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Owner breaks silence over restaurant fire

By Craig Plechura
staff writer

Silence was broken last week by one of the principals in the Glass Onion restaurant, a Farmington business that was set afire by an arsonist on June 15, 1981. The restaurant remains standing, but is charred and boarded-up today.

While he was able to shed little light on who's responsible in the torching incident, David Sinacola, who says he owns the rights to the Glass Onion corporation and name, explained much of the background of the bad luck business venture.

Sinacola calls himself owner of the Glass Onion restaurant under a complicated lease-purchase agreement he made with two business partners: Raymond Gallant of Birmingham and Athos Valentini of Northville.

GALLANT, ON the other hand, describes Sinacola as the person they

hired to run the restaurant.

The question of whose name should be on the restaurant's lease was the subject of a bitter lawsuit filed about six months before the fire. Gallant and Valentini and the building landlord, H.C.B. Investment Co., opposed Sinacola in the legal fight.

Sinacola lost the suit after the fire wiped out his source of income.

Legal problems arose, Sinacola said, after he started the restaurant and discovered his name wasn't listed on the lease. Sinacola said he withheld rent payments to force Gallant and Valentini to list his name on the lease papers on the property held by the landlords, Harry and Charles Grenadier and Harry Liberson of H.C.B. Investment Co.

The landlords sued, asking the court to force Sinacola to keep up his payments. Circuit Judge Robert Anderson awarded Valentini and Gallant more than \$66,000 to be paid by David A. Sinacola Enterprises Inc.

THE ORIGINAL contract Sinacola signed, he says, contained provisions that later caused him trouble.

"The lease should've been in my name the day I opened up for business," Sinacola says. "Otherwise, what's to stop them from throwing you out?"

"I approached them with a lease-purchase agreement to lease the equipment and fixtures (left over from when the restaurant was run as a part of the Landmark chain)," Sinacola said.

"We nickle-and-dimed for a while, and it took a month or two, but by December of 1979 we signed a contract."

"I'd do what I wanted with the restaurant, I think it was, for a five-year



David Sinacola (above) said he wants his side of the story known about the fire that occurred in the Glass Onion restaurant June 15, 1981.

Battle pursued to stop hopefuls in Senate race

By M.S. Dilton Ward
staff writer

A legal battle among Democratic candidates for state senator in the 15th District is shifting to the Michigan Court of Appeals.

Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Robert Anderson Wednesday dismissed a lawsuit filed by Senate candidate Alen Feuer challenging the right of incumbent senators Jack Faxon, D-Detroit, and Dana Wilson, D-Ferndale, to be on the ballot.

The 15th District includes Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield and Lathrup Village.

Feuer, former director of Michigan Common Cause, claims the senators are ineligible to run because they failed to establish residency in the recently reapportioned 15th District 30 days prior to the June 15 filing deadline as required by law.

An appeal will be filed today with the state Court of Appeals by Feuer's attorney, Thomas Oehmke. Oehmke also will file an emergency application for leave with the Michigan Supreme Court.

"We're asking the Supreme Court to allow us to bypass the Court of Appeals and go straight to them because it's fairly clear that regardless of who wins or loses, the other party is going to appeal," Oehmke said.

The Supreme Court has some responsibility for deciding the issue since reapportionment was a Supreme Court action and because the primary is less than a month away, he added.

FAXON SAID Anderson's dismissal of the case indicates his concurrence with an opinion issued by Attorney General Frank Kelley June 11.

The opinion waived the 30-day residency requirement for candidates because the Supreme Court took until May 21 to reapportion legislative districts.

According to the attorney general, candidates seeking the office of state senator or representative must have established residency in the district on or before June 15, the last day for them to file petitions or pay fees.

"Judge Anderson indicated the attorney general's opinion is the correct reading of the law, and that is the basis upon which I made my original decision," said Faxon, president pro tem of the Senate.

"It's just not true what he (Feuer) is saying. Obviously I am a resident. It would be easier if I wasn't. If you want to win an election, sometimes it's easier to remove the opposition than have people make the decision."

"I like to see elections where candidates can run, and people can make the choice."

According to Feuer, neither Faxon nor Wilson are living in the 15th District now.

He said both senators were served subpoenas in connection with the suit at their old residences between 6 and 7 a.m. July 4 "in quality as a resident," countered Faxon.

"I live in Southfield, have a phone in Southfield, and vote in Southfield."

"I'm not regularly staying at my old residence. But I have a responsibility to keep up my house while in the process of selling it."

Faxon, an 18-year veteran of the Legislature, represents northwest Detroit's 7th District, where his family resides. He leased an apartment in Southfield June 11.

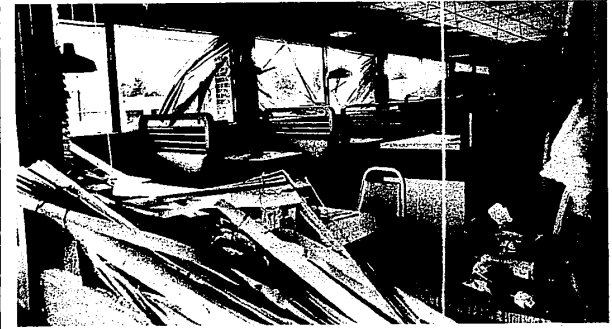
Wilson, who was out campaigning and unavailable for comment Friday, moved from Hazel Park into his aunt and uncle's home in Ferndale June 14.

Regardless of the state Supreme Court's decision, Oehmke contends the case has the potential for going to the U.S. Supreme Court and setting new case law.

"We're dealing with a very basic constitutional simple issue — representative democracy," said Oehmke.

"The issue of district hopping never has been decided by Michigan courts, or significant courts in other states. Is reapportionment an opportunity for all politicians to play hopscotch, or does it preserve the one-person, one-vote principle of American democracy?"

Other Democratic candidates vying for a Senate seat in the 15th District (which includes Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Oak Park, Huntington Woods, Southfield, Lathrup Village, Novi, Wixom and Northville) include Phillip Marcuse, Dan Reedy and Jacki Work. None of them were parties in the suit filed by Feuer.



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Gala Time

Festival committee gears up for big week

With just a few weeks to go, the Farmington Founders' Festival planning is in high gear for a week of events which has become a traditional celebration.

A highlight will be the crowning of the new Miss Farmington. She will make her debut at the Downtown Farmington Center between 9:30 and 10 p.m., where the Franklin Village Concert Band will be performing on the showmobile.

Other musical events throughout the week will include concerts by the Oak-

way Symphony, Farmington Community Band, Farmington Community Jazz Band and the Farmington Community Chorus.

There will be dinners sponsored by the United Methodist Temple beginning with the chicken barbecue July 25 and a party dinner July 28. Thursday, July 29, will feature a smorgasbord and Saturday, July 30, a ham dinner. On Aug. 1, a pancake breakfast will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Other treats in the area will include an ice cream social at the United Meth-

odist Church July 29, 7:30-9 p.m. and July 30 from noon to 5 p.m. The church also will sponsor a pie-baking contest 8:30-7:30 p.m. July 29. All entries must be submitted before 5:30 p.m. July 29.

The Elks Lodge will have its annual ox roast at its Orchard Lake Road site. Their doors will be open July 29-31, from noon until 1 a.m. An outdoor band will complete the festivities.

PRINCE OF PEACE Lutheran Church will have its annual German dinner of potato salad, knockwurst,

sauerkraut, potato pancakes, hot dogs and beverages.

The police auction will be on the showmobile stage in the Downtown Farmington Center 1-3 p.m. July 29.

The YMCA Fox Trot is scheduled for July 31. The first race is scheduled for 8 a.m. and the second race at 8:30 a.m. For information, contact the Farmington YMCA at 553-4020.

The Festival Committee still is looking for volunteers to help out with last-minute preparations. Call Ron Rice at 474-3440.

Farmington Hills losses down

Firefighters keep lid on blazes as city grows

Farmington Hills home fires resulted in an average loss of \$22,389.71, according to the Farmington Hills Fire Department's 1981 annual report.

The average loss is down about 7 per cent from 1980's figure of \$24,111.31 per home fire.

Loss in 62 residential fires in 1981 totaled \$1,389,182.

Of the 2,059 alarms received, 354 were for fires, 1,106 were for medical emergencies, and 234 included investigations, cancelled runs and responses to hazardous conditions.

Firefighters responded to 365 non-fire alarms, including 64 smoke investigations, 111 flooded basements, 19 downed wires, 74 false alarms, 32 assists to the Police Department, 28 odor investigations and one explosion.

The major fire of the year occurred in the House of Botsford apartments in December, causing \$520,000 damage. Residents of the eight-unit, multi-story complex were evacuated safely; however 15 firefighters suffered minor injuries.

FIRE ALARMS in 1981 in one- and two-family residences were down 33.8 percent from 1980, from 80 to 53 fires.

A 10.6 percent increase was noted in fires originating in mobile vehicles and property, representing 94 alarms to 1980's 65. Injuries and deaths among civilians were down 100 percent over 1980, a year in which one person was

killed and 12 were injured in fires.

Farmington Hills Fire Chief Larry Karon noted a 45.3 percent drop in the value of property destroyed.

Total pump time plummeted 53.1 percent — from 194 hours to 91.

Dollar loss resulting from fires in buildings other than residences amounted to \$187,808 in contents, an increase of 15 percent. But building damage was down 65.3 percent from \$173,672 in 1980.

The number of residential fires per month was down from 7.41 in 1980 to 5.17 in 1981, a 30.2 percent drop.

False alarms jumped 25.4 percent from 59 to 74 in 1981.

Fires in automobiles also increased, jumping 17.4 percent to 81 from 69. Auto fire losses totaled \$110,265 in 1981.

Truck fires increased 62.5 percent from eight to 13 causing \$11,113 in losses.

A 33.6 percent decrease was noted in total fire loss, a drop to \$1,741,908 from \$2,623,536.

Operating on a budget of \$1,166,211 were seven full-time fire fighters, three fire prevention personnel, two administrative personnel and 70 paid call-back (volunteer) firefighters.

"With two full-time inspectors at all times, we could get a lot more ground covered. I'd recommend that."

— William Gearhart
Fire Marshal

SINCE 1975, the number of fires is up 143 percent, medical runs are up 377 percent and miscellaneous runs increased 320 percent.

Farmington Hills' population grew

from 47,005 in 1970 to 57,922 in 1980 — a factor Karon correlates directly with the report's figure showing increases in fire department runs.

"Right now, alarms seem to be tapering off, but it's because of the time of year. Overall, the alarm rate has increased as the population grows and homes get older," Karon said.

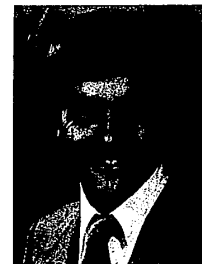
Both Karon and Fire Marshal William Gearhart would welcome additional personnel.

"With two full-time inspectors at all times, (Gearhart is now the only full-time inspector) we could get a lot more

ground covered. I'd recommend that," said Gearhart.

"But we're a young department, and it takes time. You can't do it overnight."

Karon would utilize additional personnel in the area of public fire safety "with regards to the community's questions and education regarding fire safety."



Dan Wilson

Heating assistance is made available

The Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLHSA) currently has \$41,240 available to aid low-income families with their heat bills. The Targeted Fuel Assistance (TFA) Program has been designed to assist households that spend a large portion of their income on heat cost. This is not an emergency program, therefore, shut-off notices are not required.

Eligibility is based on income at or below the poverty level and the amount of income spent on heat. Payments are made directly to the utilities or fuel oil fire department runs.

OLHSA is seeking low-income families in the area to apply for this assistance. All applications must be made on or before July 15.

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