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Early winter blast hits area with gusto

Residents wage fight on snow

By LYNN ORR

Farmington area residents had their first taste of digging out after a winter storm last weekend, a full three weeks before the official start of the season.

And while the kid in nearly everyone enjoyed the candyland atmosphere, Farmington police and public works crews had the usual problems.

"It was a good tuneup for what's ahead," says Hills DPW Superintendent Bob Shaw philosophically.

Both cities recorded a higher-than-normal number of traffic accidents.

Nine accidents within a 45-minute period Sunday afternoon were reported to City of Farmington police, the majority of them in the western end of the city. Farmington Hills police recorded about 10 more traffic mishaps for the week than normal, including six disabled vehicles, eight reportable property damage accidents (more than \$200), and three property damage incidents where the damage was less than \$200—all on Sunday.

WHILE THE accidents probably proved expensive for the residents involved, snowstorms cost taxpayers more than many might realize. It all began Friday for Farmington Hills DPW crews which were on a four-day holiday weekend. Calling in six men and a foreman at triple-time (holiday pay is expensive, says Shaw, Sunday crews worked at double-time rates.

"We pay tremendously," he said with a sigh, although the exact costs have not been tabulated.

The two-inch snowfall Friday and Sunday's six-inch accumulation required a lot of manhours to plow all the streets, including subdivisions, and salt the major roads, Shaw explains.

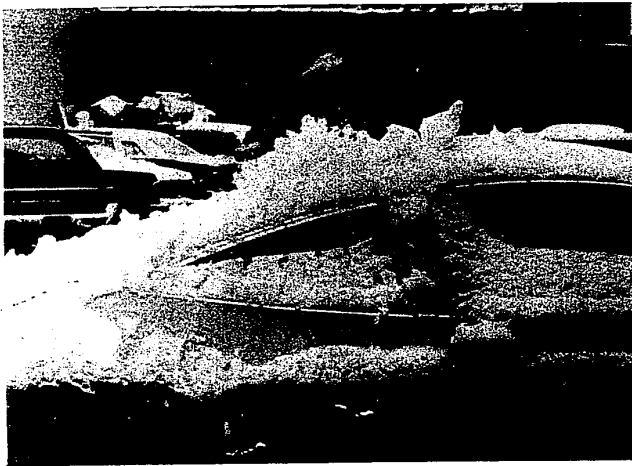
But he's accustomed to weekend snowstorms.

Invariably, most of these storms hit on weekends or at night, so the bulk of the time, you're on premium (over) time. It just happens," he says, recalling the notorious 20-inch Sunday snowfall of 1974.

While the Hills crews plowed 250 miles between Sunday and Monday, City of Farmington DPW crews used about 30 tons of salt to make the city streets safer, according to Joe Devriendt, DPW foreman standing in for the vacationing director.

The city has a two-man crew standing by from 4 p.m. Fridays to 7:30 a.m. the following Friday to take care of emergencies, he explains. Sunday's storm required three men working about 11 hours, he says.

However, the storm didn't produce the desired effect for some Farmington residents—the school buses rolled as usual.



Fighting the white stuff

Debby Pothoff of Farmington was among those surprised last week by the first snowfall of the year. Trying to maintain a certain cheerfulness, she gets

into shape for the next five months by removing the fresh snow from a friend's car. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Bartending in the Hills

She swizzles the hooch

By LYNN ORR

In smaller bars, bartenders often do double duty as bouncers, and that holds true in The Monk's Cellar in Farmington Hills.

But the bouncer-bartender is a lady, as well as the manager of the restaurant-cocktail lounge, and her velvet glove treatment may work more effectively than the traditional boot out the door.

"I'm not a little girl so people aren't going to pick on me anyway," says Kathy "Bo" Bokun, 24, who's been working at the cocktail lounge on Twelve Mile at Orchard Lake for four years.

"Threatening to call the police usually does it, because if I call, the customer will have to call a cab."

Being a woman has another advantage—it's easier for Bo to remove an

unruly female customer than a man, and the situation isn't as unusual as one might think.

About once a month Bo has to tell someone to leave and never return—about average for bars, she says. Usually making the bar off limits comes after a tab hassle.

SUCH UNPLEASANTNESS is only a minor aspect of a job Bo is extremely enthusiastic about.

"I love it," says the tall, slender young woman, whose shiny ash blonde hair bounces as she walks behind the bar, greeting most customers by name. She frankly admits that she wears a brief shiny navy outfit that reveals her long legs because the men like it.

"I love working with people. Sometimes you see people destroy themselves with liquor, but those are fewer than the ones that come in and have a good time.

And Bo has a good time along with the customers.

There's a special atmosphere in a bar, almost directly due to the customers' mood, and a perceptive waitress or bartender can spot the mood as they walk in the door.

"You know when there's a full moon out," she says. "It's like everyone's been locked up for a week and they just let them out."

That's the fun part of working in a bar, but a lot of self-control is part of the job.

Postal rules

require snow free

mail boxes

Farmington area post office customers are reminded that postal regulations require the approach to post boxes on mounted routes be cleared of snow. This will permit the carrier to drive up to the mailbox to deposit and collect mail without leaving the vehicle.

The approach and exit to the mailbox should be cleared on both sides to allow the carrier to drive ahead without backing up the vehicle after delivery. Failure to open approaches to boxes promptly after heavy snows may temporarily prevent carriers from making deliveries, according to Farmington Postmaster Kenneth Harris.

Postal regulations also require that walks, steps and porches be kept clear of snow and ice.

"The booze is right there at your fingertips and it's hard to restrain yourself, but the emergencies make it important for bartenders not to drink—at least too much," she says with a smile.

Recently a customer almost choked to death on a piece of food, and the manager has to act quickly, Bo says.

"Fortunately there was a nurse in that night, and she handled the situation. But you can't sit around waiting for someone else to take care of things."

In addition to the liquor temptation, the usual problem of overly affectionate customers can sometimes plague restaurant servers, but that's where the bartender has an advantage.

"Behind the bar you've got some distance, sort of a natural barrier," Bo says, which makes it easier to deal with customers who can't keep their hands to themselves.

And the money makes bartending look even better to women, she says. In a busy bar, a bartender earns \$3 an hour to start and will probably pick up anywhere from \$20-40 a night in tips.

"I really think it's about the best paying job for women around," Bo says, and besides it's in her blood. Her mother worked in a bar owned by the family and Bo's been in the cocktail business for a total of seven years.

She had thought about going to bartending school when she first started behind the bar, but she quickly learned that whatever experience she needed she could learn on the job.

In fact, the Monk's Cellar employs only women bartenders now.

THE HARDEST part of the job is cutting off drinks and getting the customers out at 2:30 a.m., she says. Turning on the lights to cut the mood and "yelling a lot" is how you get them out. And cutting off the drinks doesn't come up too often.

"Half the time they fall asleep," she says wryly. The Farmington Hills police are very helpful in solving any problems she can't handle, she adds.

Since she knows about half the customers and their drinks by name, the job is pretty easy. And the most popular drink, a vodka martini (about 100 a day), is easy to make.

When a customer orders a Pina Colada, the newest in drinks made of rum, liquid coconut, creme de cacao, and pineapple juice, she groans a little. But in a bar, the customer is the king, unless he or she loses his head.

White Yule predicted; snowfall above normal

By LYNN ORR

Look for a warmer but snowier Christmas than last year, if you believe the National Weather Service's forecast, which coincidentally is what the Old Farmer's Almanac predicts as well.

But if you want to know how much you'll pay for utilities to heat and light you through the long winter, the predictions get tougher.

Last year's winter temperatures were 20 per cent below normal, while nearly 44 inches of snow fell on the Detroit area from October through April. Normally the thaw month, January was the biggest surprise with an average temperature of 12.8 degrees and about 14 inches of snow.

But while it's fairly easy to document last year's winter, predicting is another story. Even the National Weather Service predicts only one month in advance, while some utility companies use private weather services to give them some kind of picture of the months ahead.

"The longer the forecast period, the lower the percentage of accuracy," admits Dennis Hess, who works at the Michigan office of the National Weather Service.

BUT BUSINESSSES usually incorporate some kind of prediction to budget utility costs. One local school official developed his own formula, figuring that this winter would be less severe than last year but still colder than normal. He's working on the premise that weather runs in six year cycles.

The only thing that Consumers Power predicts is that their gas supply will be sufficient for the customers' needs and that rate increases will probably be about five per cent higher than last year, says Michael Blombach, public affairs director for the metro region.

"We didn't have a problem last year, and even if the winter was as bad, we don't think we would have a problem this year," Blombach says. But while Blombach quotes a five per cent increase, at least one local school official was told to expect a 15 per cent hike in utility costs over last year by a Consumer's representative.

The five per cent increase would come in the form of a monthly fuel adjustment allowed by the Michigan Public Service Commission. The gas company is allowed to pass on to customers any increases in costs from gas suppliers, Blombach explains.

However, Consumers also is waiting word on a five to ten per cent rate increase from the Public Service Commission.

The company requested the gas rate order increase in November, 1974, and although the commission is supposed to rule on requests within nine months, the increase is still in limbo.

Consumer's other problem is Congress. Natural gas pricing and the sharing of gas could be affected by Congressional deliberations on Carter's energy bill.

"It's like standing at the top of the stairs and tossing the cards, you don't know what the program's going to be," Blombach says.

DETROIT EDISON is on a little firmer ground. Because of a rate increase granted in the spring, electric bills will be about four to five per cent higher for most customers, says Stuart Hetu, director of customers and marketing research for the electric company.

About a seven per cent hike, \$122 million, is pending as well, although the company doesn't expect word on that request until next year, Hetu says.

To relieve some problems encountered last year, Edison has made some improvements at the Monroe plant where they had a coal freeze-up problem, and the company also has been stockpiling an extra six-week supply of coal in anticipation of a possible United Mine Workers strike. Edison uses a short-range weather predicting service for storms, to make sure they have enough men available for emergencies; but long-range forecasting is out of the picture.

THE FARMER'S Almanac apparently is the only place where you can get a rosy picture of the winter ahead.

"Look for a snowy, but not too cold winter with a good snow expected at Christmastime," the Almanac says. "After a much warmer than average February and March, cool and wet weather will prevail through June, although April is likely to be dry."

"A hotter than average summer and a cool fall are expected, with July and September drier than usual."

If December's forecast proves accurate, you may want to buy a copy. It predicts intermittent rain and mild weather for the 1st through 6th and the month's temperature average is a 27.5 degree forecast.

OCC declares parking lot war

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Drivers in the habit of using the Orchard Ridge Campus as a short cut will find their path blocked by rented security guards beginning Dec. 1.

Students, faculty and visitors also will be stopped by the private guards and asked to show proof of their business at the Oakland Community College campus before being directed to a parking space.

The measure, which college administrators concede will back up traffic on Farmington and Orchard Lake Roads, was prompted by a hazardous, potentially dangerous situation on campus said Dean of Administrative Services William Stuart.

Officials are afraid the on-campus traffic could cause serious injury.

"The traffic back-up is a small price to pay. We've tried everything," said Stuart of the campus' traffic situation.

To discourage drivers from double parking in the fire lane near the campus' core, faculty, staff and handicapped students must have special parking permits displayed in their windows.

THE STICKERS allow the vehicles to pass security guards posted halfway down Orchard Drive on the west side and beyond the student parking lot on the east side of the campus.

Vendors and visitors will receive letters identifying them as being eligible to park near the school's buildings.

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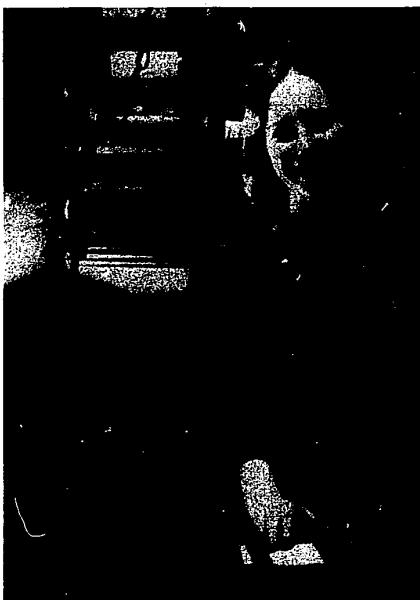
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Is it that happy smile on Kathy "Bo" Bokun's face or the uplifting spirits in the wine rack behind her that keep those customers coming to The Monk's Cellar? A The job of a female bartender has its highs and lows, she says. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)