

Farmington Observer

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Ham operators fight antenna ordinance

By MARY GNIEWEK

Licensed amateur radio operators will ask the Farmington City Council Jan. 21 for permission to install maximum 75-foot antenna towers on their property.

The city council has already introduced an ordinance which would reduce ambiguity from a present regulation which controls the height of towers to 10 feet above the home.

That would limit radio towers to 20 feet on most of the city's residential lots. Part of the ambiguity centers on whether chimneys are a part of the height definition.

The radio operators, who are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission, have asked for the exception because they say 75 feet is the maximum height they need to operate their equipment.

It is also in line with similar ordinances in Detroit, Livonia and Southfield.

Tonight the city council will review whether they wish to make exceptions to the ordinance. But they won't adopt any regulations until they've heard pro and con arguments Jan. 21.

The issue came about last year after Earl Pressel, a mechanical engineer

and amateur radio operator, was denied a waiver for his 55-foot backyard tower.

Pressel and the 35-member Farmington Amateur Radio Club hired Southfield attorney George H. Goldstone to go to bat for them.

"THE HEIGHT is related directly to the wave length used by radio amateurs," said Goldstone, who successfully argued a similar case before the Detroit Common Council in 1964.

"The safety of the towers is fully covered by the Farmington Building Code which sets very high structural standards for any antenna towers.

"Mr. Pressel has submitted a complete stress analysis of his tower to the Farmington building department. It would withstand 90-mile gales."

The Farmington Planning Commission, after hearing Pressel's arguments, recommended to the city council that the 75-foot height maximum be allowed under certain conditions.

One condition would permit the towers be erected with the consent of neighbors whose houses are within the fall distance of the tower.

"These towers are as sound or sounder than a house," Pressel said. "They

must meet very strict requirements."

Leslie Hogg, a Farmington Hills radio hobbyist, also noted that with the cost involved in erecting a tower — from \$1,200 to \$3,500 — amateurs always have liability insurance.

Another suggestion made by the planning commission was that prior to issuance of a permit, an operator would need a statement from neighbors indicating they have no aesthetic objections to the proposed tower.

The city council rejected the wording of the planning commission proposal at its Dec. 17 meeting.



Roger Anderson: "We just want people to recognize the value of operators and not to exclude them."

Radio buffs seek identity during the CB generation

By MARY GNIEWEK

WD8RGG and his friends K8BHS, W8SKOZ and W8BNVJ don't want to be confused with CB'ers.

The code names identify licensed amateur radio operators Roger Anderson, Jim Simmons, Earl Pressel and Leslie Hogg respectively.

Members of the Farmington Amateur Radio Club, they don't want to be lumped together with citizens band radio operators.

"Amateurs police themselves. It's a lot different from CB radio," said Anderson, an instructor at Schoolcraft Community College. "CB'ers operate on one band, we operate on eight common bands."

The ham radio operators are licensed and regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Written exams are required for license renewal every five years.

Radio club members are especially concerned with their image because the Farmington City Council will decide in two weeks if they should be allowed to erect 75-foot towers in their backyards.

The towers help them communicate with other ham operators around the world.

"We don't want people to think they're going to see a mass of towers, like oil derricks, appearing overnight,"

said Simmons, a radio operator since 1954.

"Seventy-five feet is the maximum height necessary to operate efficiently on all bands. They usually put up 50 to 60 foot towers."

SIMMONS'S BASEMENT hobby station is lined with postcards from ham operators in Japan, Africa, the Mid East and Europe — people he has talked to regularly since he took up his hobby. That list includes Jordan's King Hussein.

Simmons brought his tower to Farmington when he moved from Detroit in 1969. A building permit was granted for the 60-foot tower. But other ham operators, including Pressel who tried to get a permit for his 55-foot tower, have been denied an exception.

Under the present city ordinance, no structure (including towers) can be more than 10 feet taller than the house or building in the zone.

"We just want people to recognize the value of operators and not to exclude them," said Anderson. "We do emergency type work for the Red Cross and other agencies."

Amateur radio provided communications for the Three Mile Island evacuation effort, hurricane David and a host of other emergencies and rescues throughout 1979. Closer to home, ham operators helped with communications

during the recent plane crash in Troy. Every year ham operators carrying portable handy-talkie machines man the parade route during the Farmington Founders Festival.

Oakland County has several Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) representatives who meet regularly on the cities and relay weather conditions. ARES is a national network.

When electricity is out, the radio centers can operate on battery power.

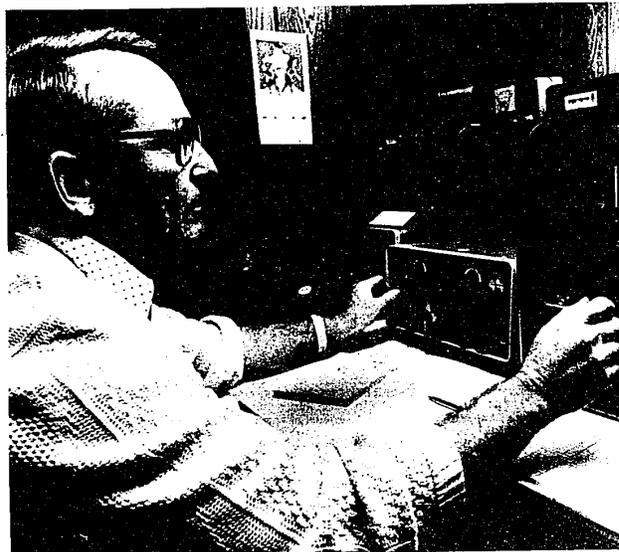
"Sure, we do this for enjoyment," Anderson said. "But there's purpose too. To further relations and good will with foreign countries, to provide a back up pool of communications."

"We provide a vital link with our own equipment, on our own time, at no expense to taxpayers."

A service provided by some hams, including Simmons, is telephone patchwork. That's done by patching a phone line into the radio. It's called third party traffic and is legal in many parts of the world.

Simmons has connected missionaries in Central and South America with their families or churches in the U.S.

The Farmington Amateur Radio Club meets at 7:30 p.m. the second Wednesday of the month at Farmington High School in room 104G. Membership is open.



Amateur radio operator Jim Simmons of Farmington tunes in a friend in Columbia, South America. Simmons 60-foot backyard tower helps provide communications links around the world. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Anti-Khomeini posters promote political hopeful

By MARY GNIEWEK

A political group that blames Henry Kissinger for the hostage crisis in Iran is getting its message out by selling Ayatollah Khomeini dart board posters on street corners across the country.

The International Caucus of Labor Committees, chaired by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., a Democratic presidential contender, is peddling its posters at Eight Mile and Grand River in Farmington Hills.

Gary Powell, a member of the group's midwest regional steering committee, said the 35 to 40 hawkers in the metro Detroit area will be on the streets until the crisis is solved.

"The poster is a way of focusing attention on the crisis and getting out more in-depth information,"

Powell said. U.S. press coverage of the "surprise" embassy takeover in Tehran Nov. 4 has been off the mark, according to the ICLC.

"Kissinger and others in the State Department knew before they pushed for the Shah (Mohammed Reza Pahlavi) to come to the U.S. that there would be a threat to the safety of Americans at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Yet they took no precautions," Powell said.

A placard propped against a street sign in Farmington Hills last week by an ICLC member read "To get at Khomeini, aim at Kissinger."

"We want to make citizens more aware of the manipulation involved with the crisis," Powell said.

"WE LOOK for areas where people are thinking politically: down

river, northwest Detroit, all over the city."

For a contribution, motorists receive a poster and a copy of New Solidarity, a national bi-weekly newspaper which espouses ICLC views.

"The response has been superb," Powell said. "This is an issue very few people disagree with."

To end the hostage crisis, the ICLC believes Iran should be diplomatically cut-off from the rest of the world.

"We want to avoid World War III," said Tim Richardson, ICLC midwest executive committee member.

"The situation in Southeast Asia and the Middle East is a direct threat. We want to generate a national debate among the public. The voice of the population must be



Donna Benton stops a motorist at Eight Mile and Grand River to make a sales pitch for a Khomeini poster. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

heard."

"The ICLC believes in industrial capitalism in the tradition of the American Whig Party." It claims it is not legally or financially connected with the "Citizens for LaRouche" presidential campaign.

"The relationship with LaRouche

is close, but there is really no legal or financial connection," Richardson said.

Some Khomeini poster peddlers are paid for their work while others are volunteers aligned with ICLC just for the Khomeini-Kissinger campaign.

Donna Benton, of Los Angeles, Calif., who was selling posters in Farmington last week is a member of the "Citizens for LaRouche" campaign.

The ICLC claims a national membership of 1,000 persons.

Fire officials investigating apartment blaze

Farmington fire officials are still investigating the cause of an apartment blaze which occurred Sunday morning at Kensington Manor Apartments.

No one was injured in the blaze, which began in an apartment at 21820 Manor Drive at 12:40 a.m.

All 16 units in the building were evacuated by police and firefighters, who spent close to three hours fighting the blaze and its aftermath.

According to Farmington Fire Marshal Norm Maddison, fire damage is probably in excess of \$60,000.

Residents were relocated to other units within the apartment complex.

some permanently, while others will return to the fire damaged units after restoration.

"The occupant of the apartment where the fire began was awakened by a smoke detector and managed to get

Farmington Hills firefighters assist-

New council to take seats

FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL

7 p.m., Monday, Jan. 7

Oath of office of three new council

out safely," Maddison said.

"The first arriving officer found heavy smoke and the building was evacuated."

members at 7 p.m. with a short reception to follow prior to a special meeting.

Hearings

• Consideration of bonding resolution and financing documents for Mechan-

ed Farmington crews in battling the fire.

"The guys did a good job," Maddison said. "It was an aggressive attack, stopped before it reached an attic area common to all the units."

The city of Farmington passed a

cal Heat and Cold Inc. (\$800,000) as recommended by the Industrial and Economic Development Commission.

• Election of mayor and mayor pro tem.

smoke detector ordinance Feb. 27, 1978. It required the installation of smoke detectors in all existing apartments. It

also requires homeowners to equip their homes with smoke detectors subject to resale.

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A BOO AND A HISS

That's what Editor Steve Barnaby wants to give to Channel 4, WDIV-TV, after learning that weatherman Sony Elton has left the station. To see what he has to say, turn to 6A.