

# Chaplains look back at ordeal of Flight 255

By Joanne Mallazewski  
staff writer

**AN INDESCRIBABLE** ordeal. There's hardly another phrase to best describe the week following the crash of Northwest Flight 255 Aug. 16 at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, in which 155 people, many from the Detroit area, lost their lives.

In terms of ordeal, this was without question a tremendous ordeal for families. It was no small ordeal for people participating, working there. Wayne County medical examiner Werner Spitz told members of the Michigan Chaplains Association last week in Farmington Hills.

Armed with photographic slides of the crash's aftermath, Spitz showed chaplains gathered at the Farmington Hills Police Department for an annual meeting what rescue workers were faced with when they entered the crash scene that rainy night.

"I recall very well... when the next morning, with all the relatives asking questions about identification... I had to leave the room, otherwise, I'd break down with them," Spitz said.

IN AN unexpected series of slides, Spitz documented for the chaplains the process used in identifying victims on Northwest Flight 255. He also documented his surprise at the reaction of some



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RANDY BONST/staff photographer

"Lots of problems. Everyone was better-skilled," he said.

Clearly, a need exists for chaplains as well as a system that allows them to get in and out of any disaster scene. "Sometimes, the mere presence of a collar presents an easing effect," he said.

Most disaster plans, required in communities of more than 10,000 population, lack provisions and roles for chaplains. Farmington Hills' disaster plan, however, does list churches that can be used for victims and families, said Capt. Russell Conway.

THE FARMINGTON Hills Police Department chaplain, the Rev. Richard Karr of Northwest Baptist Church, described the type of chaplain needed and not needed in trying times.

"Most preachers live in a sterile environment," he said. "We want someone who can take anything from anyone, anywhere and go with it."

Psychiatrist Johnson acknowledged that rescue workers, including police and fire personnel, as well as chaplains, experience the same type of emotional stress victims' families do.

"They're dealing with all this hyped up adrenalin. But they don't have an opportunity to get it out. Their post-trauma won't be handled," Johnson said.

Both Johnson and Thompson told the chaplains that they, as well as rescue workers, must be "debriefed" following a disaster, such as the Northwest plane crash.

A debriefing session allows workers to express their shock and trauma, as well as rehash how the rescue efforts could have been improved, Thompson said.

families to news of the victims.

"These people would be joyous. They would be really pleased that the relative had been identified," Spitz said. "It took me a lot of time to adapt to that."

The nationally known medical examiner joined Lt. Marshall Thompson of the Michigan State Police-Northville Post at the Farmington Hills Police Department and police chaplains from Farmington Hills, Southfield, Canton Township, Inkster and Detroit to discuss their roles in disasters.

Dr. Murray Johnson, a psychiatrist who teaches at police academies, also spoke.

Many of the chaplains were at the crash scene last August. And many had tried unsuccessfully to get through the road blocks to do what they do best — comfort and console.

But many of the chaplains were without police identification and were turned away as they tried to reach families waiting to hear about their relatives.

THE CHAPLAINS suggested a sticker for their autos to allow them through the road blocks and

other red tape set up by police and rescue authorities.

"This way, you wouldn't have the possibility of a Father John Irish coming just because he's got a collar on," said Thompson of the Michigan State Police's Emergency Management Division.

Irish turned out not to be the chaplain he claimed, but apparently an investigator for a Florida law firm arriving at the crash scene to drum up legal business.

No doubt, Thompson said, rescue efforts for Flight 255 were beset by

## Towns that tap into sewer system must pay

By Joanne Mallazewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills and Southfield officials can quell any worries that upstream communities will get a free ride from \$44 million in im-

provements to the Evergreen-Farmington sewer system.

Contracts, approved by the Farmington Hills and Southfield city councils last week, include provisions to ensure that other Oakland County communities pay when they tap into the improved system.

The contracts make certain that the Oakland County Drain Commission, which owns the major sewer system, will annually evaluate whether the other 16 communities involved in the sewer district are paying their shares.

The improvements will add capacity to the system and stop sewage overflow spilling into basements and the Rouge River.

The contracts open the door for Oakland County to submit an application to the state for financing through the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

The Evergreen-Farmington project is ranked in top priority to receive EPA financing for approximately half the cost of the improvements.

If financing is approved, the federal government will pay \$22.6 million; Farmington Hills and Southfield, \$25.7 million. The two cities are bearing the brunt of the local costs because they have the most to gain from improvements.

BUT TAXPAYERS won't necessarily feel a financial pinch because of the improvements. Both Farmington Hills and Southfield have long

been setting aside money to make payments on bonds that are expected to be sold to construct the two-segment improvements.

Construction is expected to take two to three years. The first segment is expected to bring relief to homeowners' flooded basements in the Kendallwood subdivision, north of 12 Mile, west of Orchard Lake Road. The first segment includes construction of a sanitary detention facility on the O.E. Dunkel Middle School property.

The second segment calls for a new sewage line along the north side of I-696, from Middlebelt east through the city of Southfield. The

new line will relieve a major sewer line along Middlebelt and provide relief for flooded basements and yards in Lincolnshire subdivision, south-east of 11 Mile and Middlebelt.

Next in line for federal grants is the so-called super sewer, the North Huron-Rouge Valley Wastewater Control System, and the First Hamilton relief line, south of Farmington Hills and Southfield.

TOGETHER, THE three projects will greatly improve sewage flow to the Detroit Wastewater Plant on the Detroit River. Sewage from the suburbs is sent to Detroit's plant for treatment and disposal.

The problem with the existing Ev-

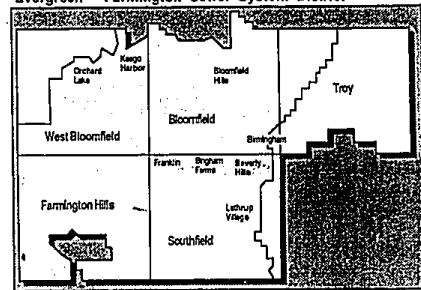
ergreen-Farmington system, built in the 1950s, is overloaded sewage lines. Most weren't built to handle the amount and type of development in Oakland County communities.

Also of concern is Detroit's authority to turn off the main line going to the sewage plant when overflowing begins.

Because there has been no place to put the overflow, diluted sewage has seeped into basements, back yards and eventually, the Rouge River.

The EPA's interest in the sewer projects and its willingness to provide financing has been sparked by the environmental damage caused to the Rouge by overflowing sewage.

### Evergreen - Farmington Sewer System District



### business briefs

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion, are planning a new venture or project, or have information about other business-related happenings — and there's a Farmington-area connection we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Observer readers. Send items to: Business Briefs, Farmington Observer, 3202 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

#### ● EARNED AWARD

Keith Ulrich of Farmington Hills was awarded an Outstanding Performance Award by D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles/Bloomfield Hills. Ulrich, an account executive, accepted the award Feb. 23 during the advertising agency's 1988 Awards Day in Troy.

The Outstanding Performance Award recognizes an employee's exceptional performance and agency contribution during the past year.

"Keith has been deeply involved in a special advertising project for Cadillac, one that has produced the hardest hitting, most unexpected Cadillac ads in many years," said Ron Monchak, D'Arcy managing director.

"He was the developer, coordinator and implementer of the U.S. Auto Club tests which aggressively demonstrated the acceleration of the new Cadillac 4.5 liter V-8 engine."

Ulrich joined D'Arcy in 1982 as a traffic coordinator. He became an account coordinator in 1983, an assistant account executive in 1984 and an account executive in 1985. He is an Adercat Club of Detroit member.

#### ● BUILDERS SEMINAR

The National Association of Home Builders and the Farmington Hills-based Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan are co-sponsoring a one-day seminar focusing on innovative ways to build single family homes at high density.

The seminar will be held April 7 at the Omni International Hotel, Detroit. Cost is \$145 per person, including lunch.

To register, call the Home Build-

ers Institute at 1-800-368-5242, Ext. 347.

The high cost of land and the customer's desire for single-family housing have brought a demand for detached homes at densities of eight to 10 units per acre.

William Kreager, a designer of higher density detached housing, will discuss overall community design and details that can make or break a project, like lot shape, placement of driveways, community entrances and house architecture. He is planner/architect in charge of residential design at Mithus Bowman Enrich Group, Bellevue, Wash.

Lawrence Treby, a leader in the field of market research and marketing, will discuss the need to target a specific population for this type of housing. He is vice president of The Greenman Group, Hollywood, Fla.

#### ● MUSIC DIRECTOR

American House Retirement Residences has appointed Betty Houghton of Farmington Hills full-time music director for its 11 residences in southeast Michigan.

"Betty Houghton has a perfect background, combining education in music, teaching and gerontology, and practical experience in senior residences and care facilities," said J. Robert Gillette, president of American House.

Houghton organized a musical band at the Farmington Hills American House where she has been activities director since May.

Bands, choirs, chime choirs and drama are in the activities "bag" that Houghton plans to use to enrich music programs at other American Houses in Birmingham, Auburn Hills, Royal Oak, Sterling Heights, Dearborn Heights, Livonia, Westland and Lincoln Park.

Before joining American House, Houghton worked as a volunteer with the Hospice of Southeastern Michigan and as a fitness instructor for the Farmington YMCA and taught in Ontario schools.

Houghton has served as vice-president of the American Baptist Women of Southeast Michigan and as worship chairwoman of the North Farm-

ington Baptist Church, where she is drama director, choir member and church soloist.

#### ● ATTORNEY SPECIALIZES

Steven Roby, a Farmington Hills attorney specializing in international ventures and immigration law, has received inquiries from corporate clients about the advantage of membership in a new, non-profit foundation in Japan, International Superconductivity Technology Center.

ISTEC, formed in Japan in January by the Japanese government in cooperation with 50 prominent Japanese companies, extends to U.S. companies the right to participate as active members for membership and laboratory fees.

Although membership and laboratory fees are significant, Roby recommends that U.S. companies seriously consider quick entrance into ISTEC.

ISTEC is planned to be a force in the international development of superconductivity materials, technology and derivative manufacturing techniques.

"Through active membership in ISTEC," Roby said, "many U.S. companies will be tuned into a formerly untapped source of technology, and may be able to intimately participate with advanced Japanese companies in future growth industries."

#### ● PALACE STAFF

As the August grand opening of The Palace approaches, the arena is undergoing accelerated staff growth with the addition of four key personnel. It was announced by Thomas Trzos, director of facility administration at the Auburn Hills site.

Brenda Hale, a Farmington Hills native now living in Trenton, was appointed event coordinator, overseeing all contractual obligations and administrative procedures for events. This includes insurance requirements, technical riders, ticket coordination with promoters and special services for talent.

She will also supervise The Palace's suite operation and coordinate booking of the banquet facility.



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