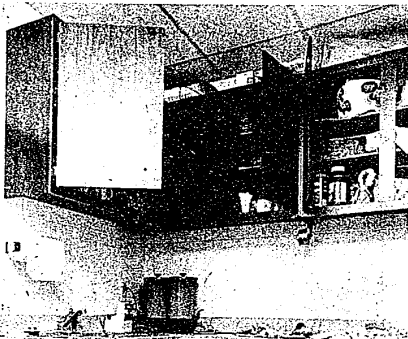


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Halloween gag costly

Vandals wreck local church



Not a cabinet nor cupboard was left unturned when vandals broke into the Central Church of Christ in Farmington Hills. Damage in the church and basement meeting rooms exceeded \$4,000. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

By MARY GNIEWEK

Damages estimated between \$4,000 and \$5,000 occurred early Sunday morning when vandals broke into the Central Church of Christ, 36500 Eleven Mile Rd.

Evangelist Rex Dean said the destruction was discovered at 9 a.m. Sunday by a member of the Farmington Hills congregation who arrived early to prepare communion for church services.

Dean was ordered by Farmington Hills police to secure the building until insurance investigators arrived Monday to estimate damages.

One police officer attributed the destruction to Halloween pranksters.

"Churches and vacant homes are targets this time of year," said Officer Gary Brandemühl. "It's rare to catch someone in the act because the buildings are empty most of the time."

A piece of cardboard placed over a broken sheet of glass betrayed the only sign of forced entry at the church, a half-mile east of Halsted Road.

Wednesday evening services were cancelled because a clean up effort had not yet begun.

Broken glass, overturned furniture, ransacked basement meeting rooms and a kitchen were sprayed with the powdered contents of three fire extinguishers. A thick layer of dust covered the church benches and carpet.

A POOL of water behind the altar, used for baptisms, was filled with debris. A bouquet of fresh flowers, which once adorned the altar, floated on the water.

In a basement room used for Sunday school classes, a makeshift stage was toppled. Toys and crayons were scattered throughout the room.

In the kitchen, the intruders left a stoveburner turned on under a pot, which had since burned the contents to a thin, black crust.

Cupboards were ransacked and cans of soup were scattered on the floor. A container of mustard, its contents splattered on the carpet, lay on the floor.

Nothing was reported stolen from the church. The intruders left behind an AM-FM radio, which was turned into police Tuesday morning.

Dean, who has led the 10-year-old congregation for the past 2 1/2 years, said this was the first case of vandalism to occur at the church.

"The fence out here was destroyed a few years back, but I've never seen destruction like this," he said.

"I've never had trouble before. I have no idea of what happened other than someone trying to be funny because it's Halloween."

Dean said 95 persons regularly attend church services, which are held twice each Sunday morning.



Autumn Wonderland

Surrounded by autumn's color display in Shawwassee Park, Ann Cleland of Farmington makes sure her four-footed companion gets some exercise. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Voters to mull office heights

By MARY GNIEWEK

Farmington Hills voters will have a chance next Tuesday to voice an opinion about the height requirement for buildings in a proposed Industrial Research Office (IRO) zoning district being considered by city council to increase the city's tax base.

Advisory Question 4 on the Nov. 6 ballot asks residents if they favor buildings up to 60 feet (five stories) tall in the IRO district. The district would be in the western part of the city. The area is already zoned for light industrial uses.

Because the question is advisory, the council will make a final decision on the height requirement.

Representatives of the Farmington Hills Council of Homeowners, a group

which represents the city's 30 independent homeowners' associations, hope the council listens to the voice of the people next Tuesday.

"I expect city council to abide by what the people want," said a council of homeowners spokesman, who wished to remain anonymous. "Let's put it to the people. If they want this city to look like Southfield, then the council should go along wholeheartedly."

The council of homeowners rejects the proposal because it believes the 60-foot height limit would help pave the way to increasingly taller buildings sprouting up in Farmington Hills.

"THE PRECEDENT was set in 1977 when city council enacted the zoning ordinance allowing 60-foot apartment buildings for senior citizen housing," said the spokesman.

"What it boils down to is a creeping height of buildings similar to the way Southfield began. Their city council began with the same intent — to increase the city's tax base.

"Once you do it for offices, commercial developments want equal treatment. Before you know it (in Southfield) there were buildings 20 and 30 stories high."

Robert J. Clarke, chairman of the Industrial and Economic Development Commission (IEDC), said an IRO district is needed and will increase the city's tax base.

"The type of industrial development we have in Farmington Hills does not provide the best possible tax base," he said.

"Light industrial areas tend to warehouse or distribution centers — which don't contain much personal

property, just inventories which are not taxed. So the city is losing its tax base."

The IEDC, an advisory group which screens companies planning to move into Farmington Hills and makes recommendations to city council, has spent two years studying the future tax base of the city based on present zoning.

"Farmington Hills will not be supported forever by property taxes," Clarke said. "In order to carry on this thinking, we requested professionals to tell us what type of zoning is needed.

"THE BEST possible tax base comes from large office centers. The idea with the IRO is to allow a combination of buildings to stimulate large office complexes."

Clarke pointed to Jarvis-Webb, newly headquartered on 12 Mile Road west of Farmington, and Texas Instruments which plans to move an office center to Farmington Hills, as examples of the types of businesses the city ought to attract to boost its tax base.

He said the 60-foot height requirement was suggested by architects and builders as an optimum size to meet requirements which call for elevators, ramps and parking to accommodate handicapped persons.

"All new buildings over one story must have elevators. They're expensive and the same price whether for two stories or five," he said.

Clarke said the proposed IRO district, bordered by the Farmington Country Club on the north, M-102 on the south, Halsted on the east and Haggerty on the west, is the only area of available land in the city where such a district could be established.

"It doesn't border any residential areas," he added.

Farmington seeks to update charter

If Farmington voters approve the single ballot question in next Tuesday's city election, they will increase the spending power of the city manager by exactly \$5,000.

The ballot proposal asks voters to support a change in the Farmington City Charter which would allow the city manager to spend as much as \$4,000 for general operations without waiting for approval from the city council.

City Manager Bob Deadman called the current charter-imposed limit of \$1,000, adopted in 1951, outdated and out-of-step with today's rate of inflation. He said waiting two weeks to

bring spending questions before the city council hampers daily operations in Farmington.

"The \$1,000 limit cripples the day-to-day operations of city government," Deadman said.

"Major pieces of equipment, like road graders and heavy duty trucks, can't be repaired for \$1,000 today. In 1951, new equipment could be purchased for that price."

Deadman said approval of the ballot question would be especially beneficial in winter, when keeping snow removal equipment functional is important and time is a crucial factor.

Hills man recovering after gunshot wound

A Farmington Hills man is recovering from surgery today after he was shot in the throat Monday during an argument at the Cafe Chablis bar in Dearborn.

Dearborn police said Norman Darbish, 29, 28984 Salem, was wounded by a single bullet fired from a small caliber handgun.

The shot was fired during an argument at 4:30 p.m., according to police.

Following the incident, Darbish drove to the Zeigler Clinic in Detroit. He was later transferred to Henry Ford Hospital, Fairlane branch.

Police have no suspects, but Sgt. Stanley Lane said the investigation into the incident will continue.

Farmington students attend Lake Forest

Marilyn Cohen, daughter of Mrs. Patricia Prappas of Farmington Hills and Robert B. Jacob son of Mrs. Reva G. Jacob of Farmington are among the

286 new students enrolled at Lake Forest College this fall.

The college is located on Lake Michigan 30 miles north of Chicago. It has a total enrollment of 1,000.

Senior housing questions jam Hills' voters ballot

By MARY GNIEWEK

Farmington Hills voters will have a chance to express their views on a variety of proposals dealing with public-financed senior citizen housing at the polls next Tuesday.

The controversial housing issue has sparked many debates in the past year. At the heart of the discord is opposition to a proposed senior citizen-low income housing project to be built at Freedom and Drake roads.

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority approved funding for the project in May. But city council could decide to scrap that plan pending public sentiment at the polls.

Proposition A, the bonding proposal, asks voters if the city should borrow \$8 million in general obligation bonds to construct senior citizen housing.

The bonding proposal, introduced by Mayor Earl Oppenhaus, is identical to one which would have been voted on March 6. That election was scrapped after city council learned that rents under a bonding proposal built senior citizen housing complex would be too expensive for senior citizens.

Oppenhaus insisted the proposal be put back on the ballot.

Three advisory questions on the ballot also seek opinions about various aspects of senior citizen housing — all of which have been passed by the city's legislative body.

ing developments for needy senior citizens and needy families.

Opponents argue that the city would lose control over such housing projects if they were secured with federal funds. Further, they object to low income housing unit construction tagged onto public funds doled out for construction of senior citizen housing.

Advisory question 2 asks voters if they favor the levying of up to 3 mills on the city tax rolls to sponsor housing developments.

Introduced by Councilwoman Jan Deon, the proposal is intended to see if residents would be willing to finance such housing developments without federal or state aid. Some persons opposed to federally-sponsored senior housing argue that such projects should be supported with local funds.

Advisory question 3 asks voters if they are in favor of the city's mid-rise zoning ordinance, which allows construction up to 60 feet in height of housing for elderly persons.

Opponents fear that such zoning would pave the way for other developments who wish to construct mid-rise buildings for other purposes.

A fourth advisory question asks voters if they are in favor of allowing buildings up to 60 feet in a proposed industrial office zoning district.

Throughout the housing debate, opponents to low income housing have asked the city council to put the issue to the voters.

THE HOUSING question has been a

central campaign issue. Anti-public housing candidates Donn Wolf, Jack Burwell and William Lange were the top vote-getters in the September primary election.

D. Keith Deacon and Cathy Jones, two council incumbents who favor public housing, were defeated in the primary.

According to a Michigan State University professor of political science, the advisory referendum questions on the Farmington Hills ballot are typical of a national trend stemming from a growing distrust of government.

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WRONG COLOR

Linda Lanikin's browntone rage just didn't fit into her new decorating scheme so she put it to good use — by selling it with an ad in our classified section. One phone call was all that was necessary to change the appearance into ready cash, handy to pay all her decorating bills. Call us today to help with your refurbishing plans.

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