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Clerk takes over helm from Cairns

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Deputy clerk Joan Reynolds will be the new city clerk of Farmington Hills and the first woman department head in the city's history.

In a unanimous 7-0 vote Monday council appointed Reynolds to the post, effective Jan. 1, 1985. She will replace City Clerk Floyd Cairns who will retire Dec. 31.

"I am so pleased Joan Reynolds is here to fill these shoes," said Councilman Donn Wolf. "She is certainly one of the best deputy clerks in the state."

Councilwoman Joan Dudley announced that anyone can fill Cairns' shoes, Reynolds is "the woman who can do it."

Reynolds has 20 years of experience in the clerk's office. She started as a typist in 1965, moving up to a secretary, executive secretary and finally deputy clerk two years ago. "I've gone through all the phases as the positions became available," Reynolds said.

Reynolds, 59, originally didn't have her sights on the city clerk's job. But she soon changed her mind as her work responsibilities and interest increased, Reynolds said.

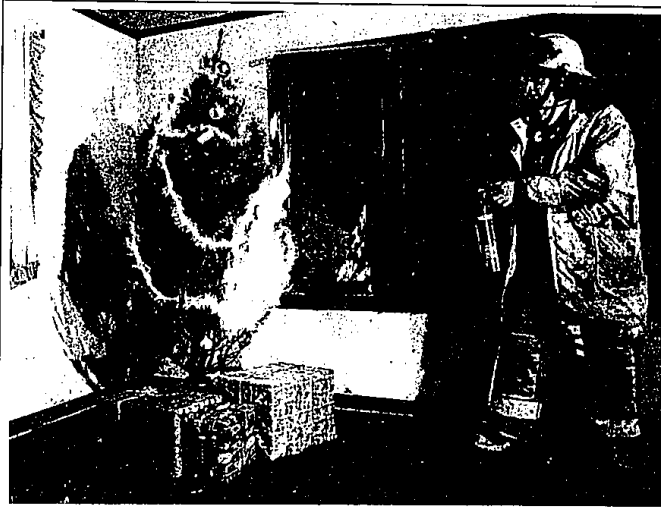
Reynolds is certified through the County, State and International Municipal Clerks Association.

As city clerk, Reynolds will be responsible for a department of nine employees. She has lived in Farmington Hills since 1947.



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

The new Farmington Hills City Clerk, Joan Reynolds, is ready to assume her duties Jan. 1, 1985. She is the first woman department head of the city and replaces the retiring Floyd Cairns who will leave the post Dec. 31.



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

An over-present danger in the home during the holiday season is a dry Christmas tree. Channel 7 newsmen Jim Ochs, pictured above, is ready to extinguish a flaming tree, part of a staged fire demonstration by the Farmington Hills Fire Department on Tuesday.

Traditional decorations can ignite into nightmare

By Joan Adamczak staff writer

A Christmas tree can be a source of danger as well as enjoyment. The enjoyment comes from the glistening ornaments, the aroma of a fresh-cut pine tree and the twinkling lights. But the danger follows when these same twinkling lights have worn insulation or faulty connections.

One small spark from an exposed wire can cause a four-foot Christmas tree to go up in flames in a matter of seconds.

The Farmington Hills Fire Department proved such flammability on Tuesday morning when they staged a Christmas tree fire for area media in an abandoned house on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington.

"There aren't a large number of Christmas tree fires each season, but

we like to emphasize the devastating effect they have when they do occur," explained Hills' Fire Chief Richard Marinucci at the burn site.

Three firefighters and Marinucci watched as Channel 7 newsmen Jim Ochs took a five-inch section of a dried Christmas tree and lit it with a cigarette lighter.

ONE SPARK from the lighter touched off a flame and the twig spluttered and crackled like a Fourth of July sparkler.

Ochs then put the lighter to a tree that had not been kept in water and was decorated with ornaments and garland for the demonstration.

Within 30 seconds the front half of the tree was engulfed in flames. Black smoke billowed up from the tree, hovering two feet below the ceiling, filling the room thick with smoke.

It is the smoke of a fire, which often contains toxic fumes and gases, which is most dangerous, said Marinucci.

"Inhaling toxic fumes and smoke disorients and intoxicates you, causing dizziness and rendering you unconscious," explained Marinucci. "The smoke and the heat are the most harmful parts of a fire," he said.

There was a slight thud as the remains of the tree fell over on the floor. Even after the flames were out, the smoke continued to pour out of the house.

THE TREE was completely burned in about three minutes.

"And that's without any furniture in the room," said Marinucci. "By now the entire room would be in flames if there was carpeting, dra-

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Sever vows court battle

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Although Ben Marks has been officially declared the winner — by one vote — of an election recount last week, opponent Terry Sever is taking his fight for the Farmington Hills City Council seat to Oakland County Circuit Court.

"I still feel, Mr. Marks, the seat belongs to me, and I am going to continue it," Sever said Monday at a council meeting. Promising council he would exhaust all legal possibilities, Sever announced that he is taking his concern about the method used in the recount to court.

A show cause hearing has been scheduled before Oakland Circuit Judge Alice Gilbert on Dec. 19, according to Paul Nida, Sever's attorney.

Nida refused to comment about the hearing's purpose, adding, "I'm not going to tell you anything of substance."

BUT SEVER said Monday there are "a lot of ifs" regarding the process used in recounting the ballots cast in the local election.

The recount showed Marks received 11,006 votes to Sever's 11,005. Marks picked up 28 additional votes in the recount while Sever stayed even — losing and then gaining seven votes.

In the November election, Sever edged past Marks with a 25-vote margin to win the council seat.

What concerns Sever are the chads — the rectangular perforations on the punch card ballots — and how they were counted.

Under state law, four bi-partisan Oakland County canvassers checked each ballot by hand and punched out the chads that were dismembered or detached on at least two corners, according to Oakland County Clerk Lynn D. Allen.

If Sever had not lost seven votes in the recount, he would have remained on council.

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Hills City Council rejects plea for rent control

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Farmington Hills leaders are standing clear of any involvement, including rent controls, in a dispute between local apartment tenants and the Beznos-Bestak Co.

"We really don't feel there's anything the city can do," said Mayor Charles Williams Monday in response to a request for help from Rob Falls, one of the chairmen of the Muirwood Tenants Association.

The association represents tenants in the Beznos-owned apartments of Muir-

wood, Fairmont Park and Kensington Manor in the Farmington area, as well as Waldenwood in Southfield and Aldingbrook in West Bloomfield.

Tenants are protesting frequent rent increases of as much as 32 percent in the last 28 months. The association's major complaint is the management firm's method of raising rents by not renewing leases, forcing tenants to pay rent on a month-to-month basis.

"The problem is, as we see it, not so much the rent increases, but how it was done," Falls told the council.

In June 1983, he said, Beznos denied the renewal of leases, allowing the

"We will try to get this matter resolved with or without your help."

— Rob Falls
Muirwood Tenants Association

landlords to "raise rent at will."

With a picket against Beznos over their belt, tenants' association officials are now unsure in which direction to take their protest, Falls said.

"We will try to get this matter re-

solved with or without your help," he said.

ALTHOUGH FALLS said he would hate to see rent-control laws in Michigan because of the possible negative ef-

fect on business, his request to council was for consideration of a rent-control ordinance.

His request was met with an immediate "no."

Councilwoman Joan Dudley told Falls the only case of which she is aware of rent controls was in New York City. New York officials imposed rent controls when faced with a large population of low-income families and a housing shortage.

"We do not fit in that pattern," Dudley said. "I beg your pardon. We do fit into that pattern at the other end of the in-

come scale," Falls replied, adding Oakland County has a shortage of about 10,000 apartments.

A tax-deductible check payable to the Farmington Area Goodfellows can be sent to the following: Mrs. Lee Ratliff, 35122 Drake Heights, Farmington 48024; Mrs. John Richardson, 33925 Oakland Farmington 48024.

If you are unable to make a monetary donation to the Farmington Area Goodfellows, perhaps you would be able to help in some other way to insure "No Child or Senior in Farmington Without a 1984 Christmas." Let us hear from you. Call the Goodfellows at 474-8475.

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oral quarrel Store's obligation for imitation dolls?

The marketplace — including at least one store in the Farmington area — has been flooded by imitation Cabbage Patch Dolls.

The real Cabbage Patch Dolls, the "in" toys for the second Christmas running, are expensive and hard to find. Some of the imitations, sometimes called Lettuce Leaf Dolls, carry an odor of kerosene and may contain harmful pesticides.

Some stores selling the imitations have refused to give cash refunds to

dissatisfied customers.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

If you purchased an imitation cabbage patch doll thinking it was the real thing, what would you expect the store's responsibility to be?

To answer this question, call 477-5498 anytime before 1 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 14. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please look in Monday's Farmington Observer.

what's inside

- Amusements . . . 19-20C
- Business . . . 7-9C
- Cable Connection . . . 4A
- Classifieds . . . Sections D-F
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- Crackerbarrel Debate . . . 18A
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- Suburban Life . . . 1-8B
- Travel . . . 6C
- NEWSLINE . . . 477-5450
- CLASSIFIEDS . . . 591-0900
- HOME DELIVERY . . . 591-0500

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Goodfellows seek community's aid

The Farmington Area Goodfellows are once again seeking community support to provide a Christmas for the less-fortunate children in the Farmington area.

While grateful to the many dedicated individuals and businesses who have supported the Farmington Goodfellows each year, they are always looking for new supporters to help accomplish the goal of providing for all the children, as well as some senior citizens who need help too.

A \$12 contribution will purchase a wash-and-wear dress for an elementary school age child and a \$5 contribu-

tion supplies a flannel shirt for a boy of elementary school age.

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