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Special Founders
Fest section inside

Farmington Observer

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LANE changes

Eastbound traffic on the six-mile stretch of I-696 from M-275 to Telegraph through Farmington Hills moved to two newly paved lanes last week. Westbound traffic will move to two new lanes by next week.

Four more new lanes then will be added.

The new eight-lane freeway, as well as a redesigned Orchard Lake Road interchange, is targeted to open in late November. If the weather holds up, said Brenda Peck of the Michigan Department of Transportation.

CLEANUP cost.

Farmington Hills spent about \$50,000 on road and roadside cleanup and repair in the wake of the June 21 downpour, city manager William Costick told the city council June 28.

This week

Thirteen young women will vie for the title of Miss Farmington in the 1989 Miss Farmington Scholarship Pageant Wednesday evening at Vladimir's in Farmington Hills. The newly crowned winner will greet the public that night at the Founders Festival Showmobile in the Downtown Farmington Farmington Center.

Memory lane

25 years ago:

- Franklin Knolls subdivision residents oppose the proposed rezoning 25 acres on the southwest corner of 14 Mile and Middlebelt from single-family residential to multiple residential and office district.
- Michael Kiley was named executive assistant to the publisher and will oversee editing and publishing operations of both the Farmington Enterprise and the Plymouth Mail, owned by Russell Strickland.

— Farmington Enterprise, July 9, 1964

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FARMINGTON FOUNDERS FESTIVAL

and
1989 US Women's Open

SPECIAL SECTIONS IN TODAY'S ISSUE

Judge defends hiring practices

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Amid criticism of his hiring practices, recently appointed District Judge Fred Harris of Farmington says he did only what he is entitled to and acted properly when he fired two veteran court employees and replaced them with his son and former law firm secretary.

"It wasn't a case of letting someone go. It was a case of my right to bring someone in," Harris said.

Harris was appointed by Gov. James Blanchard to replace veteran District Judge Michael Hand, who retired May 1. Harris began his new duties on the 47th District Court bench June 1.

Tony Lindsey, senior personnel analyst for the state court administration, confirmed Harris' right to fire and hire whom he wishes for his personal staff, which includes a court officer and a court reporter or secretary. But Lindsey said Harris could have handled the matter more sensitively.

"There's nothing to prohibit him from doing any of this. It may not have been the most humanitarian thing to do. If he had called and asked us how to do this, we would have told him," Lindsey said.

HARRIS HAS come under fire for terminating veteran court reporter Cuddy Hage two months before she would have been vested in

her pension through the city of Farmington Hills.

Harris also has been criticized for firing 11-year court officer Howard Aldrich and replacing him with his college student son, Patrick, until a police officer can be assigned to the court as security.

Rumors of concern about Harris' hirings led the Farmington Hills City Council to postpone until tonight amending the district court's budget to cover increased costs for the transition from Hand to Harris. The Farmington City Council approved the increased budget a couple of weeks ago without debate.

Both city councils finance the district court but are not involved in day-to-day operations.

PRESIDING 47TH District Judge Margaret Schaeffer said she and Harris plan to attend the council meeting tonight. She also defended Harris' hirings.

"It was certainly appropriate."

The state court administration has few, if any, guidelines or rules regulating judicial hiring practices.

"A judge has quite a lot of latitude in hiring his own staff. A judge must be comfortable with his staff. He makes his own decision whether it's proper under the conditions," state court analyst John Grewell said.

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Fred Harris assumed a judgeship on the 47th District Court bench in Farmington June 1.

National hunt on for new school chief

Resignation not too surprising, 7A

By Casey Hans staff writer

Farmington school board members will likely move cautiously in their search for a new superintendent after the resignation of the most recent school chief, who lasted only three years on the job.

Discussions are expected to begin immediately about how the board will proceed with the search, following the June 20 resignation of Graham Lewis.

possibly the superintendent of a smaller district.

"I really wouldn't want anybody who would break a contract," said trustee Janice Rolnick. "I don't want it to be a thorough search."

The search will be different this time, she said, since there appears to be no formal candidates for the job. "There'll be no favorite son this time," she said.

LEWIS was appointed as interim superintendent once during an illness of then-superintendent Lewis Schulman; he was also named interim for a six-month period before being put in the job permanently in July 1986.

Other internal candidates for the job that year included former assistant superintendent Lawrence Freedman, who has since retired from the district, and current assistant superintendent Lynn Nutter, who is expected to retire soon.

"I think we are looking for someone who can communicate his program to the community and to the staff," said trustee Jack Inch, hastily adding that he was not comparing the future to the past. "What we're really looking for is someone who can listen well, understand well."

Inch said administratively, he wanted to see a

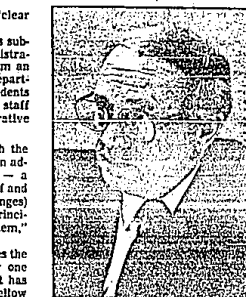
very definite chain of command, which is "clear as to where each person reports."

Upon his appointment in July 1986, Lewis substantially changed the central office administrative set-up, shifting the emphasis away from an elementary and secondary structure to departmental management. Assistant superintendents are currently in charge of curriculum and staff development, special services and administrative operations.

ROLNICK said she was not happy with the current central office structure. She wants an administrator who will supervise instruction — a sort of ombudsman, who could deal with staff and community. "When that (administrative changes) first came to us, I was concerned who the principals would go to and who would evaluate them," she said. "We need somebody in there."

Outgoing president Jack Cotton said he likes the concept of incorporating curriculum under one administrator, and the direction the district has taken toward staff development. As with fellow trustees, he wants to see innovative ideas continue.

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Graham Lewis stays as consultant

Dangling from overpass, man shouts, 'Let me die!'

By Bob Sklar staff writer

While a "highly intoxicated, very depressed" man, dangling by his arms from an I-275 overpass, shouted, "Let me die!," a police officer clinging to him yelled, "Stop the traffic!"

The drama was played out Wednesday on the Grand River overpass above I-275 in Farmington Hills when police officers and bystanders pulled the 35-year-old East Lansing man to safety as rush-hour traffic sped by below.

"I know, without a doubt, we saved him from serious injury," said Trooper Judy Anderson, 26, of the Michigan State Police Northville post.

The man was admitted to Westland Medical Center for a 48-hour observation period and a psychiatric evaluation. His only injuries in the apparent suicide try were scrapes, police said.

Police believe the man, released from a Westland detoxification center within the previous two days, intended to let go of the ledge.

Anderson characterized him as moody. "He'd cry, be belligerent, then calm down," she said. "He wasn't grateful we saved him — at all."

"He meant business," added Novi Police Chief Lee McGee, who assisted Anderson in saving the man. "I thought he was a goner."

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Addition OK'd in historic area

City manager cautions DDA, 4A

By Casey Hans staff writer

"They tried, but they couldn't do it. For the second time in recent years, members of the Old Village Association have fought against expansion of a commercial business in their neighborhood. The association represents homeowners in and around Farmington's historic residential district downtown, north of Grand River.

Their protests over the past seven

weeks went unheeded.

The Farmington Board of Zoning Appeals garnered just enough votes Wednesday to approve a variance for a building addition to the Heaney-Standquist-Furcetti Home, which fronts Farmington Road at the corner of Oakland Street. The variance was approved on a 4-2 vote, with members JoAnna McChane and Robert Walker opposing the measure.

Walker tried to shank a ruling he lived near the site, but was told his reasoning was not solid and that he must vote.

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Quadriplegic seeks privacy in wait to die

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Farmington quadriplegic David Rivlin is trying to maintain privacy as the search for a physician to disconnect him from a life-sustaining ventilator proceeds.

"There is a lot of emotion involved," Rivlin's attorney, David Rosin of Detroit, said Friday. "My work is done. The family is not anxious for publicity. They want some privacy. There will be no advance announcement of when this (disconnection) will be done."

Attempts to talk directly with Rivlin, 38, at the Oak Hill Care Center, his home for two years, have been difficult in the past week. On July 5, Oakland County Circuit Judge Hilda Gage said there's no need to give permission to remove him from the ventilator.

Gage's lack of a ruling on Rivlin's May 17 petition enabled Rivlin to seek a physician willing to sedate him and remove the ventilator.

"It makes me feel good. It puts it out of the hands of the court and into the hands of where it belongs," Rivlin said after the July 5 hearing.

"If you can lead an independent life, then go ahead and do it," Judge Gage said. "But if you're stuck and in a situation where you have no freedom, then you've got to make a choice. And my change will come with death," Rivlin said.

BEFORE THAT happens, Rivlin must be moved from the Farmington nursing home because owner Dr. Ed Blumberg has refused to allow the procedure to be done on the prem-

ises, Rosin said.

"The problem is there is a series of things involved. First, a place (where the procedure will be done) has to be found. In other words, the doctor has to have some connections to be able to do this," Rosin said.

The attorney said that as far as he understands, the physician who disconnects Rivlin from the ventilator will not be held civilly or criminally liable. "The judge (Gage) seemed to say a person could do what they want," Rosin said.

Rivlin's aunt, Marion Gornbela-Melton of Palm Harbor, Fla., who has Rivlin's power of attorney, and Rivlin have both said there will be no liability. "He gave her the authority to give anyone she wants amnesty," Rosin said. "Who's going to complain?"

After the July 5 hearing, Gornbela-Melton

said, "I think if I had a nurse with me or other medical personnel with me, and I was told I was the only one who could, or should, pull the plug if that's to, I would do it."

Rosin said that as far as he can tell, there should be no need to again go before Judge Gage for any ruling as the search for a physician and the disconnection procedure proceeds.

BECAUSE NO one formally opposed Rivlin's May petition asking to be disconnected from his ventilator, Gage said there's no need for his request to be brought into court. "We're here to settle disputes. There's no dispute before me," she said July 5. "This is purely a private personal matter between a patient and his physician."

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