

Farmington Observer

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Drinking age is attacked by lobbyists

By MARY GNIEWEK

There's still hope for 19, 20-year-olds and others who are opposed to the voter-approved 21-year-old state drinking age, scheduled to take effect Dec. 22.

According to State Rep. Wilbur Brotherton, (R-Farmington) a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the proposed law may postpone implementation, at least temporarily.

"THE FEELING AROUND here is that it may be delayed a few weeks or even months because the arguments offered by the group that launched the suit are substantial," Brotherton said from his Lansing office.

The suit, filed last Monday in Wayne County Circuit Court by the Michigan Commission for the Age of Responsibility (MICAR), questions the constitutionality of the new law. On Monday, Dec. 11, MICAR will ask Judge Irwin Burdick for a preliminary injunction to halt enforcement of the new law.

Regardless of the outcome, the state legislature is prepared to resolve the question of penalties for violation should the law become effective on the scheduled date.

"THERE IS A lot of confusion. Unfortunately, people still think the legislature can stop enactment," Brotherton said. "But when this passed, the voters changed the state constitution. And there is no way the state legislature can undo that. Our job is to clarify what the people decided by general election."

On Thursday, the house committee on civil rights will discuss a bill (HB 6731) that would make violation of the new drinking law a civil offense. A \$25 fine would be imposed on first time offenders. The bill would permit local governments to implement stiffer or more lenient penalties.

The legal drinking age changed from 18 to 19 yesterday, as a result of a new state law passed by the legislature last year. However, Brotherton said state residents who turned 18 before Dec. 3 can legally consume alcohol until Dec. 22.

MICHIGAN LIQUOR CONTROL Commission enforcement clerk Rene Dubois said that liquor store clerks between the ages of 18 and 20 can continue to sell alcoholic beverages.

Dubois said the LCC is waiting to hear from state officials to begin enforcement of the new law. Routinely, the LCC acts on complaints by checking businesses that are suspected of selling liquor to minors. The agency also makes random spot checks of bars and lounges.

"Realistically, we can't control everyone," said Roger Rosendale, LCC director of enforcement and licensing. "Local police departments are charged with control and enforcement, too."

FARMINGTON BAR OWNERS are waiting out the next three weeks to see what changes will occur.

The Stein Haus caters to an 18 to 25-year-old crowd in the evenings. It offers rock and disco live entertainment five nights a week.

"I don't know if we'll change our format, but we may have to," said manager Patty Boyle. "We'll play it by ear for awhile."

"The kids are sarcastic and grumpy about it. But they didn't go out and vote, so they can't blame us," she said.

Boyle supports the change from 18 to 19-year-old, but not from 19 to 21. Angelo Zerbo, co-owner of Angie's Disco in Farmington, agrees.

"The legal drinking age should be 18, not 21. I think the change in the law is terrible," he said. "A large drinking population is being taken out of the bars and put into their cars where they will continue to drink. The law won't change that."

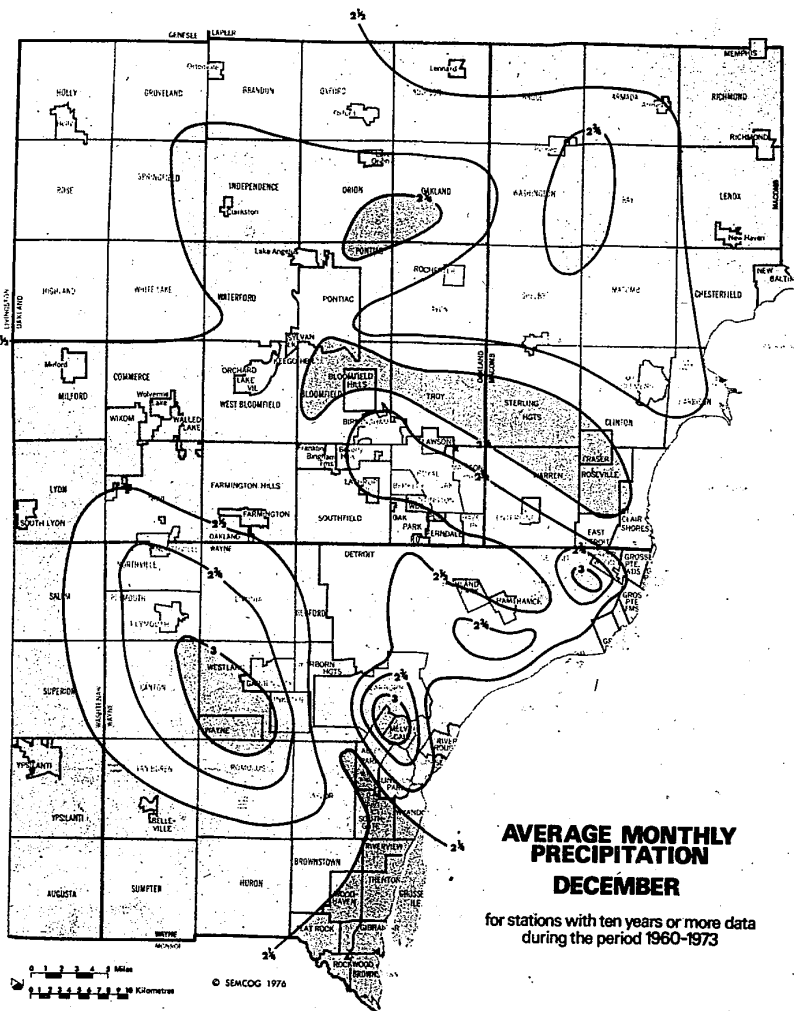
ZERBO SAID, however that he may benefit from the law because the majority of his disco clientele is over 21.

"Bars that cater to an 18 to 20-year-old crowd have a percentage of over 21 clientele. I think these patrons will go to other bars that already cater to the over 21 crowd when the law goes into effect."

The disco owner believes competition among bars with young patrons will force some lounges out of business.

One bar owner who doesn't think the new law will affect his business is Ernie Palombo of the Monk Celler in Farmington. The lounge attracts primarily an over 30 crowd.

"It's a bad law because we're taking away rights that people already have," Palombo said.



Blue-gray areas show the region's places of highest rain and snowfall—around industrial plants in Wayne, Dearborn and Detroit's east side. Source: "Precipitation in Southeast Michigan," copyright

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Figuring out Michigan weather can be puzzling

By LEM MESSEE
Outdoors writer

There's an old saying: "If you don't like Michigan weather, wait five minutes."

To which you can add: "—or drive a few miles."

The plain fact is that some areas of this region get more rainfall and snow than others. This map, from the South-

east Michigan Council of Governments, shows the patterns clearly.

During December, the yellow areas get the least amount of precipitation—under 2½ inches; the red areas, moderate amounts—2½ to 3 inches; and the blue-gray areas, more than three inches.

PRECIPITATION means both rain and snow. In general, the folks who plow your roads figure that one inch of

rain is the equivalent of 10 inches of snow. Of course, there are wet, heavy snows and light, powdery snows, so the 10:1 ratio doesn't always hold true.

The three areas of heavy precipitation on the map occur near heavy concentrations of industry. The best explanation seems to be that smoke "seeds" the clouds by giving water vapor a nucleus around which to condense.

The condensed water vapor becomes rain—or snow, or sleet or something else unpleasant.

Actually, December is an average month for precipitation. June is your heavy month.

And even though there's a lot of mid-winter snow on the ground, February is the month of lightest precipitation. Most of the stuff on the ground is left over from January.

Those lines that form irregular circles on the map are called "isohyets." By definition, isohyets are lines of equal precipitation.

In southeast Michigan during December, precipitation ranges from a low of 2.05 inches to 3.2 inches—both spots in Wayne County.

Agendas are posted

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
2300 Liberty
8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 4
• Progress report on CETA program.

• Proposal to participate in state's construction code.
• Results of bidding concerning new police cars.
• Results of bidding concerning the installation of a sanitary sewer on Lamar.

• Appointments to the board of review and the Oakland County Housing Commission.

FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
31555 Eleven Mile
7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 5

• There will be a study session in council chambers with the city's building authority to discuss senior citizen housing.

FARMINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
32500 Shilawassee

• The regularly scheduled meeting has been canceled. The next scheduled meeting is at 8 p.m. Dec. 19 in the central administrative office.

Chamber chief outlines business goals for the year

Local attorney Don Harris, 37, has been elected president of the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce for 1979.

Harris, a partner in the Larson and Harris firm, has been practicing law in Farmington for the past 12 years. He has been a member of the chamber's board of directors for the past three years and was vice president last year.

"The new committees are just getting underway. We have some good ideas we're anxious to put into action," Harris said.

He said the primary goals of the local chamber are to promote community pride, encourage expansion and be a voice for business and professional people in Farmington.

"We also provide service to the total

community, like giving information to new residents and new retail and other types of businesses.

"One thing we're doing right now is placing a series of ads in local newspapers to promote our shopping areas. We'll also do something for Michigan Week next May. Last year, members of the Garden Club passed out flowers to shoppers to welcome them to the city."

"Most people think of shopping only in large centers or downtown Detroit, but we have many large retail outlets and specialty stores in Farmington."

Harris said an effort will be made next year to stress that the local chamber office represents both Farmington and Farmington Hills.

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GLASS RECYCLING

While merchants and consumers are debating the pros and cons of the bottle return bill, Nancy Kourjian, of the Farmington Hills recycling center, is wondering how the law will affect her ecological effort. To see what she has to say on the subject, turn to page 7A.



Don Harris, newly elected president of the Farmington Chamber of Commerce, discusses the year's coming activities with Margaret Halava, vice-president. (Staff photo)