

Are you busy during the week?

Cast worries aside, they're open on Saturday

By RON GARBENSKI

If you ever missed work to take care of your legal matters in court, then you know the problems it may cause those who have difficulty appearing in court during regular business hours.

To help area residents who might have trouble taking time off from work during the day, Farmington's 47th District Court now will begin holding evening and Saturday sessions.

"I always thought it was unfair for someone to give up about \$20 or \$40 worth of the daily wage to appear in court during the day to fight a \$10 traffic ticket," said 47th District Court Judge Michael Hand.

"Now, under a new law approved by the governor in January, we are required to hold the Saturday and evening sessions for those who work during the day," he continues.

Under the new law, all district courts in the state having more than one judge must establish evening and Saturday hours.

The civil division of the 47th District Court, located at Farmington City Hall, will be open the first Saturday of each month to handle only small claims.

THE FIRST Saturday session is scheduled for April 3 starting at 9 a.m. and continuing until noon or whenever all cases are heard.

Traffic and criminal cases can be heard the last Wednesday evening of each month beginning March 31 at 4 p.m. and continuing around 10 p.m.

The criminal division of the 47th District Court is located in the Farmington Hills City Hall.

To arrange for your case to be heard during the Saturday or Wednesday evening hours, residents must obtain an application from either court office.

The applications will be reviewed and a court date will then be set.

We will night court in the Farmington area several years ago to accommodate persons who had trouble coming into court during the day.

Judge Hand explained for the new hours. Hand said, "We'd like to be as flexible as we can and not make the girls work overtime if we can manage it."

Martine Dupond, court clerk of the 47th District, said there hasn't been a rush of applications for the evening and Saturday sessions.

"We only have had the notices up at our office for about a week notifying residents that we will be open the extra hours," she explained.

"But there haven't been many requests for the new court sessions yet. The reason for the extra hours isn't because we have an overloaded docket," Mrs. Dupond continues.

But rather because the state passed a new law and we must obey it. At this time, we just don't expect that many applications for the evening sessions.

THE JUDGE also said if the volume of cases appearing on the Saturday or Wednesday evening dockets is large then more sessions might be added during evening hours to comply with the law.

At first we will only handle small claims since a month on Saturdays, Hand said. "And criminal cases will be heard only one evening per month. If the public really responds to the idea then we will consider expanding hours further."

Hand explained that small claims cases may be filed during the month's Saturday session, but the case won't be heard that same day because of the legal procedures that must be followed before the case can be heard.

That doesn't give enough time to prepare the case if it is filed on Saturday.

Hand continues, "But then again, we don't want the cases to get too old so we will handle them as soon as we can."

I can't really predict how many residents will take advantage of the Wednesday evening and Saturday morning sessions, he concluded. But I think over the months of the extra hours session off the number of people wanting to come to court will go down.

Hand says the only problem the district court anticipates with the new hours will be budgetary.

Since state law requires court workers to be paid for all necessary overtime, the extra sessions will cause court employees to arrange their schedules so that they can work one evening or Saturday per month.

"Our budget is tight already and I don't think we will be able to afford overtime for the new hours," Hand said.

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Area Arts Commission soon may become reality

A Farmington area arts commission came one step closer to reality this week.

The Farmington City Council has agreed to work with Farmington Hills in formulating a contract to create a nine-member commission.

Attempts to formulate a bi-city commission have been going on since Farmington Hills became a city two years ago.

Although unanimously agreeing to make the study, some Farmington councilmembers were less than enthused.

"There's too much red tape," said councilman Richard Tupper at a week-long meeting.

"IT SEEMS TO ME that it takes away

its effectiveness," he said, referring to the contract proposed by Hills attorney Terry Brennan.

Tupper was concerned about the effects of a Hills council veto on commission spending.

"I'm not in favor of establishing an arts commission, then hamstringing it," Tupperman agreed.

Each city would contribute to the commission's funds and have the right to be informed of how that money is spent.

If the commission was forced to gain the approval of both cities for its expenditures, there is the possibility that the two cities would not agree.

Line-item reporting of all expenditures may enunciate the commission, Mayor Richard Richardson said.

"For a council to come up and say they should not have because we don't want it—you may as well not have a commission at all," he said.

"You ought to know what you're funding," said City Manager Robert Deadman.

"It's pretty difficult to start crossing out items."

In a letter to the council, the Ad Hoc Committee on Council of the Arts suggested that the art commission be composed of three City of Farmington members and six Hills residents.

Members would be appointed to staggered terms of one, two and three years to establish continuity within the commission.

THE SELECTS council would be eligible for state and federal art program funds. It could gain state and national recognition as a unit of local government.

The commission also would be able to conduct continuing programs under the proposed arrangement.

The ad hoc committee also recommended the present council of the arts be discontinued or continue to function as an interested citizens group in a manner similar to the Friends of the Library.

"The education and well being of our citizens will be improved as a result of increased cultural benefits which should be available to the community," read the ad hoc recommendation.

"The cultural programs should provide constructive pursuits for our younger citizens and provide opportunities for advancement in the arts."

Encouragement of our youth in cultural endeavors should be beneficial to both cities in reduced law enforcement expenditures, said the recommendation.

The ad hoc recommendation said the commission would be better equipped to insure that all residents would have the opportunity to experience cultural benefits.

Two juveniles who have admitted to van-danizing 30 Farmington School District buses Wednesday, March 3 will be referred to the Farmington Youth Assistance program for guidance and counseling.

Farmington Public Safety Director Daniel Byrnes said both juveniles are first-time offenders and were released to their parents.

Each juvenile's parents must pay \$24 in restitution for the damaged buses. The juveniles will receive counseling from FYA staff counselors.

The two juveniles pulled the apart plug wires, distributor caps and wires from 30 of the district's fleet of 50 buses causing many senior high school students to be late for classes the next day.

Police apprehended one youth Thursday morning, March 4, and the second juvenile confessed last Monday after being questioned by the Farmington Public Safety Department.

We believe it is impractical to apply the provisions of this ordinance to those establishments in which the coin-operated device is only incidental to their main business, for example, a bar with the new electronic dart or hockey game.

City Manager Robert Deadman told the council the machines must still be licensed.

Under the present ordinance, owners of coin-operated amusement devices are required to file an application indicating the number, type and location of all machines.

License holders are fingerprinted to determine if they have a criminal record which would prohibit them from owning the machines.

Arcade managers must be at least 21 years old.

The 21-year-old-operator clause is difficult to enforce, Deadman says. It would require that all owners of coin-operated amusement machines be checked to insure that their managers are of legal age.

"I think determining 10 per cent would be hard to enforce," Byrnes said. "You're talking about ease of enforcement."

He suggested a survey to learn of the average number of pinball machine businesses in the city. Such a study would help avoid the possibility of a business with four machines being treated the same as a pinball establishment.



A big Irish smile by Katherine O'Sullivan Hayes tells us that St. Patrick's Day is just around the corner. She was recently selected as Irish Queen for the Ancient Order of Hibernians. A Farmington High School student, she was in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Detroit. (Staff photo)

Subtle discrimination

Council considers ordinance to prevent influx of pinball

The Farmington City Council has proposed an amendment to an ordinance designed to prevent an influx of pinball machines to the city.

The ordinance is necessary "to stop the phenomena of every time you get an empty building, you get it filled up with amusement devices," City Manager Robert Deadman explained.

"I think what you are trying to do is make it very difficult to open up a store where the sole business is coin-operated machines," he told the council.

Other store owners hesitate to rent a shop next to an arcade because it becomes a lien hanging, he added.

"To me, it looks like discrimination."

Councilman Alton Bennett said, "We've got to be subtle in our discrimination."

Mayor John Richardson also agreed. "If someone wants to use it, let the Councilman Richard Tupper say. There are better places for kids in Farmington," he added.

"IT DOESN'T totally prohibit the operation of amusement devices of this type," Councilman William Hartsock said.

The amendment would exempt those businesses which own fewer than three machines and receive less than 10 per cent of their income from the operation of the machines.

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