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Farmington FOCUS

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THE FATE of the historic Harger House is in limbo. A revised open-space plan for the Farmington Hills Elmi Club Subdivision was approved by planning commissioners Oct. 10. But what's to become of the 140-year-old Harger House, which sits in the subdivision's common area fronting Halsted Road, remains undetermined.

Subdivision residents are expected to vote on three options during the next month: demolish the deteriorating structure, let residents use it as a homeowners association building that can be rented for gatherings, or sell it to a private developer for perhaps office use.

Subdivision bylaws dictate a 30-day notice for any planned meeting, according to Hills Mayor Jan Han.

STOP! That's the message you would heed when you see a school bus with red lights flashing. That's the law.

According to Secretary of State Richard Austin, Michigan State Safety Commission chairman, most deaths and injuries involving school buses occur after students leave the bus and are struck by a passing vehicle.

Michigan law requires motorists to stop within 10 feet of all school buses with red lights flashing, no matter which side of the road the bus is on.

The only time a motorist does not have to stop for a school bus with flashing red lights is when the bus is on the other side of an impassable median of a divided highway.

SHE'S now a Peace Corps volunteer.

Judith Burland, a graduate of both Farmington Harrison High School and Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, has completed the 10-week training program for the Peace Corps Volunteers in Burkina Faso, Africa.

She's now on assignment, teaching English on the secondary level, at the Institute Shabana in Rabinda, Zaire.

IT'S quite an honor.

Matthew Urdan was selected Michigan DeMolay's "Outstanding Ruler" at the DeMolay state convective held at Ferris State College, Big Rapids.

From among 41 contestants, Urdan was ranked first in competition, streaming, pole, delivery, recitation and interpretation.

KUDOS are in order. Farmington Hills Councilwoman Joan Dudley was named second vice-chairwoman of the Michigan Women in Municipal Government.

FOOTNOTES: In 1828, the first school was built in Farmington Township, a log hut on Elm Avenue. Farmington founder Arthur Fowler's son, Nathan, was the first schoolmaster.

In 1843, Nels Foster was appointed to build a new school. When that was destroyed in 1852, he built the next school, a two-story brick building that is where the present Farmington Public Schools building stands. That building served until 1936, when the Union School replaced it. The Union School was destroyed by fire in 1978.

Resident's body found after blaze

By Bob Sklar and Lisa Simon staff writers

The body of a 50-year-old woman was found in her Farmington Hills house following "a suspicious" fire Monday evening.

Firefighters found the body of Marlene F. Edwards, after extinguishing a fire on Rhoswood Drive, in fashionable Meadowbrook Hills, near Eight Mile and Halsted.

Mrs. Edwards died prior to the fire,

apparently of natural causes, Farmington Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci said late Wednesday. He said he's awaiting the medical examiner's written report about the exact cause of death.

Farmington Hills Fire Lt. Peter Baldwin labeled the fire suspicious, pending results of the autopsy by the Oakland County medical examiner and analysis of fire samples by the Michigan State Police Crime Laboratory in Northville.

"We'd like to get all the pieces together before we can come up with a determination about the fire," Baldwin said.

Interim chief is chosen

Graham Lewis, assistant superintendent of special services for Farmington Public Schools, will serve as interim superintendent when school chief Lewis Schulman retires Dec. 31.

Without discussion, the Farmington Board of Education unanimously selected Lewis Tuesday following a recommendation of a board-appointed selection committee.

"I consider it a compliment to me," said the 53-year-old Lewis, who came to the district in 1972 as director of special education. "I will be working very, very closely with Lewis Schulman to make sure the transition is smooth."

In 1981, Lewis' title was changed to assistant superintendent of special services in charge of special education as well as the gifted, reading and early education programs.

Lewis came to the Farmington Public Schools after 13 years with the Pontiac Public Schools. There, he began his career teaching high school art and the mentally impaired before being appointed as the district's supervisor of special education.

MARINUCCI SAID he's hoping laboratory analysis of fire samples will provide a clue to the fire's cause. He's also planning to analyze color photos of the fire taken by free-lance photographers. "We're hoping they'll show the fire's intensity, which might indicate what may have been burning."

Some still-unanswered questions relate to unusual burn patterns. "It was a very intense fire, which we can't explain," Marinucci said. "It was hotter than it should have been, based on when Mrs. Edwards was supposed to have arrived home. It developed faster than a smoldering-type fire."

The fire is believed to have started on the first floor — in the area of the family room near the back of the house, where the body was found, investigators said.

A next-door neighbor, Helen Oswald, said Mrs. Edwards "was a lovely person. Any time you needed her, she was there. She was a good neighbor, and I'm going to miss her."

Oswald told how she called Mrs. Edwards for help when she had a kitchen fire about six years ago. Mrs. Edwards came over immediately and lent a hand. "I wish I could have done the same for her," Oswald said.

THE EDWARDS moved in about 12 years ago, according to Oswald. Another neighbor, Stanley Zajdel, called Mrs. Edwards "a wonderful woman and mother." Survivors include two daughters, Lisa and Michelle, both Farmington High School students.

Tuesday, Farmington Hills fire in-

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Barrie Werba, a 10-year Farmington Hills resident, says she "lives and breathes the arts, 24 hours a day."

Crusader Hooked on the arts? You bet!

By Lisa Simon staff writer

In a baby-blue office on the 17th floor of the Fisher Building in Detroit's New Center area, Barrie Werba, executive director of the Michigan Foundation For the Arts (MFFA), sits behind a desk crowded with papers.

Although the office is plain — a few notes taped on the bare walls, a few framed posters leaning beneath the window — Werba's articulate promotion of the arts fills the room with color.

The 10-year Farmington Hills resident says she "lives and breathes the arts, 24 hours a day." Her duties as MFFA executive director include program administration, newsletter writing and editing, and public relations.

"The MFFA is Michigan's 'best-kept secret,'" Werba said. "Not enough people know about us and what we do. Not enough people know how many fine artists and art schools there are in Michigan."

Celebrating its 20th year, the MFFA has supported 500 artists and 125 art organizations since its inception.

A PRIVATE foundation supported by individuals, corporations and

people

other foundations, the MFFA awards financial support to artists in four ways:

- Cash prizes through a competitive program
- Grants to arts organizations for specific projects
- \$2,000 scholarships to college seniors with proven academic and artistic excellence

Michigan Artists Awards, \$2,500 cash prizes that go to five outstanding artists each year.

Artists in the visual, musical, literary and dance fields are eligible for such support. Says Werba: "I think artists are terrific people."

Werba said she particularly admires artists because they often dedicate their lives to something that won't bring financial reward.

Werba's involvement with the arts extends beyond the three years she has been MFFA executive director.

ORIGINALLY FROM Brooklyn, Werba studied painting at Hunter

'The Michigan Foundation for the Arts' is Michigan's best-kept secret. . . Not enough people know how many fine artists and art schools there are in Michigan.'

— Barrie Werba, MFFA executive director

College in New York City. Before moving to Michigan 20 years ago, she held jobs in advertising production and publishing in New York City.

Her husband, Gabriel, is executive vice president of Anthony M. Franco Inc., a downtown Detroit public relations firm.

When the Werbas' children, Farmington Harrison High School students Annmarie, 15, a sophomore, and Dean, 18, a senior, "were semi-grownup," Werba attended Oakland University in Auburn Hills to study journalism.

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Enhanced 9-1-1 Cities say yes to county emergency system

By Joanne Mallazewski staff writer

If all goes as planned, Farmington and Farmington Hills residents will benefit from Oakland County's planned installation of an estimated \$400,000 Enhanced 9-1-1 emergency telephone system within 18 months.

Without controversy or debate, the Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils approved service agreements, enabling county officials to move forward in coordinating a countywide E-9-1-1 emergency system.

"We have been looking for it (E-9-1-1) for some time," said Farmington Hills Mayor Jan Dolan.

Farmington Hills officials have talked about installation of a specialized 9-1-1 system for years, particularly in light of the construction of a new police department building.

Farmington Director of Public Safety Frank Laubhoff echoed Dolan's sentiments about the proposed emergency phone system: "It is one of the best things to happen in this community in a long time."

E-9-1-1 is a computerized system that will replace local emergency phone numbers. Residents in each participating community will simply dial E-9-1-1 for both police and fire emer-



'Each community has to decide what capabilities it wants to buy. The county is putting in a basic system that communities can build on.'

— William Costick, Hills city manager

gencies. The computerized system has the ability to direct the phone call to the appropriate emergency department.

Under the E-9-1-1 proposal, the county will pay 100 percent of the initial \$400,000 cost of the rewiring necessary to accommodate the emergency system countywide.

Rewiring will enable Farmington and Farmington Hills residents to dial E-9-1-1 and be connected directly with the police and fire departments serving

their area. Rewiring is particularly important in communities that share several telephone exchanges. The 47 exchange extends through Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi, for example.

The county will also pay 50 percent of the annual recurring maintenance costs for the system; individual communities will pay the remaining half. Maintenance costs are based on each city's estimated number of telephone numbers and current Michigan Bell

tariff rates.

FARMINGTON'S ANNUAL maintenance cost would be \$2,700, said City Manager Robert Deadman. The annual maintenance cost for Farmington Hills would be higher — \$18,109, because of the greater number of telephone numbers in the city, said City Manager William Costick.

The county is offering a system highlighted by two major features.

The first is a selective routing. Older 911 systems, such as the one in Livonia, do not have the ability to separate calls according to municipal borders. But the system proposed by the county will be able to distinguish communities, Deadman said. When a resident in either Farmington or Farmington Hills calls E-9-1-1, the system will automatically send the call to the respective police/fire department.

An automatic number identification (ANI) is the second feature offered in the county's proposed system.

When E-9-1-1 is dialed, the resident's phone number will automatically appear on a computer terminal screen in the dispatch center of the police headquarters. If the dispatcher has the resident's phone number, other reference data can be obtained to acquire an address if the caller is unable to communicate with the dispatcher.

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