

Farmington Observer

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Bus drivers lack contract but will work

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Farmington bus drivers still are without a contract for the upcoming school year.

Their two-year contract expired July 1. Negotiations with the Farmington Board of Education began last June and reached an impasse Monday when both sides agreed to call in a mediator. Leon Cornfield, a mediator with the Michigan Bureau of Employment Relations, joined in Tuesday's bargaining session but was unable to bring about a settlement.

NEGOTIATIONS WERE adjourned until Sept. 10, the next opening in Cornfield's schedule.

"We're progressing with mediations and we're hopeful a settlement will be reached. The decision to call in a mediator was mutually reached," said Mary Ann Ligato, field representative for the Michigan Education Support Personnel Association (MESPA). She is heading the bus drivers' six-member bargaining team.

"What we're asking for is a contract on par with those of other district employees." Ligato was reluctant to elaborate due to "the delicate nature of the mediation process. We don't want to jeopardize it."

ATTEMPTS TO reach Robert Coleman, chief of the school district's bargaining team, were unsuccessful.

Farmington School Superintendent Lewis Schulman voiced optimism about the prospects of a quick settlement.

Students will not be affected by the absence of a new contract, he added.

"The bus drivers have a contract extension that is effective indefinitely. So bus service will not be disrupted when school opens," Schulman said.

Weather policy, which last winter caused a rift between bus drivers and school administrators when the employees staged a "stay-in" because of poor weather conditions, is not an issue on the bargaining table.

"That was resolved with the institution of a safety officer (a bus driver) who will make recommendations to Mr. Schulman," said Ligato.

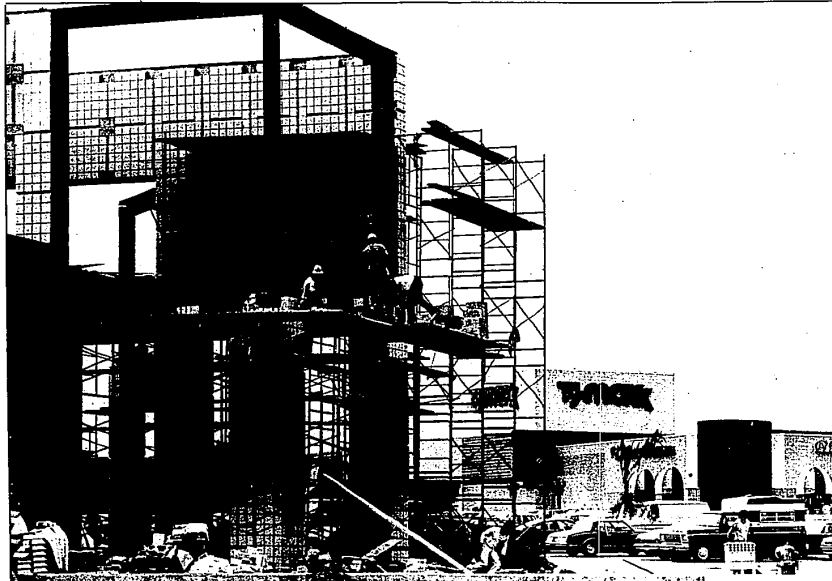
"Final decisions still will be made by Mr. Schulman, but we hope will rely heavily on the position of the safety officer."

IN SEPTEMBER 1980, students were stranded at bus stops when the drivers staged a wild cat strike.

That controversy centered on the contract formula for computation of work hours and the number of runs.

Under the expired contract, 60 bus drivers started at \$5 hourly and reached top of the scale at \$7.25 after five years, according to Judith Watts of the Farmington School Bus Drivers Association.

The drivers transport 8,406 Farmington students and 1,455 parochial students daily.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Workers on scaffolding are building what will be a Gap clothing store in the Orchard Place shopping plaza next to Tally Hall. While only three stores are open now, sales in those establishments are breaking records, according to developers.

Designers discounted

New center sales booming

West Bloomfield's Brooks and Layne Development Co. is saying yes to Farmington Hills.

The company's principal owners, Marvin Brooks and Sandy Layne, recently celebrated the grand opening of Orchard Place, a \$7.5-million shopping center neighboring Tally

Hall on Orchard Lake Road south of 14 Mile Road.

Although only B. Dalton, T.J. Maxx and Dimensions are open so far in the 100,000-square-foot development, sales are breaking national records, according to Layne. Layne attributes the center's

booming business to "the strong desire in the area for discount designer goods."

Scheduled to open by October in Orchard Place are The Gap, Taggs, Shoe Town Shoes, Harmony House Records, Linens Limited, Southfield Coney Island and the Miami Bake

Shop. Several of those stores will feature designer goods at discount prices.

About 10,000 square feet of space still is available for lease.

AT A TIME when housing con-

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Bar break-ins in city probed

The Old Village Inn was broken into Saturday, Farmington's second bar break-in in 10 days.

Ten days earlier thieves broke into Charlie's Place in Farmington after the bar closed for the night.

In the most recent burglary, thieves took an estimated \$100 in goods and gold coins and damaged \$95 worth of vending machines and bar equipment at the Old Village Inn, owner John Crowley told police.

In the Aug. 19 break-in at Charlie's Place, \$3,820 was reported stolen and \$100 in damages was caused to bar vending machines and equipment.

In both break-ins the intruders used a screwdriver to pry their way inside, police said. Fingerprint samples were taken in both burglaries by investigating officers.

Charlie's Place co-owners Charles Spaller and Bob Rock, both of Farmington, said the burglars took a large quantity of liquor and wine. Charlie's Place is at 23621 Farmington Road.

The reported loss included 13 cases of wine and liquor, a \$1,500 wall-screen projection television that was chained to the ceiling, two electric saws and a staple gun. Police said Spaller gave the name of a possible suspect who watched bar employees load several cases of newly purchased liquor into the bar.

A cigar still was burning in an ash tray in the bar, according to police, when the break-in at Charlie's Place was reported by employee Steve Bruce at 7:09 a.m. Aug. 19.

Pizzeria owner dies in crash

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

Loyal customers of Mario's Irish Pizzeria at 13 Mile and Orchard Lake Road were apprehensive when they saw that the restaurant had abruptly closed last Wednesday.

Then they learned the reason. Owner Myles Burke III, 45, of Farmington Hills had been killed when his car crashed head-on into another car on Eight Mile Road, west of Haggerty in Northville Township.

His wife of two months, Karan, 37, was injured and was listed Tuesday in stable condition in an acute care unit of Botsford Hospital.

The driver of the other car, Richard Siebert, 24, of Southfield was injured. He was treated in St. Mary Hospital in Livonia and released Tuesday. Northville Township police said Burke was driving west on Eight Mile about 11:55 p.m. Aug. 24 when his car crossed over the center line and collided with Siebert's eastbound car.

POLICE Sgt. John Sherman said the accident is under investigation. He said toxicology reports on had not been completed and "the exact cause (of the accident) and person responsible, technically, is still to be determined."

Burke's sons, Myles IV, 21, and Jeffrey, 19, of Farmington Hills plan to reopen the their father's restaurant with the help of a cousin, Ted Ehen, 18, of Northville. Myles will be the proprietor of the establishment, his brother said.

"We're just going to try to generate all we can do to make this business work," Jeffrey said. "The business hasn't had anybody answering the phone in the last week. We're still sorting it out. We hope our loyal customers haven't given up on us."

BURKE TOOK over the restaurant two years ago. He tacked the whimsical "Irish Pizzeria" name on the original title of Mario's. The restaurant features square and round pizzas as well as chicken and ribs.

"Dad was really proud of his Irish heritage," Jeffrey said. "He and his wife — my stepmother — recently visited Ireland after they were married June 1."

The family has snapshots of the couple taken downtown at the Irish ethnic festival and in an Irish pub. Prior to acquiring the restaurant, Burke worked as a district manager in the credit division of Ford Motor Co. Burke's death is the second in the family in the last 16 months. His daughter, Colleen, 19, was killed in April 1981 when she was struck by a car while walking on Drake Road between 12 Mile and 13-Mile roads. The driver fled the scene and the accident is still unsolved.



Myles Burke III, owner of Mario's Irish Pizzeria, was killed last week and his wife, Karan, is hospitalized from injuries suffered in the two-car crash.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Crafty couple of kids

Stacy Mehler shows her friend, Abby Magid how to paste up a pinata at a neighborhood Kiddie Camp in Farmington Hills. Abby's got more

paste in her hair than on the balloon but the kids had fun on one of the last days of summer. Turn to Page 3A for a story and more pictures.

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