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Twenty-Five Cents

Fire victims are granted grace period

By LYNN ORR

Another seven months will pass before Valley View Condominium residents, who watched their apartment homes go up in smoke last fall, will be back in their Grand River homes.

The blackened shell of the 16-unit building is scheduled for demolition May 15, Nov. 13, one year after the fire, is the target date for moving in, according to George Thomas, the condominium association's spokesman.

"We've had a lot of hurdles on this, but we believe things can get underway soon," Thomas promised the Farmington City Council Monday night.

The site is surrounded by fencing to keep out children and looters. Suitcases, broken furniture and mattresses stand out amidst the rubble.

The city's building department notified the self-governing association that the shell must come down by April 15. Councilmembers agreed to the 30-day extension in light of the association's assurances that work was progressing.

THE RECONSTRUCTION will cost \$50,000, Thomas said. The rebuilding process was slowed by insurance negotiations, updating of the original plans to meet current city codes, and other problems, he added.

Some 85 items involving specifications of the building had to be negotiated with the insurance company, he said.

The original architect of the building was contacted to do the plans. The cost of reconstructing the building will be covered by insurance.

One co-owner and one renter of the complex were without homeowners' insurance for their personal belongings. However, everyone else had homeowners' insurance.

The co-owners insurance covered the building itself, Thomas explained. "Where co-owners' stops, the home-

owners usually takes over," he said. Most of the burned-out residents rented apartments for six months or one year in the nearby area, and everybody wants to come back, Thomas said.

"We've even had people inquire about vacancies," he said. Although it is believed an electrical problem caused the fire that gutted the two-story building, the cause has never been officially determined, Thomas said.

The fire began in the early morning hours in a vacant apartment. Although the smoke alarm was activated, no one heard it. The fire apparently smoldered for some time before igniting other apartments. Firefighters from the City of Farmington, Farmington Hills, and Novi battled the blaze for more than six hours in freezing temperatures in a futile attempt to save the western end of the building.

While the firefighters aided residents in escaping the blaze, the fire quickly spread across the roof of the building. As the day progressed, walls buckled and crashed to the ground, while the intense heat deformed steel girders.

Eleven people, including three of the complex's residents, were treated at Beisford General Hospital.

The fire originated in an upper unit on the south side of the center of the building, according to Public Safety Director Dan Byrnes. Void spaces which act as sound barriers between apartments lent themselves to the rapid spread of the fire.

Onlookers surmised insufficient water pressure from old water mains may have hampered the efforts to put out the blaze. Byrnes believes additional water would not have saved the building.

It was the city's biggest fire in 20 years, since the fire which destroyed the National Food store at Ten Mile and Orchard Lake Road in 1958.



The ravaged remains of last winter's Valley View Condominium fire still remain. But the Condominium Association is struggling to have the structure rebuilt and the residents moved back in by

November, the anniversary month of the blaze. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Politics, athletics top interests

Club revival hits high schools

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

After suffering through a slump in the late '60s, high school activities have come into their own again.

That's the word from Farmington district administrators who've watched their students become more involved in school government and athletic events.

But the types of clubs which are undergoing a resurgence are indicative of a change in the high school life-style over the past 10 years, according to administrators.

Creative writing, bowling, student council, service organizations, band, casting and drama groups are part of the high school scene.

But activities such as chess or skiing, which can be pursued outside of school are ignored by many students. Unlike their older brothers and sisters, the students can pursue these activities on their own. The clubs are unnecessary.

"Kids are more sophisticated

"Kids act a lot differently than they did. They are more career and goal oriented. They spend a lot more time pursuing these things."

—Clarence Shrewbridge

today," said Clarence Shrewbridge, Farmington High School administrator. "The formal structured clubs are passe."

Club which once helped advertise a career preference are also on the wane in Farmington area high schools.

IN THEIR place, student council activities and athletics have captured the interest of students, according to administrators.

Competition with these new favorites and additions to the school curriculum have sounded the death knell for such career clubs as Future Teach-

ers, Nurses or Homemakers of America.

"Students get opportunities in these careers through their classes. We teach nursing arts. When kids are actively involved, the clubs aren't that necessary," said Shrewbridge.

"Kids act a lot differently than they did. They are more career and goal oriented. They spend a lot more time pursuing these things."

Career clubs are non-existent in North Farmington and Harrison. Part of the reason for the lack of interest in this type of organization also stems from the trend toward after-school employment, according to administrators.

What does excite students is activities around school issues and school government. Student councils once again are objects of interest instead of derision on campus, according to administrators.

The rah-rah spirit that would have resulted in a student being booted off campus 10 years ago is now applauded. That spirit packs the student councils and service clubs with members.

"IT ROUNDS a student out," explained Timothy Kay, 18, of Harrison High School. "You learn how to deal with people. You can get closer to the teachers. It's very rewarding."

"It's very enjoyable to work for a cause," said the senior class board president.

One of the reasons he was drawn to activity in the school is a desire to become involved in the system.

"It's worthwhile," he sums up. Some administrators agree that the present attitude is a healthy one.

"The key to a young person's success in high school is how much he acts beyond the academic arena," said Shrewbridge.

Students who only attend classes are more likely to become involved in

trouble or have problems, he said. School clubs offer students an opportunity to become involved in useful pursuits.

"Kids like to be doing things instead of sitting by themselves," said Clayton Graham, North Farmington High School principal.

Outside of high school offices, athletics is a big drawing card for students searching for a club.

"Athletics have increased drastically," said Buller.

THE FIRST year girls' track was offered, 1976, about 25 students showed up. One year later, 52 girls were interested in the team, according to Buller.

Out of the 1,180 students in Harrison High School, Buller estimates that 252 are involved in athletics.

"I can think back to the old days when we would wonder if we've had enough students for one team," he said.

Some schools have clubs that shine through the membership fight because their students are eager beavers. Service clubs are a good example, administrators say.

At Farmington High School, sophomores raised money for a class project to discuss the perils of smoking with elementary school children.

The school's National Honor Society chapter raised 110 pints of blood in a recent drive.

At North Farmington, members of the radio club are raising money so students could have their own broadcasting facilities.

But the club that sticks out in Buller's mind at Harrison High School is now extinct. Sporting the unlikely name of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the organization attracted members who were non-Christian and unathletic.

THE closest some members came to a football field was when they played in the band.

"It was a nice social evening. We socialized, then talked about problems in the school," remembered Buller.

As with most clubs that founder, the basic membership graduated and was left.

But students can start any club as long as they have a sponsor on the faculty.

Physician mixes music, medicine

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Dr. Conrad Lam's interests in music and medicine has, over the years, taken him across the country, through the founding of two marching bands, and to a breakthrough in heart surgery.

Lam, 72, of Farmington, has addressed medical conventions in North and South America, was inducted into several honorary positions on both continents and merited a listing in the 1970-71 edition of Who's Who in America.

And in spite of the acclaim for his dedication, he is equally at ease speaking about his profession or relating off anecdotes about the Franklin Village Band.

The ability to keep his perspective carried him through the decision to attempt a different type of heart surgery in April 1950. In an effort to ease the pain of one of his patients, Lam and his associate, Dr. H.H. Aram, transplanted the main heart artery, the aorta.

THE PATIENT was in great pain, suffering from a swollen aorta. "He was certainly going to die. We thought we could try a graft from a dead person since there were no plastic tubes for that use at the time, like there is today," remembered Lam.

The two doctors from Henry Ford Hospital embarked on a search for a second aorta. They were hampered by the unprecedented use intended for the aorta. Some persons feared a lawsuit from the family of the dead donor.

But their search ended in the Wayne County Morgue, where they discovered a healthy aorta in the body of a man who had died from severe burns. The operation bypassed the patient's aorta. Although the procedure allowed the man an extra three months in comfort, he eventually died when the old aorta developed an infection.

Lam, who hesitates calling the operation a success, theorizes that the

infection might have begun because the old aorta was receiving an inadequate amount of blood.

At the time, the media and the medical profession hailed it as a breakthrough, but Lam remained aloof from the fuss.

"AT THAT TIME I was more interested in another part of the heart other than the aorta and I didn't push this method very hard," he explained.

"I was more interested in the micro-values of the heart."

His interest in the workings of the heart have led him to eschew retirement and take on the position of consultant emeritus at Henry Ford Hospital.

He intends "never" to resign. From his office at the hospital, Lam oversees a few patients and offers his services as a consultant. It's the type of occupation he had envisioned for himself since he was a young boy growing up in Ogelsby, Texas, a town of 400 persons.

His young imagination was fired by the sight of the town doctor driving a Buick runabout and reading about the remote town of Battle Creek, known then as a health resort.

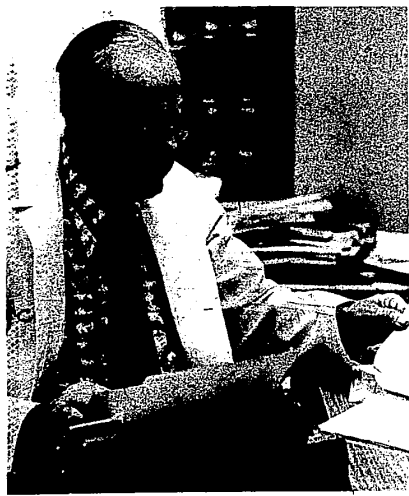
As a 7-year-old, he amused his mother by printing cards that read, "Conrad Lam, sergen, Battle Creek, Michigan." Now, Lam is amused by the almost prophetic note in the childhood project.

"I always wanted to be a surgeon," he said, leaning back in his chair, smoothing his brown and white print tie.

UPON CLOSER examination, the print became distinguishable. "The surgeon general of the United States warns that cigarette smoking can be hazardous to your health" is the familiar admonition printed on Lam's tie.

In his office hang plaques testifying to his dedication to medicine and his continuing interest in music. Harding

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Dr. Conrad Lam, 72, is still giving his time to his profession at Henry Ford Hospital at an age when most men are retired.

inside

EVERYTHING WENT

"Sale. Everything goes," the ad began. And everything went because Patrick Todd had advertised on the pages of our classified section. "We had a terrific response!" he told us after the successful sale. You, too, can quickly clear out those household goods you no longer need. Advertise in your hometown newspaper.

DIAL DIRECT
644-1070

Business Ads.....9C
Classified Ads.....11-22C
Club Circuit.....2B
Community Calendar.....3B
Editorial Opinion.....29A
Sports.....Section C
Suburban Life.....Section B

City raps Federal's for non-conformance

Federal's Department Store in downtown Farmington did some rearranging of its operations, much to the chagrin of the city fathers.

The department store converted 8,700 square feet of its retail space into warehouse and storage areas, without taking out building permits for construction and electrical work.

In addition, the rearranging doesn't comply to city ordinances.

Warehousing and storage uses are excluded from the central business district, according to City Mgr. Robert Deadman. And the store has been notified of its problem.

"We believe the city code clearly states that the type of use into which Federal's has converted a portion of

their store is prohibited." Deadman told the council. "We are uncertain what position Federal's, Inc. will take in this matter."

INCREASED truck traffic noticed by residents brought the store's rearrangements to the city's attention. With about 64,000 square footage in the building, about 25 per cent is devoted now to prohibited uses.

Deadman has notified Steven West, chairman of the board of the firm, that the store must be returned to its original use. Tickets for code violations and/or possible court action are the alternatives facing the council if the store refuses to comply with building ordinances.