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Fun Factory fights city to stay open

By MARY GNIEWEK

Alfred Dinverno feels he has become a scapegoat for the problems of teenagers who find themselves on the wrong side of the law.

Owner of two Farmington Hills pinball centers called The Fun Factory, Dinverno has been accused of harboring drug-pushers, loiterers and providing a hangout for young troublemakers.

Neighbors and adjoining businesses have complained about youths congregating near the business on Grand River just west of Middlebelt. At a recent city council meeting, the owner of a Mavrick gas station nearby complained that Fun Factory patrons were trying to sell his employees drugs.

Others have lodged charges of vandalism, excessive noise, speeding through residential streets and pot smoking in the Fun Factory parking lot. Despite the accusations, Dinverno is determined to stay and make his a reputable business.

Staying there will be an uphill battle for Dinverno. According to the Farmington Hills zoning department, he doesn't have a legal right to be there.

"The Fun Factory was denied an occupancy permit by the city plan commission, but (Dinverno) opened anyway," said Hal Rowe, zoning supervisor. "Our problem is that he should not be there without a permit. This case has been tied up in Circuit Court since October of 1977."

Slapping the city with a suit of his own, Dinverno has challenged the constitutionality of an ordinance barring youths under 16 admittance to game amusement centers. He has received a temporary injunction allowing patrons of all ages to frequent his establishment. But that case also is pending in Oakland County Circuit Court.

Area C-Cs will join

A number of local Chambers of Commerce have joined to form the West Suburban Area Council of Chambers.

The purpose of the council is to promote chamber unity in the west suburban area.

Chambers which have become a part of the new council include Livonia, Plymouth, Farmington, Westland, Redford, Garden City, Wayne, Northville, Romulus, Belleville and Novi.

The council's intent is to coordinate efforts on specific legislative issues which have the support of at least 75 per cent of the member chambers.

The council also will be a tool to foster communications among member chambers and to promote the interchange of ideas and goals among the chambers.

Frank Hand, Livonia Chamber president, was elected council president at a recent organizational meeting.

Jaycees sponsor prayer breakfast

The Farmington Area Jaycees are sponsoring a prayer breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday Jan. 23 at Mercy Center, Eleven Mile near Middlebelt, Farmington Hills.

Breakfast fee is \$5.

Bartlett Hess, pastor of Ward United Presbyterian Church will speak at the breakfast. He has travelled extensively and has worked with missionaries in India and the Philippines.

He and his wife, Margaret are co-authors of "How to Have a Giving Church" and "The Power of a Loving Church."

Tickets and information are available through Dan Getts, 476-0190 or any other member of the Jaycees.

"We've got a policy here," Dinverno said. "Either play the games or leave the premises. The problem of loitering is widespread and it's getting worse than ever. But I've become the scapegoat for the neighborhood's problems."

"I've asked neighbors if they would approve of an eight-foot high security wall around the building so that all cars would have to enter and exit on Grand River — not through their alleys and streets. Though some of them seem to like the idea, they don't want to cooperate. They just want us out of here."

Dinverno employs a full-time security guard to enforce the law inside.

"Anyone we suspect of dealing drugs is banned. If they come back again, we won't let them in."

Drug traffic was the complaint Mavrick station owner Tom Dish lodged with the city council.

"These kids come over to our station, sit in the office and harass the workers," Dish said. "Two of my best employees were asked to buy drugs. What is the city going to do about it?"

Theresa Schaefer, attorney for the city, said that while the proceedings continue in court, the city cannot interfere with business.

"The sooner this case is solved, the better for everyone," she said.

A spokesman for the Pentastar Machine Co., which adjoins the Fun Factory, believes the problems are caused by a minority of patrons.

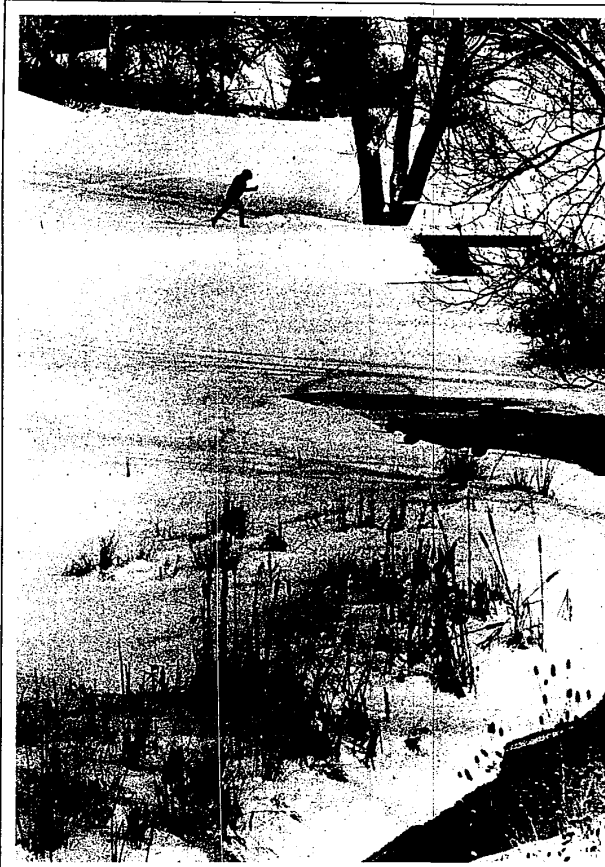
"About five per cent of the kids cause trouble," he said. "We've had broken windows, bricks knocked out of the building, clogged sewers — just meaningless vandalism. 'But what are you going to do? Where are you going to put these kids? No one wants them in their neighborhood, it's a nuisance. Yet the majority of kids are OK. I feel sorry for them, they have no place to go.'"

Dinverno said the majority of his clientele is between 12 and 19 years old, with a recent upsurge in the over 18 crowd as a result of the increase in the drinking age in December.

Dinverno is quick to defend his establishment.

"Suicide among teenagers is up 30 per cent," Dinverno claims. "This is due to lack of good family life and also because teens have no place to congregate freely. I'm trying to give them such a place. I want this to be an advantage to the community, not a disadvantage." Dinverno said he further hopes to control loitering by charging patrons at the door, giving them tokens instead of money to be used in the games.

"They'll have to pay or leave," he said. "I think we can have a good rapport with the kids and the neighbors, it depends on communication and cooperation."



Winter solitude

As the urban crunch keeps growing everyday, now the property of Farmington Hills, has been put to Farmington area residents have found an area where use as a cross country skiing site. To read more about they can enjoy some peace and quiet, while at the it, turn to Page 3A. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe) same time enjoy the winter. San Marino Golf Course,

Aid for small business is goal for Doug Ross

By STEVE BARNABY

Financial breaks for all businesses will be one of the main endeavors of newly elected State Senator Doug Ross (D-Oak Park).

The 15th District legislator has vowed to concentrate on this area which he feels was overlooked by Republican Gov. William Milliken in his State of the State address.

Small businesses, he says, are hampered by the single business tax and federal and state programs which are aimed at aiding large corporations. The SBT is aimed at taxing businesses payroll. Many small, labor intensive companies have complained that such a tax puts a hardship on them.

Ross is seeking to unite small and medium size businesses by showing them that their interests are different from those of large corporations.

"I want to convince small businesses that they are a separate entity. They must pursue their own interests," he says.

Too many times, smaller businesses have a tendency to relate to large corporations with whom, in reality, they have few like problems.

To further this goal, Ross is instituting a small business citizens legislative committee. He also hopes to see a non-profit research corporation formed which would study small business problems.

The problem, as it now stands, is that small businesses have little clout and few facts or strategy to solve their own problems, says Ross.

Among the things Ross would like to see accomplished is to substitute a profit base tax for the single business tax. Businesses, he says, could choose between the two.

He also would like to see what he terms as "bureaucratically dictated rules and regulations" replaced by incentives relying on the profit motive to

get businesses to respond to public needs.

"Centrally promulgated rules are inefficient and in many cases don't work," he says.

As an example, Ross says it would be more efficient to provide a tax incentive for a business to correct pollution problems rather than exact standards. But under Ross's concept it would "cost" businesses if they didn't take advantage of the tax incentive.

Another area of concern for Ross is the elimination of abuses of unemployment and workman's compensation.

"Now this is a less urgent matter for larger corporations because they have less trouble paying the costs," says Ross.

But smaller businesses must, many times, absorb the cost of the abuses because they are unable to pass those

costs onto the consumer, he says.

"We should attempt to make this reform for smaller businesses so they can go around such industries as the auto companies who easily absorb the costs," he says.

Among measures Ross would like to see taken is a return to the principle where cost of insurance relates to the health and safety of the factory is under the control of the employer.

"This works as an incentive to increase safety in the work place," he says.

Another relief for small businessmen would be to have an income maintenance for those persons who can't work, such as those who have mental breakdowns.

This income maintenance would be provided through general taxes, according to Ross.

Brodhead to fight medi-gap

U.S. Rep. William Brodhead (D-Detroit) has introduced a bill to outlaw what he terms as "gross" abuses in the marketing of so-called medi-gap insurance to senior citizens.

Medi-gap is a term applied to private insurance offered to old persons as a supplement to federally-financed Medicare.

Hearings before the senate special committee on aging and the house select committee on aging documented widespread abuse in the sale of such insurance, said Brodhead, whose 17th District includes Farmington, Farmington Hills, Redford Township and Southfield.

Among the alleged abuses, according to Brodhead, are the sale of policies which duplicate and overlap Medicare coverage, misleading language in policies and the use of scare sites tactics.

Other abuses uncovered are the sale of policies which don't cover some of the most common illnesses of senior citizens on the basis that they are pre-existing conditions and failure to disclose the contents of policies in clear and understandable language.

"The House Committee has estimated that senior citizens are being bilked to the tune of \$1 billion every year by unscrupulous companies and their agents," said Brodhead.

"I believe this is a national disgrace and the federal government which helped create the problem through the gaps and limitations in Medicare has a clear responsibility to act."

Some 15 million Americans over 65-years-old purchase supplementary health insurance, says Brodhead. Medicare covers only about 38 per cent of the health care costs of senior citizens. It doesn't pay the difference between what Medicare calls reasonable and necessary costs and what physicians actually charge.

One of the best indications of whether an insurance company is taking unfair advantage of its clients is the company's loss ratio—the percentage of health insurance premium dollars a company pays out in claims.

Brodhead said that Blue Cross-Blue Shield and the best private companies return about 90 per cent of premiums to the insured in claims. However, he said, that companies which have a clear track record of abusing the elderly have shockingly low loss ratios, some as low as 20 to 40 per cent.

Brodhead's bill mandates federal minimum standards which companies selling medi-gap insurance to the elderly must meet. It also directs the secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to make a comprehensive study of methods to assure that good quality health insurance is available to the elderly at a reasonable price.

Called the "Senior Citizens Health Insurance Standards Act of 1979," the bill requires each state to submit a minimum standards plan to the HEW secretary which will accomplish the following objectives:

"Insurance companies must return at least 75 per cent of premiums in the form of benefits.

"Prohibition of the sale of insurance which duplicates Medicare coverage.

"Drastic limitation on pre-existing conditions

"Requirement of full disclosure of all policy provisions to purchaser.

"Requirement that policies be written in plain and simple language.

The bill requires each state to change its law to meet these minimum standards. If a state fails to do so, the HEW secretary is empowered to enforce minimum standards in that state.

"Despite the widespread evidence of abuse, it would be erroneous to conclude that all insurance companies are guilty of these abuses. In fact, most of the nation's insurance companies are reputable and market fair health policies," he said.

Brodhead is a member of the House Ways and Means Committee which has concurrent jurisdiction of Medicare matters along with the Commerce committee.

Chorale tours

The Northern Michigan University Arts Chorale will visit three Michigan cities on a four-day winter tour this month.

Cheryl Prochaska, of 34296 Conroy, Farmington, will tour as a member of the chorale. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Prochaska.

The group will tour Escanaba, Houghton Lake and Ann Arbor.

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