

Spy boxes go, as Nichols debugs cop shop

By LYNN ORR

Farmington Hills Police Chief John Nichols is cleaning out the bugs in the police department—literally.

During recent contract negotiations with the patrol officers union, a revelation about electronic devices in the police station surprised Nichols, who took over the force last fall. "I didn't know they were there, but

quite frankly, it's not in my management style," Nichols explained. He removed the five devices last week, according to Ptl. Timothy Romps. "It makes things more honest and aboveboard," commented Romps, an eight-year veteran of the force and union steward for Teamsters Local No. 214, which represents the patrol officers.

Romps said it was "common knowledge" among the officers that the devices existed. "It's a real pleasure working with John Nichols there. He was surprised about this and took immediate action," Romps added. A receiver in the captain of the patrol officers' office controlled the five 6-by-4 inch boxes located above the drop ceiling in various parts of the station, according to Nichols.

"They weren't designed for clandestine spying," Nichols explained. The "unsophisticated" devices may have been used to monitor the front desk and relations with the public, he surmised. I don't think they were particularly effective."

CONCERN about the devices among the patrol officers prompted the discussion with Nichols during contract talks about past practice, Romps said.

The union's contract with Farmington Hills expired June 30, 1978. Negotiations continue for a new settlement. Getting rid of the surveillance devices makes for a much better atmosphere, Romps added.

When and how installation of the devices occurred is questionable, Nichols said. He had no knowledge of their presence. Romps assumes installation took

place under the tenure of former police chief Ron Holko during remodeling. Holko resigned from the force in January, 1977, shortly after knowledge about his private security business in Southfield surfaced publicly.

Holko is believed to be living out of state at this time and could not be reached for comment. It is not known whether city funds financed the installation of the equipment.

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Council nixes higher towers

By PATRICIA LACROIX

Ham and citizen's band radio enthusiasts got a unanimous "negative" from the Farmington Hills City Council Monday night to, as a zoning amendment which would have allowed them to erect more powerful transmission towers was defeated.

Currently, the city allows residents to erect 25-foot towers with exceptions granted in special instances by the zoning board of appeals. Proof that a person is restricted from enjoying his hobby has been reason enough in the past for an exception to be approved.

The amendment, if it had been approved, would have allowed residents to construct towers up to 75 feet without receiving special permission. However, no tower could be taller than its distance from a neighbor's property.

Claude Coates, planning consultant for the city, said the issue was brought before the city council because of the large number of exceptions that the zoning board had been asked to grant.

"Twenty-five feet is simply not enough for the full equipment utilization in the pursuit of their hobby," Coates said. "The zoning board of appeals is having a difficult time dealing with this because of the large number of cases."

Two questions kept resurfacing during the lengthy discussion, including the aesthetic appearance of a neighborhood dotted with 75-foot towers, and the likelihood of interference with television and radio reception in neighboring homes.

One city resident who spoke against approval of the ordinance said it was "more than a little devastating" to

know that larger—and presumably more destructive—equipment would be used with the taller towers. In addition to respecting the rights of some people to enjoy radio operation, he said there must also be respect for other people to enjoy their lives without interference.

Coates said, however, that taller towers actually interfere less with commercial broadcasting than do shorter towers.

Other members of the audience spoke for the passage of the amendment.

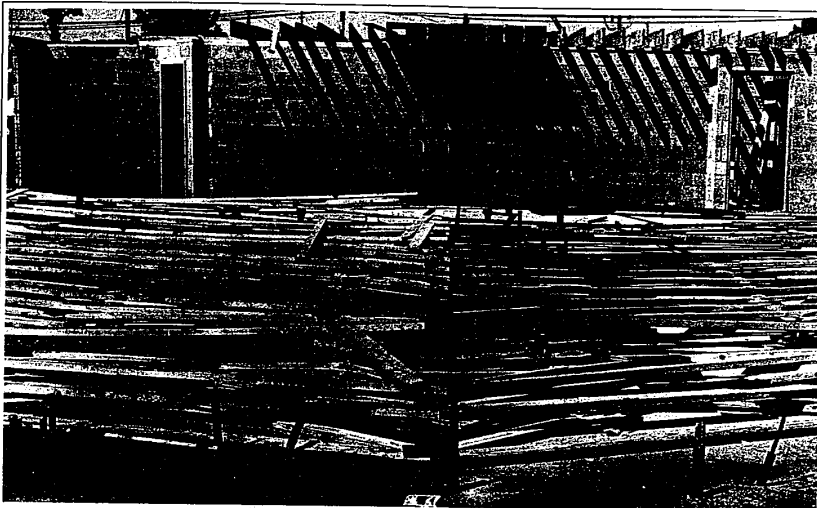
"Limiting towers to 25 feet effectively emasculates the ham from radiating effectively," said Leonard Nathanson of Lake Park. "Our public service has been well documented with our participation with the National Red Cross and other organizations."

"It's come to the point that we need a law so hams can feel free to exercise their service to the community," Harvey Ellis of Springfield said.

Councilman Earl C. Opperthaus said he saw "several difficulties" with the ordinance as proposed. The first of these, he said, was that Farmington Hills was getting crowded and the council must be concerned with the rights of other residents. Secondly, Opperthaus said he could not justify imposing 60-foot height limits on senior citizens' housing on land zoned for multiple dwellings and then approve heights of up to 75 feet in other residential areas.

Opperthaus suggested several changes in the amendment, including a height limit of 50 feet instead of 75 feet and a stipulation that the towers

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A symmetrical arrangement of lumber remains after the trusses on a construction project collapsed, bringing down the exterior walls and injuring two workers on the site. (Photo by Allen Schlossberg)

Building cave-in injures 2 workers

By LYNN ORR

A building collapse in Farmington Hills sent two construction workers to Botsford General Hospital Monday afternoon.

Victor Stringer, 25, of Farmington, and Randy Cripps, 26, of Westland, were treated and released from the hospital for injuries caused by the caving-in of a Bezanza restaurant under construction in the Hills Industrial Park.

Six construction workers on the site

watched the trusses of the building fall, bringing down the exterior walls in a domino effect.

"Poor construction" caused the collapse, according to Hills Fire Chief John Van De Voort, the first to arrive on the scene. Construction foreman Roger Cripps, cousin to the injured man, said the collapse was a "Another Book."

Redfields Construction Co. of Dearborn is erecting the restaurant, located on Ten Mile east of Haggerty.

Richard Cripps, also a cousin of the injured man, owns the construction company.

STRINGER of 21199 Flanders, Farmington, sustained a head injury when the pile of lumber fell. Cripps was buried in the debris and rescued by his fellow workers. Pieces of lumber on the ground were studded by bent nails caused when the trusses tore from their moorings.

Jim Hone, 24, of Farmington, ran to

a cement block wall when the lumber began to fall at the north end of the site. Most of the other workers were located at the south end of the site. The crash of lumber was the first signal of trouble, they said.

"Accidents happen," Foreman Cripps said. "About half the trusses were up, and we were putting more traces in," he explained, denying the poor construction charge. Estimates of damage to the building was unavailable.

Milky's way means magic for starry-eyed fans



Audience participant Anita Pearl is flabbergasted when magician Karrell Fox separates two seemingly interlocked metal rings. Fox, who performed as Milky the Clown for seven years, is appearing at Tel-Twelve Mall through Sunday. (Staff photo by Gary Friedman)

By PATRICIA LACROIX

With five minutes until showtime, Matthew runs away from his mother, who is sitting tiredly in the audience chairs. She calls him back. He obeys and returns to his seat next to hers. Still, he can't help but squirm in anticipation of what is to come—at showtime.

Karrell Fox, The Farmington Hills resident is probably best remembered as Milky, the always-happy magical clown who pushed Twin Pines milk on Milky's Party Time from 1958-64. On the TV show, his make-up was subdued so the children who got close to him—as they always did—were not frightened.

"The whole idea was to make me look as much like a milk bottle as possible," Fox said. "Those were six good years (when he did the show for WJL-TV in Detroit). I still think of it whenever I drink milk."

There is more to this man than memories, however. Since the Milky character went off the air, Fox has kept busy with his magic. The professional magician has toured the country, written books, done television commercials and attended magic conventions all over the world.

He has a magic show on now at the Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield through Sept. 27.

LOUD MUSIC plays from tiny speakers, music that only a child could appreciate. The stage is decorated with fluorescent orange cardboard cats and hot pink question marks. One little boy doesn't like the music and covers his ears. It is a little loud. The show is beginning.

"There is currently a big rebirth in interest in magic," says the slightly paunchy Fox, taking a puff of his cigarette. "This is probably due to the success of Doug Henning and the TV show 'The Magician' with Bill Bixby."

Fox said he first became interested in magic when he was 11 years old, when he performed professionally for the first time. At 18, he had his first book, "Kornfidentially Yours," published. Since then, he has written two other books, "Clever Like A Fox" and "Another Book."

Now he is recognized as one of the nation's foremost magicians.

ADULTS, acting almost ashamed of being interested in such "childish" things, hang back in the audience, letting the children "get a better seat." They all have expressions of amazement on their faces—lots of grins, lots of laughs, lots of good times. Children, on the other hand, crowd the stage, hoping to get just a little bit closer to this wonderful magical person.

"Most of the time, when people ask me how I did a certain trick, I would say 'Very well.'"

"Kids ask me how I get ladies to float in midair, and I tell them this story about how she ate feathers when she was a little girl, and she is now very light," Fox said.

"You can't destroy the make-believe—ever. Not even for adults. That is important. Very important."

The magician calls for the assistance of a mother, and picks a woman named Anita, going along with the show and acting more like a child than a mother, repeatedly slaps her thigh in frustrated amazement as she is unable to reason out the trick of three interlocking rings. The magician, nevertheless, tells Anita that she has been a big help, as are all the volunteer assistants.

Sometimes the tricks fail, however. He said the real trick then is to make the audience believe that the trick worked fine, "just differently than the last time."

"Many people specialize in a certain area of magic, but I'm what my friends call a 'general practitioner.' I

do a little bit of everything—illusions, sleight of hand and floating ladies," Fox said.

"With adult audiences, I especially enjoy hypnosis," Fox said.

During the show, Fox has a slight problem when a die will not slide behind the little trap door in a wooden box. The magician tries again, slightly flustered, and after a nervous little giggle. It is on the second try, and the show continues smoothly.

Fox said the biggest thrill he ever had was appearing on the Ed Sullivan show.

"It was especially nice because Karrell Fox appeared, not Milky. I was getting categorized into 'clown' and I didn't want to," he reminisced. "Live audiences are the most enjoyable, enjoyable. You get a good mix of adults and kids, and lots of feedback."

A kid—giving lots of feedback—stares glassy-eyed at the magician on the stage. One of his striped athletic socks is sagging to his ankle. His mouth is hanging open, as the magician gently teases two little girls on stage about their handling of silky scarves. The two little girls—born hams—give lots of feedback.

"I think magic is a good thing for kids to get into," Fox said. His own two children, now teenagers, have both performed in the Detroit area as magicians, following in their fathers' footsteps.

"Sure, it makes me feel good that they were interested in it. I never pushed them, though—I figured that if they were into it, that OK, and if they weren't, that's OK, too," he grinned. "But it's good for them—it teaches them to talk to people. They lose their shyness and they learn to use their hands."

Brian, another child from the audience, becomes the star for the day when he helps the magician with an egg trick. When the child pulls an egg

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