

Farmington Observer

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Bar owners suffer with drinking law

By MARY GNIEWEK

Just one month has passed since Michigan's new drinking age law took effect, but already Farmington bar owners and musicians are suffering the consequences.

Business in some lounges has tapered off to half of what it was and rock bands are finding it more difficult than ever to find work.

"WE'VE GOT TO appeal to a different night clientele," said Steve Fleming, manager of The Inner Change in Farmington Hills. "I've hired a Dix-

ieland band to perform on Monday and Tuesday nights, it draws an older crowd.

"I used to take in \$2,000 a night with a full house, now I'd settle for half of that. I've got \$20,000 invested in disco equipment and there are seven people here tonight," he said last Wednesday. "And they're all watching television with me."

Until last month, The Inner Change appealed to 19 and 20-year-olds. The lounge was packed on Dec. 22 — the last night that age group could legally purchase or consume alcohol.

"The night after the change was Saturday, we took in a total of \$74," Flem-

ing recollected. "And we weren't open on New Year's Eve. I didn't think it would be worth it. I had to let go two waitresses. They weren't making any money."

THE SALVATION OF Fleming's establishment is his day business, which is picking up. Since lunch business is profitable, kitchen hours have been extended to 10 p.m.

Besides extending dinner hours and adding live entertainment twice a week, Fleming has done away with the \$1 cover charge. Other bar owners are following suit.

Phil Courville, manager of the Stein Haus in Farmington, says he is offering a variety of specials to lure new customers: That includes no cover charge, a ladies night once a week, and cut rate beer prices. He says business has dropped 40 per cent since the law changed.

The bar owners are passing on their loss to local musicians. Byron Taylor, business representative for the Detroit Federation of Musicians (DFM), said even the best local rock bands have been hurt by the new law. He cited Mugsy and Stonebridge as two examples.

"Mugsy was playing in Ann Arbor recently and the bar owner stiffed them on the money. Before, rock bands could make between \$1,800 and \$2,500 a week," he said. "We have no choice now but to cooperate with bar owners who can afford to pay just a bare minimum. The industry has definitely been hurt by this."

"It's dumb to give kids rights and then take them away. Some bar owners are trying a teen club format once a week with live rock music and non-alcoholic drinks. But I don't think kids will pay a \$4 cover charge to drink Coke."

THE DFM HAS 5,500 members in the metropolitan area. At various times, the membership has included Three Dog Night, Alice Cooper and Glen Miller.

One bar owner who isn't complaining about the new law is Mike Watzman of the De My Guest lounge at Nine Mile and Middlebelt.

"It's difficult to tell yet if it's hurt my business because it always drops off this time of year. I'll know better in mid-February."

"I'm getting back people who quit coming when the drinking age dropped to 18. And there are some new faces."

"Young kids don't spend a lot of money. They buy maybe one beer or two the whole night. I'd be happy if the legal age was 19, the kids are out of school and earning a living by then."

Ghost of Elvis spawns lawsuit

A Farmington Hills firm slapped with a lawsuit from Radio Corporation of America (RCA) this month said it will continue to sell home video tapes of seven Elvis Presley movies while the case is pending in Manhattan Federal Court.

On Jan. 11, RCA charged Magnetic Video Corp. at 23434 Industrial Park Drive, with violating the record company's exclusive rights to market tapes of the late Presley, who died in 1976.

The record company is asking for an injunction against the firm and profits from sales of the Presley tapes.

CHARLES TATHAM, attorney for Magnetic Video, said two countersuits will be filed against RCA because of its action. Both the Farmington Hills corporation and Viacom International, a New York firm, are suing RCA for interference in a contractual relationship.

Magnetic Video obtained rights to the Presley films, which include "Blue Hawaii," "Fun in Acapulco" and "Girls, Girls, Girls," from Viacom. The company is licensed through Viacom and Twentieth Century Fox to market 100 popular movies for home viewing.

"The RCA case falls flat because the songs are synchronized with the movies. We are not peddling recordings," Tatham said.

"RCA says the home movies violate its right to make phonograph records. It's stupid. We've been in touch with the Presley people through Viacom. They

say RCA doesn't own movie rights."

Though a spokesman for Magnetic Video could not estimate the profits netted on Presley films, he said 1978 was a spectacular year for sales. The company shipped 200,000 movies last year.

"We don't have the profits broken down according to movie stars, but 'Blue Hawaii' was our ninth best seller of 100 films," said Bob Vandegriff, vice president and general manager of consumer products division.

"In 1977, sales were less than \$3 million. But last year was spectacular. Sales were over \$9 million. We sell through manufacturers representatives and direct mail marketing, too."

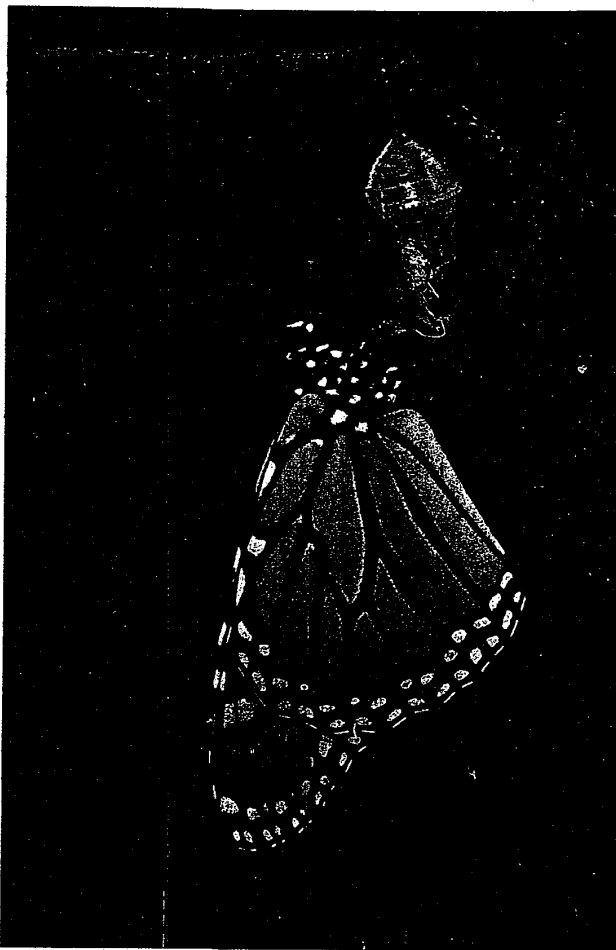
THE PRESLEY FILMS sell for \$34.95. They range from the 1958 film "King Creole" to "Paradise, Hawaiian Style" made in 1966. Also available are "GI Blues" and "Roustabout," both made in the early 1960's.

"The lawsuit is an unfortunate experience," Vandegriff said. "It's going to be hard on my dealers."

Both he and Tatham believe it might be several years before the case is settled.

Magnetic Video Corp. has been headquartered in Farmington Hills since 1972. Among its best-selling movies are "MASSH," "Patton," "The French Connection" and "The Sound of Music."

A spokesperson for RCA was not available for comment.



Monarch emerges

This stunning photograph of a Monarch butterfly emerging from its chrysalis was taken by Charles Sterling in his backyard in Southfield. "A lot of people are turned on by nature," says Sterling, noting that if they can't draw or paint, photography is the best way people can capture nature. For more on Sterling, turn to the back of this section.

Bill introduced to slash Social Security tax

U.S. Rep. William Brodhead (D-Detroit) has introduced a bill to cut the Social Security payroll tax by one-third and to finance a portion of the system out of the general fund.

American workers are just beginning to feel the effects of the most recently enacted payroll tax increase, says the 17th District representative, whose district includes Farmington, Farmington Hills, Redford Township and Southfield.

"They are becoming more and more furious. If Congress fails to take some action, I believe we will have a taxpayer revolt that will make Proposition 13 look tame in comparison." Brodhead introduced a similar bill in 1978 but it wasn't considered despite a vote in the Democratic Caucus which called for Social Security tax relief.

"The measure failed," says Brodhead, because the administration opposed it. But today, with growing citizen pressure, even the administration has indicated it will support some relief, he says.

Called the Social Security Refinanc-

ing Act, the bill is designed to relieve American workers of a major share of the payroll tax passed by Congress in 1977 to keep the ailing Social Security system financially solvent.

Under the current law, the payroll tax rate for 1979 has been increased to 6.13 per cent. By 1990 it will rise to 7.65 per cent.

Under Brodhead's bill, the tax rate would be reduced to 4.4 per cent by 1982 and would remain at that rate through 2001.

"During the Social Security debate in 1977, I strongly opposed increasing the payroll tax rate. There was no question that we had to refinance the system, but increasing the regressive payroll tax isn't the answer," he says.

"The most equitable solution is to finance Medicare and disability out of general revenues and return the system to what it was originally designed to be—a basic retirement system."

Under the new bill, the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund, also known as Medicare, and the Disability Insurance Trust Fund will be removed from pay-

roll tax financing.

This change in financing would insure a payroll tax below the tax assessed in 1978 for the next 42 years.

In the bill introduced last year, an immediate rate reduction would have been implemented. In the new bill, the cut is phased in over a three-year period ending in 1982.

Brodhead emphasized that his plan to cut the payroll tax doesn't sacrifice the actuarial integrity of the system. Before the current law was enacted, the Social Security Trust Fund was expected to run out of funds in 1983. Passage of the 1977 amendments assured continuation of the program until 2030.

But the Social Security Refinancing Act puts the system on an actuarially sound basis with a 100 per cent reserve fund until 2051, according to Brodhead.

"This guarantees all current Social Security recipients and all those now paying Social Security taxes that their retirement benefits are secure through the middle of the next century," he says.

EFFECT OF SOCIAL SECURITY REFINANCING ACT ON WAGE EARNERS

AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS	COMPARISON	ANNUAL TAX			
		1980	1982	1985	1987
\$15,000	Under prior Social Security law	\$ 908	\$ 945	\$ 945	\$ 968
	Under proposed refinancing Act	960	1,005	1,058	1,073
\$25,000	Under prior Social Security law	1,234	1,474	1,575	1,613
	Under current law	1,533	1,675	1,763	1,788
\$40,000	Under prior Social Security law	1,234	1,474	1,758	2,012
	Under current law	1,588	2,131	2,686	2,860
	Under proposed refinancing Act	1,450	1,399	1,676	1,760

Association fights retirement myth

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) would like to dispel the myth that useful, productive life ends with retirement. Just ask Marlene VanAmeyde, retired superintendent of the Farmington Public Schools and vice president of the local AARP chapter.

"It's not a tea and cake society. It's an active, alert group," he said. "In

spite of the propaganda, many elderly persons have adequate incomes and are not in need of handouts. The vast majority can take care of themselves."

THEIR MOTTO is, "To serve, not to be served," and while their philosophy is not as militant as another senior citizens group called the Gray Panthers, AARP stresses education, participation

and political awareness.

"Our primary purpose is to find things to do for others and for each other," said Bernice Fredericks, who is president of AARP chapter 2088, which covers Farmington, Farmington Hills, Novi and Westland.

Currently, the local chapter is sponsoring an income tax preparation workshop for the elderly. The service

will be available to all senior adults through April 15, and it's free. The program is staffed with AARP volunteers.

At other times of the year, workshops are held in defensive driving, home security measures and healthcare. Chapter members also help finance university studies in gerontology

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JAYCEES CELEBRATE

Since 1946 the Farmington Area Jaycees have been serving the community while training its members to be leaders in the community. This week is Jaycee Week, and to see what some of the contributions are which the Jaycees have made to the Farmington area, turn to Page 2A.