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TIME to caucus. Farmington Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci, newly elected president of the Southeastern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association, attended the first national fire and emergency services dinner April 12 in Washington. The guest speaker, President George Bush, told 2,000 of the 3 million Americans involved in firefighting and emergency services: "By saving lives, you have defined a successful life." The president, who received a specially made fire hat, pledged to stand behind the fire and safety community. "Volunteers can join hands with government" to bring about "a better, more secure, more fire-safe America," he said.

Farmington Hills has a combination full-time, part-time fire department. In just one year, the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, with 310 members, has become the third largest of 88 caucuses on Capitol Hill. Marinucci will be installed as Southeastern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association president at a luncheon May 11 in Farmington Hills.

QUOTE of the week

... if we determine what's today, then we're going to determine what color homes are going to be tomorrow. . . . And it's truly offensive. . . .

— Farmington Hills councilman Paul Sowerby, reacting to a new ordinance regulating front-yard accessory structures (see story this page).

what's inside

- Around Farmington . . . 4B
- Business 1C
- Cable connection . . . 10C
- Classifieds C-E-H
- Index 3G
- Auto C-H
- Boats 5H
- Real estate E-G
- Employment G-H
- Creative living 1E
- Crossword puzzle . . . 9E
- Entertainment 5C
- Obituaries 13C
- Opinion 14A
- Police/fire calls 6A
- Recreation news 12C
- Sports 1D
- Suburban life 1B

Bridal II

SPECIAL SECTION IN TODAY'S ISSUE

Council adopts artwork ordinance

New law will restrict artists, critics contend

By Joanna Maliszewski staff writer

If renowned artist Vincent Van Gogh were alive today, he'd probably be unhappy with the Farmington Hills City Council's new artwork ordinance. But he wouldn't be alone. "Art has to flourish. If we didn't allow it to flourish, we wouldn't have what we've had in the past. If we restrict it . . . the right to thought, the right to create, we wouldn't have what we've got today to look back on," Oxford Street resident Massie Kurzeja told the city council Monday.

"If we stammer it, we won't have works of art, we'll have people's idea of art. You can't take someone's mind and say that's not art."

Kurzeja's criticism of the new ordinance ranged from falling to offer a distinction between sculpture and "similar structure" to allowing artwork to pass muster with the Farmington Area Arts Commission before it would be allowed in non-single-family-residential front yards.

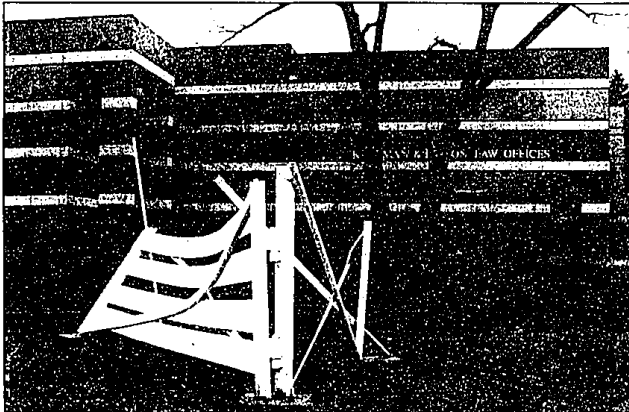
Months in the making, the new or-

dinance allows "one statue, sculpture or similar structure" in front yards of non-single-family residential property following review of plans and the structure by the planning commission.

The ordinance is the result of discussion and argument over "Covington" by Bloomfield Hills sculptor Michael Hall in front of an office building at 30833 Northwestern Highway. Last spring, the board of zoning appeals voted against it being on the lawn in front of a building. City building codes have no provision for a work of art.

THE SCULPTURE'S owner, Gilbert Silverman, an internationally known art collector, at first opposed early drafts of the ordinance.

But when the ordinance was introduced last week, he supported it. "I think it's a wonderful start. You can't focus in and define art. Basically you must have some confidence in the people you select for your arts commission, because of



Architect Kenneth Nowmann and sculptor Michael Hall carefully positioned "Covington" in front of the Kaufman & Payton Law Offices and a shallow stream with weeping willows. The artwork stands on the west side of Northwestern Highway, south of 13 Mile.

Fred Harris new district judge

By Joanna Maliszewski staff writer

Farmington Hills attorney and former Oakland County Road Commission chairman Fred Harris will replace veteran retiring 47th District Judge Michael Hand of Farmington.

"The governor has known Fred a long time. They go back to when Jim (Blanchard) was in the U.S. Congress," said Greg Morris, director of Gov. Jim Blanchard's personnel office.

Morris announced Harris' appointment late Tuesday, less than a week

after Hand's impending May 1 retirement was publicly announced. The appointment doesn't require Senate confirmation.

Harris was one of seven candidates, most of whom had been in the running to fill Oakland County Circuit Judge Norman Lippitt's seat.

"We had already gone through the (evaluation) process," Morris said.

Harris, 58, will serve as interim district judge until the November 1990 election, when he would have to seek election if he chooses to continue in the position.

Hand's four- and six-year terms expires Jan. 1, 1991. Hand, 70, a Farm-

ington resident, said he decided to retire while he still was in good health and could enjoy retirement.

VISITING JUDGES are expected to take Harris' place until Harris takes the bench alongside 47th District Judge Margaret Schaeffer. And Harris is uncertain of when that will be. "I've got to get out of the courthouse first before I can address this issue," said Harris, who admitted he was "absolutely elated" with his appointment.

"It's certainly going to be a change. It's one more step in the legal career, certainly the ultimate

step — to become a judge," he said. "In my 25-plus years in law, I've been just about everything in a courtroom but a judge."

A 16-year Farmington Hills resident, Harris served as assistant Wayne County prosecutor from 1963-64, when he went into private practice, working in criminal defense and civil litigation.

His specialties include labor and domestic law, as well as work in negligence, administrative law and workers' compensation.

"Based on my years of practice,



Fred Harris 'absolutely elated'

'Hard worker' drowns on job

By Casey Hans and Diane Gable staff writers

Billy Steiner of Canton Township grew up in a friendly neighborhood in southern Farmington Hills and pole-vaulted to great heights for Farmington High School.

He had a bright future with his wife, Torey, their 3-year-old son, Dustin Lee, and their second child — yet to be born.

The 28-year-old Navy veteran died Monday when an early-morning explosion ripped through an underground sewer tunnel at the Ford Motor Co. Rouge assembly complex in Dearborn.

"He was a real hard worker," his father, Fred Steiner of Farmington Hills, said. "He worked all the time, day and night to support his family. He was a strict father."

Steiner's high school track and field coach recalled him as "one of our leaders."

Services for Steiner are sched-

uled for 11 a.m. today, April 27, at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington with the Rev. Terry Purvis Smith officiating. Burial will follow at Glen Eden Cemetery in Livonia.

BILLY AND Torey recently bought a home in Redford Township, according to family members.

While Billy served on the U.S. Navy 6th Fleet during the Beirut and Grenada uprisings, his family nervously waited back home for word of his well-being. "We were watching TV all the time, wondering if he'd be all right," Fred Steiner said.

Billy survived each time.

On Monday morning, however, Steiner and another man, 57-year-old John Hatch of Detroit, both employees of Deutch Industrial Services of Detroit, were working underground when the explosion occurred. The maintenance workers were killed when a water-line break flooded the tunnel. Divers



Billy Steiner 'all-American boy' searched for the men after the tunnel was flooded with 4 to 6 feet of water. Their bodies weren't found until that evening.

The cause of death for both men was drowning, a spokeswoman from the Wayne County Medical Examiner's office said Wednesday.

FORD SPOKESMAN Jay Meisenhelder said the company does not expect to know what

Tax rate may fall, taxes rise

By Casey Hans staff writer

Farmington city officials are proposing a lower operating millage rate for the coming year.

But because of rising property values in the city, the rollback will not avert property tax hikes if the proposed overall \$6.8 million budget is approved. Most of that, \$4.3 million, is the city's operating budget, up slightly from last year.

State equalized values on property in the city have grown by \$30 million, making each mill worth more. So although the city plans to lower operating millage from 10.65 to 10.4 mills, the lower rate is worth more money. The city is restricted by law to hold a public Trial in Taxation hearing before voting to increase the budget.

In proposing the new fiscal budget April 17, City Manager Robert Deadman told city council members a 5.6-percent property tax increase would be necessary to cover the proposed General Fund budget. In addition, the city will dip into its surplus fund balance for another \$60,000.

Deadman estimates there will be a 2.9-percent overall increase in expenditures in the coming year, and that the extra local revenue is needed because of declining revenues from the state and other sources.

The debt service rate of .98 mill is proposed to remain the same as last year.

SOME OF the 1989-90 budget highlights as offered by Deadman include:

- Reorganization of the city's assessor, clerk and treasurer staffs as the city continues its renovations of city hall and physical moving of departments. The changes would reduce one part-time position in the city clerk's office, add one employee in the treasurer's office and reorganize some work duties.
- Additional training for the public safety department. All officers will be state certified to Firefighter Level II, and will have computers in patrol cars to aid in license plate checks and other measures.

Open enrollment coming to high schools

By Casey Hans staff writer

A new policy giving high school students a choice about where to attend school has been introduced in Farmington.

Effective with the 1989-90 school year, the open enrollment policy allows students in the Farmington Public Schools a choice of attending Farmington High, Harrison or North Farmington. It was approved unanimously by the school board April 4.

The district-wide policy follows a trial run this year, in which Harrison and Warner Middle School were deemed "open enrollment" schools because of declining enrollment.

Superintendent Graham Lewis recommended the change because, he said, only a small number of students had elected to change schools this year under the limited policy.

"It is time to consider removal of 'soft' boundaries of the high school attendance areas," he told the board. When asked what the district would

do if one school ran out of space, Lewis replied: "If we run out of seats, we would say 'The house is full.'"

UNDER THE new policy, students attending a school out of their traditional boundary area would provide their own transportation. Although the official policy is effective with the 1989-90 school year, Lewis said requests for transfers have been considered on an individual basis since January.

School trustees were cautious in their approval, asking Lewis to keep an eye on enrollment shifts and evaluate the program annually.

Board president Jack Cotton said the issue was a philosophical one. "I don't want to be chastised a year from now, (with the public saying) 'It's a lousy program and we can't go back,'" Cotton said.

Principals from the three high schools will meet with Lewis to draft a letter to parents of high school students and incoming ninthgraders,

explaining the new policy.

LEWIS SAID although "there's a little apprehension about it" among high school administrators, he is confident the program will work.

"There's no question that nationwide . . . this has been something the outside school community has been pushing," said Harrison principal Clayton Graham, who predicted a continued small shift in en-