.

The fire caused extensive smoke and heat damage throughout the home in the Independence Green Subdivision and completely gutted the family room.

Officials determined the fire was caused by careless smoking.

The fire was reported at 7:54 a.m. Thursday. Officials said James Szczesniak apparently had been smoking the evening before and left his cigar smoldering in the family room.

When his daughter left for school in the morning, she let enough oxygen into the room to set off the blaze, fire officials said.

rounded metal buffer in shop class.

The bill was introduced in the House Thursday afternoon by State Rep. David Bonior (D-31, Clemens) as a "means to put school inspection authority all in one place."

The bill, as proposed by Bonior, would make two specific amendments to the state's Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The major provisions clearly specify the state department of labor would have the authority to inspect and issue citations if violations of the act exist in school shop areas, a spokesman for Bonior's office said Friday afternoon.

"This would mean the labor department would be able to inspect all school machines, machine tools and experimental areas such as chemistry or physics classrooms," James Volman, a Bonior aide said.

THE SECOND major amendment would be to include the protection and safety of students under the department of labor.

"The present law would be changed to have all students covered by the labor department while they are using equipment in a school shop area. It would require them to wear specific safety equipment such as glasses and aprons," Volman said.

"Generally, these precautions are followed throughout the state. This amendment would protect students under the law and require them to wear the proper safety equipment while in these areas."

The bill is designed to cover all school shop areas and would cover such facilities

as the one in which Kourjian was electrocuted.

The investigation that followed Kourjian's death revealed several violations of the state's Occupational Health and Safety Act not only at East, but throughout the district.

During the investigation, state officials discovered the problems that existed between the department of labor and department of education over which one had the authority to inspect school facilities on a regular basis.

This problem and Kourjian's death prompted local lawmakers to consider corrective legislation.

STATE REP. Wilbur Brotherton (R-Farmington) and Oakland County Prosecutor E. Brooks Patterson also have been working with state officials in an effort to change the present state law to protect students and make sure accidents like the electrocution never happen again.

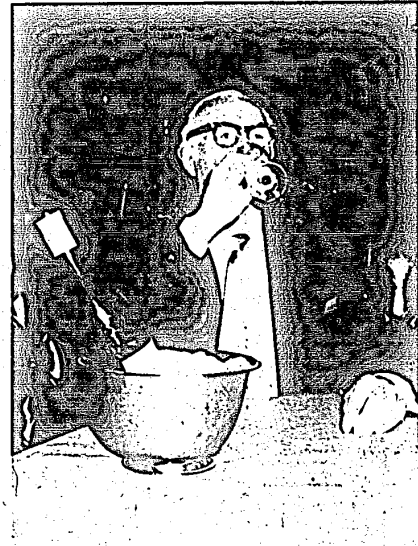
Brotherton and Patterson have met with departments of labor officials to consider what the state should do to eliminate the problems existing between the labor department and the department of education when it comes to inspecting school facilities.

Patterson also has met with the state's association of school principals to review the law and consider what proposals they have concerning the impact of the East electrocution.

Presently, the labor department and department of education share authority to inspect schools.

"Both departments have authority to make decisions concerning inspections, but

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Harry Waugh, wine connoisseur, enjoys a glass of wine during a wine-tasting session in the Roman Terrace, Farmington Hills. "People interested in wine are the nicest of all," he said, referring to wine drinkers he has met on his lecture tours.

Little old winebibber uncorks secrets

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Wine-tasting is a serious business. Seven men equipped a cluttered table in the Roman Terrace, Farmington Hills, and prepared to undertake the solemn task of enjoying a rare, 10-year-old cabernet sauvignon.

"Hold the glass by the stem," instructed Robert Simburger, a member of Les Amis du Vin, a group devoted to educating the public toward a greater enjoyment of wine and food.

"If you touch the glass, the heat of your hand will alter the taste of the wine," he explained.

"Hold the glass by the stem and gently swirl the wine. You don't have to hold it above the table. Then you're beginning to learn this. Its best to keep the glass on the table."

"Now, sniff the aroma. Put your nose into the glass. Try all that's why they call it a wine's nose," he said, dipping his nose into his glass.

"Marvelous," David Orlington, another member, said. "I really can't say that," he amended after a moment's hesitation. "Harry, what do you think?"

"I MUST SAY I think I can say, this is a marvelous wine," Harry Waugh said in a satisfied tone.

The wine-tasting session with the "Friends of Wine" was part of Waugh's American lecture tour.

Wine is more than an avocation for

Waugh, a resident of England who is director of Chateau Latour and author of five books about wine. "I've been drinking wine since I was brought up with wine-tasting," he said. "Circumstances led me to it."

He left school at 16 and became a gate-man at a Greyhound bus station in England. He entered the wine business as a 21-a-week clerk at a winery.

"I started at the bottom and I'm proud of it," he said.

Wine-tasting is a talent, like singing. "I happen to have a sense of taste and smell," Waugh explained. "You're born with certain gifts."

"It's like singing, you have to keep in practice."

Wine-tasters are serious about the kinds of wine they taste. "Rose," Waugh said, in dismay. "Rose is not a serious wine."

"A young person should start with a Beaujolais," he continued. "That's a good wine to eat your teeth on, so to speak. It doesn't cost that much either. About \$4."

"IT'S EASY to drink," he added. "You can progress on to a Bordeaux later."

Experienced wine drinkers should be able to distinguish different shades of taste and fragrance in a good wine. They may be able to distinguish the taste left by the oak cask in which the wine was stored.

Good wine becomes better as it grows older, said Waugh.

"A young, expensive wine that tastes

bad will probably mature into a fine wine," he said.

A young wine that tastes good may unfortunately age into a poor wine.

There are other factors which influence the taste of a wine.

"The weather, the district, the manager of the vineyard influence the way a wine tastes," Orlington explained.

"It's the tannic acid in the wine that gives a good, young wine its bitter taste," Waugh explained.

Tannic acid, derived from fruit, is used to clarify the wine.

When a friend brought a bottle of 1850

vintage port to Waugh's home, Waugh let his son and daughter taste it. "Just so they can say later on that they tasted a fine, old port," he explained.

His twin son and daughter were born two years ago when Waugh was 69.

"THE DAILY MAIL had headlines about it this big," he said, holding his thumb and fingers about two inches apart.

He pulled three color photographs of them from his wallet. One, fittingly enough, shows a tiny, blond girl trying to carry a bottle of wine without dragging it.

"I'm starting them off right," he said with a laugh.

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PIONEER DAYS

A speaker at a recent Farmington Historical meeting tells about the pains and pleasures of early Farmington settlers. To see how it was, turn to page 4A.