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Police bust up Farmington High grads' bash

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

Graduation week revelry led to the arrest Wednesday night of 46 young adults — most of them seniors graduating from Farmington High School.

All but three of the 46 were charged with disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum 90 days in jail and \$100 fine.

Also arrested and released to their parents were three juveniles charged as disorderly persons, who were picked up in a sweep of a field on Westchester,

south of Nine Mile and east of Haggerty in Farmington Hills.

In the mass arrest, Farmington Hills Police also confiscated 19 vehicles driven to the impromptu party by those arrested.

These parties, known as "grassers," are a common annual occurrence in many suburban communities.

According to police in Farmington and Farmington Hills, the party, which attracted between 400 and 500 young persons, began in the west lot of Farmington High School.

Students had been invited by princ-

pals Jerry Potter to come to the school parking lot to decorate their cars with painted slogans. Potter explained the invitation was a gesture designed to curb the rowdiness and vandalism that often accompanies graduation ceremonies.

A crowd of about 150 to 200 students were asked to leave the school grounds shortly after 8:30 p.m., said Farmington Police Lt. John Santanaro. All but a handful of students complied with the principal's request, police said, and the rest of the crowd dispersed when a dozen officers from Farmington moved in.

HOWEVER, prior to the order to leave the school lot, Lt. Santanaro said, police ticketed two men for careless driving and arrested one young man for consuming alcohol on school premises. Donald Sexton, 20, and John Finchere, 18, both of Farmington Hills, received the careless driving citations after pouring oil on their tires in the parking lot to make them smoke and spin, said the lieutenant.

James G. Tulpa, 18, of Farmington Hills, was charged with the liquor violation.

Police said the group drove north to

12 Mile Road and Haggerty before settling on a site south of Nine Mile. Police responded due to complaints about the size of the crowd and the fireworks being ignited.

Police Chief John Nichols said the crowd-greeted officers with a chorus of obscenities and a shower of bottle rocks, beer bottles and cans. Eventually, 20 Farmington Hills officers responded to the scene and arrests were made after some partygoers ignored an order to leave the field.

Police officers and no turkeys were injured" in the mass arrest.

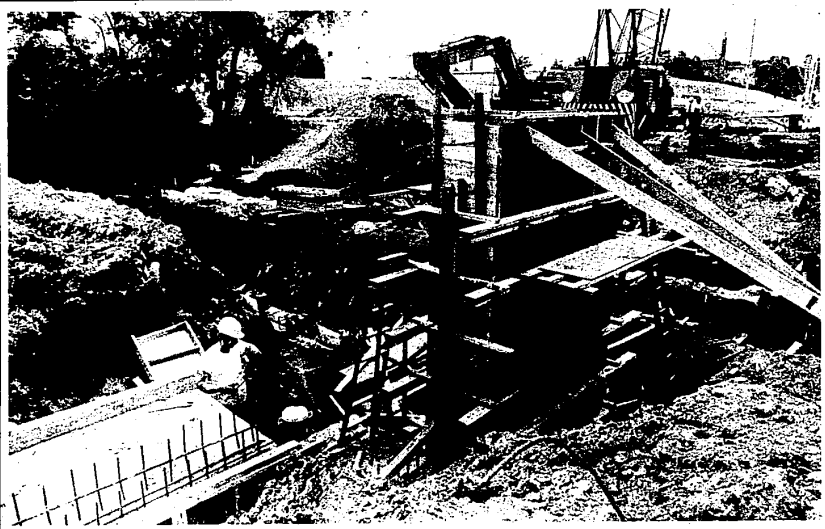
Police stepped in, Nichols said, when things got out of hand.

"It's one thing to throw toilet paper on the trees or paint snappy sayings on dad's car and honk their horns," Nichols said. "But throwing beer bottles at policemen can be hazardous to their health."

Had a beer bottle struck any officer, Nichols said, felony charges would

POLICE CHIEF Nichols said "no po-

Please turn to Page 7A



The end's in sight

Work on the Shiawassee bridge is now 50 percent complete and the job should be finished in another 60 working days. For a closer look

at the work being done on the bridge and the construction at Grand River and Ten Mile, please turn to Page 3A.

Cops brutal, students say

By Steve Barnaby
editor

"They came in like riot troops."

That's the way one person described police reaction to a party being held by Farmington High School seniors which resulted in the arrest of 46 students.

The incident occurred last Wednesday evening in an empty lot near Nine Mile and Haggerty.

"The cops came up, opened my car door and threw me on the ground and hit me with a billy club," said Peter Barbrick, one of the students cited for disorderly conduct.

Barbrick, along with the other students, was handcuffed and taken to the Farmington Hills police station and later released.

Both police and students admit the problem began after students threw beer bottles at the police.

"There were a few trouble makers, maybe 10 or 20 people," said Barbrick.

Estimates of how many students were in the empty field range from 150 to 500 persons.

Farmington senior Jim Moloney cor-

roborates Barbrick's story.

"The police came at us dressed in their riot helmets," says Moloney.

"THE POLICE" started dragging people out of their cars," he says.

Both students agree that police never gave students a warning to bust up the party before they moved. And both also say several students were hit by police.

"Me and my date were trying to leave the party. We were a thousand feet from the rest of the kids when the police came up," says Moloney.

Another student, Tony Parker, also says police never gave a warning before breaking up the graduation celebration.

"They started to shine their lights at us. Some students started yelling that we weren't bothering anyone," says Parker, who admits that some students were using obscene language and that beer bottles were thrown.

"Everywhere you looked there was a cop. It was pretty brutal. I didn't think it was necessary," says Parker.

Both Farmington and Farmington Hills police were involved in the arrests.

Democrats launch legislative property tax plan

By Sandra Ambruster
staff writer

Home and business owners alike will receive tax breaks this year if the Legislature adopts a new plan announced Tuesday by State Senate Majority Leader William Faust, D-Westland.

Key features of the plan include a freeze on property tax assessment increases, a 30 percent rebate on school operating taxes over a three-year period and elimination of the Single Business Tax (SBT) for those businesses that gross less than \$5 million a year.

"We hope this addresses the problem of assessment increases," said Faust. "I

think that a legitimate question has been raised. People would say that they hadn't voted on a millage increase, but their tax bills were going up."

"I'm not criticizing communities in my own district, but many have used whatever money was available without tightening budgets except for loss of federal and state funds," he added.

Although generally in favor of a Democratic legislative tax initiative, State Sen. Doug Ross, D-Southfield, is taking a look at the entire package before giving his outright endorsement.

"This is a real complicated issue and needs some substantial examination," said Ross aide Robert O'Leary.

At least two of the tax program elements have been endorsed by Ross in the past — the senior citizens renters' credit and the single business tax relief section.

FAUST SAID that swift action by the Legislature on several aspects of the plan is expected by July 1. Other features of the plan likely will require hearings and be made retroactive, he said.

He said that the plan was drawn up in a series of meetings last weekend with other Democrats and represents a consensus of that party's caucus.

The two points of the plan to be approved by July 1 are the SBT and the

property assessment freeze, according to Faust. He called the freeze on increases in assessments a landmark part of the plan.

"The Legislature has declared that property taxes are local issues," he explained. "This freezes property tax assessments at the 1980 level. The only way for a revenue increase (by hiking assessments) is by a vote of elected representatives."

Although Faust was one of the authors of Proposal A, the tax cut plan recently rejected by voters, he has been critical of attempts by the state Legislature to change tax levies set by local government units.

Under this plan, local governments and school boards would be responsible for voting on whether to increase property assessments within their boundaries. Residents would be notified and public hearings held before they could do so, Faust said.

"People have had enough of increasing tax bills without someone being accountable. You and I always voted in the millage, but not to have assessments grow," Faust continued. "It is essential to retain local control and responsibility."

OF EQUAL importance in the plan is elimination of the SBT for businesses that gross less than \$5 million, according to Faust. Instead, those businesses would pay a tax only on the profits they earn. Faust expects this provision to take effect this year.

"We feel that this will improve the business climate, creating economic development and new jobs," he said. "We've had many businesses at that level and below that ran into a deficit because of the Single Business Tax."

"Those companies that are marginal operations would save. Unless they made a profit, they would pay no business taxes."

Faust said that big business would benefit from another provision of the plan which would allow the deduction of unemployment insurance and work-

ers' compensation insurance costs from their base profits. Paying those costs and then considering them as taxable means that businesses end up paying twice, he explained.

"Those costs are a public purpose and responsibility, not a business responsibility," Faust said. "Of course, we hope business will reinvest the money, and this is also fair."

He estimated that this provision would cost the state \$175 million in the third year of the plan.

SENIOR CITIZENS would be exempted from paying any school taxes in Michigan if this plan is approved. Faust also said that senior citizens who have fixed incomes and who are renters would only be expected to pay a maximum of 40 percent of their income for housing. The rest would be paid by the state.

Another major provision of the plan would rebate a portion of school operating millages paid. The rebate in the first year of the program would amount to 15 percent. Taxpayers would actually receive a rebate check, probably in October or November of this year, if the plan is approved by the Legislature.

The average taxpayer would get a check for \$100, but in Faust's district,

Please turn to Page 9A

Norman Hunt

C'ville trustee wraps up career

By Marie McGee
staff writer

Norman Hunt's days as a Clarenceville Board of Education member are officially over, but it's only the beginning of a new role he plans to play as an active spectator.

"I didn't seek re-election because I had lost interest," said Hunt, a Farmington Hills resident and 15-year veteran of the board. "I just felt that the younger people coming on are doing a tremendous job."

"Now I'm going to come to the meetings as a member of the community. That part of the agenda for expressions from the public — that'll be me. I'm going to create the problem, then get up and walk away from it," he said with characteristic good humor.

HUNT, 63, is proud of the fact that he was always a board member who was never afraid to speak his mind whether it was on the closing of an elementary school or the sex ed program the district is planning to initiate.

That openness, he said, was based on an unwritten policy of the Clarenceville board through the years that "you speak your piece, but you never leave the meeting with hard feelings."

"It's always been that way," he said,

and it added to an "incredible" rapport that prevails among the seven members. "But, while we were friends, no one could come into a meeting claiming he had two or three votes in his pocket on any issue."

The turbulent late '60s and early '70s came to mind easily as being tense and sensitive times, he said. That's when rebellious students, supported by several teachers, challenged the administration in several areas, and the result for awhile was a polarized community.

Looking back, Hunt said that despite the turbulence, he felt there was some benefit from those trials and tribulations that were only mirroring what the rest of the country was going through.

"YOU GET SOME good out of everything," he said. Then a smile broke through as he added: "We sure got the community out. We had some of the best audiences we've ever had."

Hunt and his wife Faith raised their family on St. Francis Street next to Edgewood Elementary School. It was his involvement with the school's PTA that led to his appointment to the board in 1966 to fill the unexpired term of Fred Bailey.

It was also the reason he fought so hard at the outset to keep the school open when Botsford Hospital offered to



Norman Hunt
a new role

good thing for the district," he said. In the end he backed down, but said he is happy he did so because "it is being utilized and won't be a vandalized skeleton." It isn't lost to the community, he added. Money from the sale of the property has been set aside in an interest-bearing account. The interest will be utilized to fund the maintenance of other schools in the district, he said.

The Clarenceville School District includes parts of Livonia, Farmington Hills and Redford Townships.

THE SEX ED program that came up for discussion shortly before his tenure ended was the target of some criticism.

"It was one of the battles I lost," he quipped. Sex education, he feels, is a parental responsibility and offers an opportunity for the child and parent to become closer in the sharing of viewpoints.

Looking back, Hunt said he'd like to go down in board history "as someone who came up with some grandiose educational program, but that just isn't so." But if common sense and dedication — underscored by a good sense of humor — count for anything, Norma Hunt's name will surely be at the top of the list.

what's inside

Agenda	4A
Community Calendar	7C
Editorial	7B
Local Angles	2A
Opinion	2B
Special	3
Section 8	3

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