

Farmington Observer

Volume 93 Number 83

Thursday, July 29, 1982

Farmington, Michigan

56 Pages

Twenty-five cents

1982 Seaboard Communication Corporation. All Rights Reserved

Sidewalk rift stirs debate in the Hills

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

In a split 4-2 vote, the Farmington Hills City Council Monday approved a citywide sidewalk policy that will assess the average homeowner \$98 for the installation of walks along major mile roads.

The council also unanimously elected to use block grant funds to construct a sidewalk for residents of Detroit Baptist Manor for senior citizens.

Public hearings on the necessity and cost of the proposed sidewalk plan are as yet unscheduled.

The tense atmosphere of the meeting was in keeping with the confusion and frustration which have accompanied the sidewalk issue since it reared its head in Farmington Hills five years ago.

The drawn-out debate was sparked by council members' exchange of conflicting opinions as well as uncertainty about the amount of public support for sidewalks.

The council also wavered on the course of action it should pursue with regard to adoption of a sidewalk policy.

The session wound down after council member Joey Soronen, prompted by her colleagues' lack of resolve, suggested the council "move off dead center and vote or we're not going to get anywhere."

Voting against the plan were Charlie Williams and Donn Wolf. Mayor Jack Burwell, Jan Dolan, Fred Hughes and Soronen supported the policy, presented to the council by Tom Biasell, director of public services.

Unanimously adopted was a maintenance plan providing for the inspection, repair and replacement of sidewalks and clearance of encroachments.

The council refused to accept responsibility for ice and snow removal, siding it a sure road to added litigation and legal costs for the city.

According to the sidewalk proposal, all property owners within a square mile will be assessed on a formula basis for the construction of sidewalks along bordering major mile roads.

Commercial, office and multiple dwelling sites on major roads will assume 100 percent of the cost of sidewalk construction, or \$16.17 per foot, provided the property extends 300 feet or less from the walk.

Single family residences not abutting a mile road will be assessed \$98 over five years at an interest rate to be determined by the council. Residential parcels abutting sidewalks will be charged \$196.

Targeted for immediate sidewalk construction is the square mile bounded by 12 Mile, 13 Mile, Orchard Lake and Farmington roads.

WILLIAMS WAS the policy's most vocal opponent.

"Before we take out a roadshow, I feel we should take a polling of the people. If we got a vote of the people, I don't think we'd get the support for sidewalks."

"We're an automotive society, and I don't think over 50 percent of the interior of a subdivision will vote for it. This makes it sound like the sidewalk plan is a roadshow we strongly support. We have to be sure people want it before we enforce this on them," Williams said.

"Where schools are, I think it's worthwhile to be in sidewalks, but I don't believe in it myself," he added. Because the council has yet to hold the first public hearing on sidewalks, it is unknown how much support exists for a policy, Dolan said.

City Manager Larry Savage said, "We'd want to go out, not with the idea of pushing it down their necks, but to explain how the system works. If it falls down, we back off and look to other methods of financing or reconsider our policy."

Dolan and Soronen agreed that any



RANDY BOST/staff photographer

Greeting and charming all of Farmington society last night was Roxanne D'Ascenzo, who has been named this year's Farmington Founders' Festival Queen.

Celebration Festival Queen crowned

By Steve Barnaby
editor

One of the Farmington area's premiere moments was celebrated last night as a new Farmington Founders' Festival Queen was crowned.

Hundreds of enthusiastic residents gathered at Vladimir's Banquet Hall in Farmington Hills to see Roxanne D'Ascenzo named as the 1982 Festival regent.

A familiar and popular face at North Farmington High School, she was homecoming queen her junior year. She will graduate in 1983.

Throughout the evening's competition, D'Ascenzo stood out in all areas of the competition. Especially notable was her jazz dance rendition to Helen Reddy's version of "The Last Thing I Said." From the time she walked on stage, many onlookers had her checked off as a possible winner.

The 5-foot-7-inch brunette is the daughter of Sarah D'Ascenzo of Farmington Hills. Her sponsor for the competition was Bob Sax of Oldsmobile. Placing second was Sandra Marie Oswald, a 1982 graduate of Harrison High School. The daughter of Robert and Marcia Oswald of Farmington Hills, she dazzled

the audience with the flute solo of "Danse De La Chevre" by Arthur Honegger.

Oswald also was honored with the talent award for the evening, an honor well-deserved, according to the response by the audience.

PLACING THIRD was Pamela Ann McCann, a 1981 North Farmington graduate. The blond, blue-eyed beauty was a crowd-pleaser with her display of dress-making ability. She is the daughter of Donald and Barbara McCann of Farmington Hills. Sponsor was Home Planners Inc.

One of the festival's most popular queens, Kelly Lynn Garver, last year's winner, treated the crowd to a country-western number on her violin-turned-fiddle. After being introduced to city residents at the Downtown Farmington Center, the new Miss Farmington, D'Ascenzo, and her court were treated to a reception at Glen Oaks in Farmington Hills.

Among the awards won by Miss Farmington are a \$1,000 scholarship, a \$1,000 grooming and charm scholarship, a \$350 expense allowance, a \$100 interview wardrobe allowance and sponsorship to the Miss Michigan pageant.

Trooper fatality probed

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

A 28-year-old Michigan State Police officer died in Farmington Hills early Thursday when her car left the I-696 freeway and rolled over repeatedly.

Police said Trooper Vickie Ann Moreau-Devries of Novi was working as an undercover narcotics officer but discounted the possibility of foul play.

"It appears she fell asleep and ran off the roadway," said Trooper Daniel Girard, spokesman for the Michigan State Police Northville post.

Moreau-Devries, the wife of a state police trooper, was westbound at 12:51 a.m. near the I-275 interchange when the accident occurred, police said.

Oakland County Medical Examiner Robert Ryberg listed the cause of death as "shock and hemorrhage due to multiple fracture of ribs, right and left."

AUTOPSY tests are being conducted to determine if alcohol or drugs were present in trooper's body. Results weren't available Monday, Ryberg said.

Post Commander Lt. William Tomczyk said Moreau-Devries was assigned to narcotics duty from 2 to 10 p.m. Wednesday.

He said police considered the possibility that she may have been forced off the road by someone involved in narcotics. "That idea was investigated and as of now we have nothing to confirm that suspicion, nothing to indicate that is what happened," Tomczyk said.

A co-worker in the criminal investigations section said Moreau-Devries was assigned Wednesday night outside of the area on a narcotics case still under investigation by State Police. She may have been drowsy and fell asleep during the long drive home, said Lt. Philip Asiala.

SOME DETAILS — such as the time she left work — are being withheld by police on the grounds that the information could pose problems for her husband, Trooper David Devries, or jeopardize a narcotics investigation.

A funeral Mass was said Monday at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church in Northville and burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Southfield. The arrangements were handled by the Casterline Funeral Home in Northville.

Moreau-Devries enlisted in the Michigan State Police in February 1977 and was first assigned to the Mount Pleasant post. She was transferred to the Northville post in May 1978. She worked in the criminal investigation section in Livonia.

Moreau-Devries married Trooper Devries, who works in the Brighton post, last summer. The couple had no children.

Road racer killed

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

For the family of a Farmington Hills man killed in an amateur-auto-racing accident Saturday, there is some comfort in knowing he died doing something he loved, his daughter said.

Robert G. Williamson, 53, of 36309 Paddockford, was pronounced dead at 4:30 p.m. at Pontiac General Hospital from injuries suffered in the crash, which occurred at about 2:50 p.m. at the Waterford Hills track. Williamson had been traveling at 35 mph when his car hit another car that had spun out in front of him.

Williamson was thrown in the air and upside down inside his car when his car's front wheel clipped the other car's rear end, according to observers' accounts. The accident occurred during the first lap of a Formula Vee race in an S-curve.

Please turn to Page 8A

Fireworks display will chime in with symphony

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

Bigger, louder and brighter fireworks are promised in this Saturday's Farmington/Farmington Hills Founders' Day Festival fireworks show.

The show will include a display accompanying the Oakway Symphony's performance of the 1812 Overture by Tchaikovsky.

Dick Megregian of Farmington Hills, fireworks show chairman for the third consecutive year, says he's trying to synchronize booms to match a musical score which calls for cannon blasts. It's the same piece of music Quaker Foods used in their famous shot-from-guns puffed wheat commercials.

Megregian, a license pyrotechnician, stopped short of promising to deliver fireworks salutes in time with the mu-

sic. He said the process is extremely complicated especially on such short notice.

"I don't want to promise the public something and not deliver," Megregian said. "I will say that we'll have some pyrotechnic surprises during the 1812 Overture."

The concert starts at 8 p.m. and winds up at 10 p.m. on the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College, where the fireworks will also be staged. The fireworks show should last about a half hour, Megregian said. Police estimate that almost 10,000 persons will attend, so it's a good idea to arrive early and stake out a good spot.

Getting a fireworks shell to sound like a cannon blast isn't an easy task, Megregian said, because every batch of explosives sound different, depending on the chemical mix.

"I WANT THE boom to sound like a cannon," he says. "Right now it sounds like 'Phit' when it goes off. And when one goes off it scatters the rest of the shells. I need boom, boom, boom, boom."

Megregian took a half-day off from his engineering work at Chrysler Corp. to consult experts on his problem. Even if the music and fireworks don't come together in the overture, Megregian said, he promises to deliver quite a show.

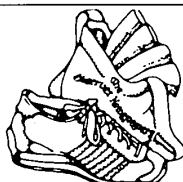


RANDY BOST/staff photographer

Dick Megregian shows off his tools of the trade, which will be in full bloom during the fireworks display.

what's inside

Classified ads . . . Sections C,D
Community calendar . . . 2B
Entertainment . . . 7,8,9,10C
Recreation news . . . 17A
Sports . . . Section C
Suburban life . . . Section B
Travel . . . 13A
YMCA highlights . . . 16A



Your Observer carrier will be stopping by this week to collect for the month. Please be ready and be sure to save your receipt. It's worth a \$1.00 discount on the next classified ad you place in your hometown newspaper.

Please turn to Page 8A