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# Marlowe Belanger spearheads countywide culture council

By CORINNE ABATT

Marlowe Belanger of Farmington Hills is a logical person to head the two-year old Oakland County Cultural Council. She's been a professional volunteer in the arts for years and knows her way through the maze of government as well as down the paths of art.

She is a great one for taking on jobs that others might view with mixed emotions. The challenging ones seem to bring out the best in the lady who meets problems with a combination of quiet-spoken charm and businesslike approach.

She was appointed chairman of the Council last January just about the time she had finally reconciled the differences between the Farmington Area Arts Commission and the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

OAKLAND IS the only county in

the state to have a cultural council as an official arm of the Board of Commissioners.

"And now," said Mrs. Belanger, "for the first time we have a working relationship with those commissioners."

In total 22 persons were appointed to the Cultural Council.

"All of them are professionals," said Mrs. Belanger, "and all are giving us time that is valuable."

She intends to make good use of these professionals and will assign responsibilities to each in keeping with their particular area of expertise.

BUT, MRS. BELANGER, experienced in the ways of developing programs knows that 22 persons don't reflect a county. To meet needs countywide and be certain that there is a broad representation of input and output, she is working with an ad hoc group made

up of representatives from every city, village and township in the county. These persons are appointed by their local governments.

The ad hoc members met in March to determine directions for the coming year.

"They tap the pulse of their communities and we let them vibrate to us," she said.

In the all day March session the ad hoc members, in both small and large groups, were asked to help determine directions for the Council, pinpoint particular problems in their areas, list what talent they had to share, make long range planning suggestions, and focus particular needs.

"By the time it was over," Mrs. Belanger said, "we gleaned from them our charge and our responsibilities."

The function of the Cultural Council has from the beginning been deemed to be supportive and adjunctive to what already exists, rather than to replace.

a great number of peoples who are not touched by the arts," Mrs. Belanger added.

In its 1977 budget, the Board of Commissioners appropriated \$10,000 for staff and program support for the Council. The Council recently submitted for support up to 20 percent of this sum for the budget year from Michigan Council for the Arts which would amount to \$3,800.

The money will be used for operating expenses — a part time secretary, supplies and postage. The office is in a small room in the County complex on North Telegraph.

When the input from the March meeting of the ad hoc committee is analyzed, there are certain to be more projects underway for the summer months.

Mrs. Belanger is chairman of the Farmington Area Arts Commission and a member of the Michigan Council for the Arts advisory panel for arts councils.

## Harris sues 2 officers

Two West Bloomfield police officers are being sued for false arrest by Oakland County Road Commissioner Fred L. Harris of Farmington Hills.

Harris filed suit in U.S. District Court last week charging he suffered humiliation and embarrassment following his arrest March 27, 1976, for driving under the influence.

He is asking \$100,000 in damages.

He was found not guilty of that charge by then 48th District Court Judge Alice Gilbert. He was found guilty and fined \$35 on a charge of unauthorized use of emergency lights.

Officer Michael Messina and Richard Lamphere, who is no longer with the department, reported at the time that Harris was erratically driving a

county-owned car with a flashing red light mounted on its roof. He was arrested at 11:30 p.m. one week after a tornado hit the township and was reported to have said he was checking tornado damage.

"I did my job," Messina said of the arrest, adding that he could not comment on the police record of the arrest, which has been expunged.

Harris' suit claims injuries, violation of his civil rights and that he was arrested without probable cause, saying the two officers used undue force.

After his arrest, Harris was taken to Oakland County Jail and was released the following day after posting \$100 bond.

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