

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Prevent fires! Fire prevention week is coming up. Find out what local departments are doing to help folks learn not to burn./6A

New DDA director: Lapeer's Downtown Development Authority director has been hired for Farmington. People in Lapeer will miss her./13A

COUNTY NEWS

Hizzoner's pledge: Detroit's mayor says he'll work with whomever is elected Oakland County executive./5A

OPINION

Prayer policy: There are a lot of good reasons for not opening a community function with a prayer./18A

SPORTS

Senior softball: With a roster filled with Observerland players, National Trails finished fourth in the 50-and-over Senior Softball World Series./1B

ENTERTAINMENT



George Burns: Show business legend George Burns is coming to Livonia Oct. 1-4 to dedicate, and perform in the theater they named after him. He will be joined by special guest Florence Henderson, and accompanied by a 21-piece orchestra./7B

SUBURBAN LIFE

50th reunion: Baldwin High School Class of '42 celebrates its 50th anniversary. Grads, who now live in the Detroit area as well as out of town, renew old friendships./1H

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Lauhoff offered top city post



BY CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

Farmington public safety director Frank Lauhoff was offered the city's chief executive post Monday, following a brief interview and discussion by the city council at a special noon meeting.

Discussed by the council in recent weeks as a prime candidate for the city

manager's job, Lauhoff, 40, was the only city employee to apply for the position which was advertised last week through postings at city hall.

A unanimous vote was cast Monday to negotiate a contract with Lauhoff which would be effective on Jan. 5, 1993, the day after current City Manager Robert Deadman retires. The move

will give Lauhoff time to work with Deadman before retirement.

"I'm excited at the offer and I look forward to the challenge," Lauhoff said, reacting to the council's action. "I believe I can help continue to move the city in the right direction."

The council had chosen to keep its search for a chief executive within the walls of city hall first, in lieu of doing a more extensive search externally.

A committee comprised of Mayor William Hartsock and councilman Richard Tupper will now begin negotiating a contract with Lauhoff with the help of city attorney John Donohue. A

formal draft of the agreement will then be brought before the council for action.

Hartsock said he considered the city manager's relationship with the city council a marriage of sorts, and called Lauhoff a "suitable partner."

The mayor called on the community to be supportive of the council's decision, despite some criticism of the internal search process. "I think it's extremely important that the public understand it's been a . . . thoughtful process," he said. "This is the most important decision this council will make."

See CITY MANAGER, 2A



SHARON LEAL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Against the wall: Joan Barber measures noise levels on her side of the wall that serves as a safety barrier between her house and I-275 traffic in western Farmington Hills.

Noise battle not over for homeowner

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

With her sound level meter in hand, Joan Barber is continuing her long-standing battle for barriers to muffle the noise that envelops her historic house on I-275.

The Farmington Hills resident promises she will continue that battle despite the erection of a safety barrier by the Michigan Department of Transportation earlier this year.

"I don't really feel safer," Barber said. "If a truck hits at a right angle, it will still come right over to my house."

The safety barrier — standing a 5 feet high, 130 feet long — came after two trucks flew off the fast-moving freeway and landed in her yard. Her 168-year-old Greek Revival house sits about 130 feet away from the eight-lane freeway, immediately north of Nine Mile.

MDOT officials believe the safety

barrier reduces the noise level for Barber somewhat.

"The safety barrier is an increased height (than most safety barriers) to mitigate the noise for Mrs. Barber," said Leo DeFazio, a supervisor in MDOT's materials and technology division.

But Barber is skeptical. "Earwax it hasn't helped. Before, it was 70 decibels — sometimes 80. Now, with every truck that goes by it's

still 70. At rush hour it's over 70," Barber said.

What bothers Barber is that others who live on a freeway have noise barriers, such as Camelot Court on I-696. She maintains that her historic house, which is eligible for the national historic register, should be protected, especially since it was there long before I-275 was built.

See NOISE WAR, 4A

Muirwood challenged by assault victim

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

A 33-year-old woman is challenging Muirwood Apartments management after she was assaulted in her bed by an unidentified man early Sunday morning.

"I'm not going back to that apartment," said the woman who lived in the apartment with her toddler son for only eight days before a man broke in.

"I had a false sense of security. I wasn't expecting someone to come in at 2 a.m. and get on top of me in my bed."

■ 'I'm not going back to that apartment. I had a false sense of security. I wasn't expecting someone to come in at 2 a.m. and get on top of me in my bed.'

assault victim

The woman provided management at Muirwood, which is owned by Bextak Co., of Farmington Hills, with a list of demands Monday, including moving costs to another apartment, as well as emotional counseling costs. Bextak

management, who said they are not liable for the intrusion, declined the majority of her demands.

According to police, the woman was in her bed sleeping when she was awakened by a man who had climbed in.

"Don't scream. I'm not going to hurt you. I'm a friend," the man reportedly said.

The woman told Farmington Hills police she noticed the man had something — perhaps rope or wire — in his right hand. He told her to roll on her stomach, according to the police report.

Believing she might be raped, the woman said she grabbed the man's hair and screamed. The man then grabbed her around her neck.

See SECURITY, 4A

Candidates worlds apart on county government

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

Elizabeth "Betty" Howe and L. Brooks Patterson were polite to each other during an interview at the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers early Monday.

Patterson more than once referred to Howe as "my friend Betty." Howe kept patting Patterson's arm.

But outward congeniality didn't stop them from emphasizing the sharp differences between them and the way each would approach the job of Oakland County executive.

Howe, a Democrat, and Patterson, a Republican, are vying in the Nov. 3 election to succeed Daniel T. Murphy, who retires at the end of this year. Howe is the former director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Patterson is the former prosecutor of Oakland County.

This week was a milestone of sorts in the campaign. After months of separate campaigning, Howe and Patterson agreed to joint appearances. The first was Monday at the O&E, followed that afternoon by a heated and sometimes hostile debate in Royal Oak. A second debate is scheduled today in Southfield.

Whatever the format, differences between the two are readily apparent, almost glaring.

Howe, 56 and a former chairman of the Oakland County Democratic Party,

insists county government is gridlocked. She says that's partly because reforms she campaigned to initiate in 1974 — when Oakland County adopted a county executive form of government under Public Act 139 — have not been completed.

If elected, she pledges to push for more reform, even though enabling legislation from the state Legislature

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See COUNTY, 7A