

# Farmington Observer

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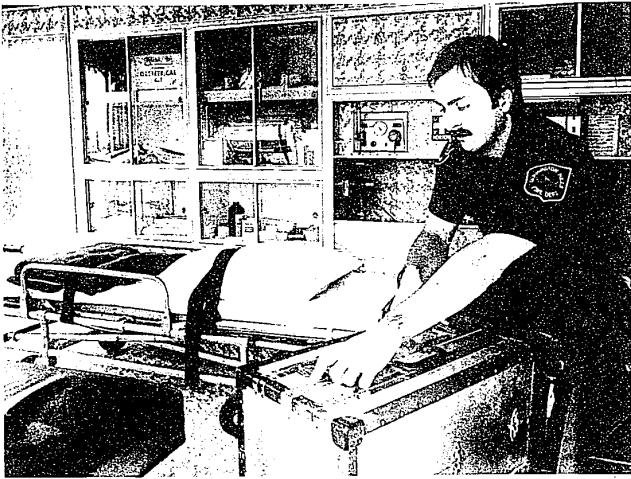
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Farmington, Michigan

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Firefighter Richard Marinucci, leading the drive for city-run emergency medical service, checks supplies in a city-owned ambulance in Farmington Hills. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

## City stalls EMS plan but fight continues

By MARY GNIEWEK

Proponents of city-run emergency medical service (EMS) accused the Farmington Hills City Council Monday of trying to keep an EMS proposal off the November ballot.

City firefighters, who collected 4,000 petition signatures from residents who want city-run EMS, had little hope that a city-run EMS proposal would be on the ballot. Such a proposal would ask voters if they would pay for a fulltime EMS service staffed by firefighters trained as paramedics.

After hours of debate, the council asked City Manager Lawrence Savage to collect more information on EMS alternatives for presentation in a special council study session. It admitted the information may come too late to ensure a ballot question in November.

The deadline for submitting a ballot proposal to Oakland County is Sept. 16. Farmington Hills now relies on a privately run EMS service, AMCARE of Redford, but firefighters, led by Richard Marinucci, want control of the operation.

"We're not trying to downgrade anyone," Marinucci said. "But with a private company which operates in more than one city, we wait 15 to 20 minutes sometimes for an ambulance to show up."

MARINUCCI ACCUSED council members of not allowing the firefighters to present a workable plan to them. Later, he apologized to Mayor Joanne Soronen for accusing the city council of "hiding behind the money issue."

Council estimates of providing city-run EMS ranged from \$500,000-\$900,000. But Acting Fire Chief Tom Johnson said \$300,000-\$400,000 is more accurate.

The department already has ambulances that could be converted to advanced life support units. They're used to transport patients now because firefighters are trained only in basic Red Cross lifesaving and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

"Advanced life support is needed. The fire department could do it best and more cost efficiently than anyone else," Johnson said.

"Firefighters have groups in the community who want this service and plan to do what is necessary to institute it."

"Let's talk human life — not dollars."

But council arguments never veered off the money issue.

"We are talking about a substantial amount of money," said Councilman William Lange. "I think it should be on the November ballot with a price tag

attached in all fairness."

Lange tried to get the question on the ballot as an advisory question. His motion for an advisory referendum failed 5 to 2, with support only from Donn Wolf.

THE COUNCIL majority feared an advisory question would only confuse voters, since the issue would have to appear on the ballot again as a millage request if voters approved the advisory question.

Councilman Joe Alkateeb accused the firefighters of using the EMS issue as a ploy for the establishment of a fulltime fire department.

"We don't want a fulltime fire department, but one more responsive to the needs of the people," Johnson said.

"The alternative is to get a private contractor, but then we don't have control."

Under the firefighters' plan, the fulltime staff of eight would have to be doubled to provide around-the-clock service. Marinucci argues that cost can be kept at minimum if users are charged a service fee.

Council critic Aldo Vagnozzi, one of a handful who spoke Monday in support of the firefighters plan, accused the city council of stalling and using bloated cost figures to confuse the issue.

## Subs unite for more rights

By MARY GNIEWEK

FAST was launched quickly in a garden setting in Farmington Hills Tuesday afternoon.

The 35 substitute teachers who gathered in the Kendallwood Subdivision backyard of Marge Griswald took about 30 seconds to decide on the name, an acronym for Farmington Association of Substitute Teachers.

FAST, anxious to improve and standardize relations with Farmington Public School administrators and full-time teachers, named officers, set up committees and doled out assignments in its first informal open air meeting.

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tees and doled out assignments in its first informal open air meeting.

"We're trying to be more productive — to upgrade ourselves professionally," said acting chairwoman Gretchen Peterson.

Mrs. Peterson, of West Bloomfield, began the drive for substitute teacher rights earlier this summer. She thinks unity will help the subs reach their goals, which include better pay (they just got a raise to \$36 a day), better working conditions, and better communication with full-time teachers.

The group assembled on lawn chairs and picnic benches and included older teachers with years of full-time experience and young teachers caught by the declining enrollment seniority axe.

THEY AIRED A common litany of complaints about their non-professional status over the hum of airplanes and lawn mowers.

"Some schools really make you feel like the low person on the totem pole," said Phyllis Parsons, a substitute from Novi.

"I'm there to teach, not to scrub floors."

Mrs. Parsons would like recognition as a professional with a college degree, not as a babysitter.

Subs think supplies as basic as pencils and paper, prescribed lesson plans and other vital information should be handy when they enter a classroom cold.

Instead one sub recalled her surprise when a student in her charge went into a diabetic coma. No warning of the student's condition nor treatment plan had been offered.

"There was a can of orange juice in the desk, was I to assume that was for the student?" she asked.

The subs said information on discipline, supplies, time schedules and procedures for lunch hour would be helpful as would a uniform district wide policy. Mrs. Peterson's request to school personnel director Robert Coleman for an orientation meeting for subs has so far gone unheeded.

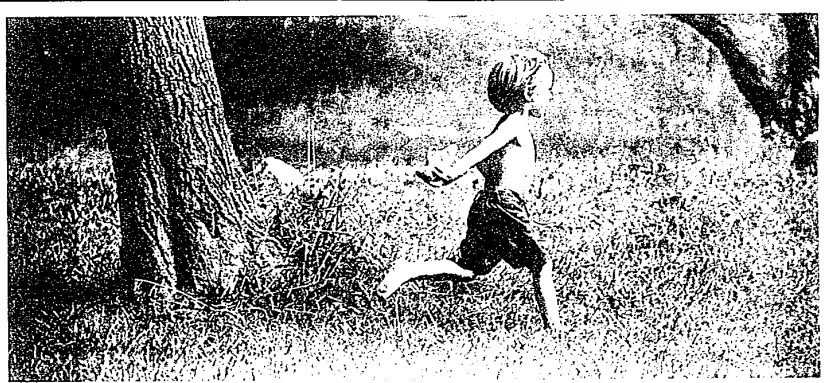
She was told subs could attend the regular full-time teachers orientation session. Yet none of the subs have been contacted as to when or where that meeting will be held.

"Subbing shouldn't be considered a lost day," Mrs. Peterson said.

"I think if the board of education was aware of our problems, they'd be receptive to the need for change."

FAST scheduled its second meeting for Oct. 13 at 7:30 p.m. in an as yet

undisclosed location. Teachers who regularly sub in Farmington (an estimated 150) are invited to attend.



Brandon Dix, 3½, takes a shoeless romp through Farmington City Park sans shirt or socks. To see what older kids are doing to squeeze the last ounce of enjoyment out of summer vacation, turn to Page 3A. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

### Breezin'

## Mercy Center programs get new lease

The city of Farmington Hills approved a two-year lease with the Mercy Conference Center on Monday for continuation of senior citizen activities at \$18,000 annual rent.

It was the second pact between the two, and a substantial hike from the initial three-year, \$1 annual rental fee.

## Foods director spices kids menu

Fresh baked bread, a soup and salad bar for high schoolers and not one, but two daily entrees for elementary students are the things newly appointed food service director Michael Howard is hoping will lure brown-baggers back to the school lunch program in Farmington.

Howard, returning to the Farmington Public Schools food service division after a 10-year absence (he worked in food sales and for Elias Brothers in the interim), says he's available at anytime to talk about the program with anyone who shows interest.

"I like the people, the area, and the atmosphere of the educational facility," says Howard, who oversees a staff of 61 food service employees.

Student food committees will be formed at the three high schools so that the kids who eat the daily grub have some input on selections.

"We hope to do our own production in our own facilities to better utilize government donated commodities," Howard said.

Government commodities include canned chicken, canned pork, applesauce and green beans. Whole wheat products baked in a district bake shop is also an idea for better nutrition that Howard hopes to incorporate.

MEALS AND MILK will be sold daily for 95 cents in grades six through 12, and 80 cents in the lower grades. Milk is included as part of the scheduled lunch, or can be purchased separately for 10 cents.

Some children will be eligible for free meals and milk or reduced-price meals. Scales of eligibility for free meals will be distributed to each child in the school district the first week of school.

Eligibility is based on family income and size.

If a family has unusually high medical bills, shelter costs, special education expenses due to the mental or physical condition of a child, children may be eligible for free meals even if the family doesn't meet the economic guidelines.

New Mercy Center administrator Sister Edwina Menten was unable to comment on the rent hike.

"You would have to talk to the previous administration," said Sister Menten, who took her post just three weeks ago.

The city rents the facility at 11 Mile and Middlebelt, called the Gathering Place, and offers a swimming pool, gym, cafeteria and meeting rooms to senior citizens.

The Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLHSA) also uses the facility for its hot lunch program for seniors.

"Originally they were able to provide the space at no charge," said Doug Gaynor, parks and recreation supervisor who oversees the program.

"I certainly think the amount they are charging us is well worth it for the programs we are able to provide for our senior adults," Gaynor said. "We're very pleased."

The current contract expires Aug. 31. The \$18,000 has been budgeted in the current city budget, according to city council, who approved the lease 7-0.

### what's inside

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The time had come for Steve Muir to part with his 1970 'Cuda convertible. So, to insure he found the right buyer he advertised in the best car market in town - his hometown newspaper. Steve got the cash and a happy buyer got the car, in less than one day.

Call us today with your ad.

644-1070



Newly appointed food service director Michael Howard loads a shipment of perishable food into storage at Larkshire Elementary School in Farmington Hills. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)