

FARMINGTON  
NOTES

Hooping it up!

Jared Gorbach, a 12-year-old Farmington Hills resident, was hooping it up with his hometown heroes when he was Piston for a Day on March 11, compliments of The Olive Garden Italian Restaurant.

The Olive Garden's Piston for a Day contest for kids ages 7-14 ran Jan. 24 through Feb. 27 with one winner chosen from each of The Olive Garden's 10 Detroit-area locations!

Jared's name was drawn from all entries at the Novi Olive Garden. As a winner, he received four tickets to the Pistons' March 11 game against the Cleveland Cavaliers, a player "contract" signed by Pistons management, a pregame photo taken with a Piston player on the court at the Palace of Auburn Hills, a Pistons gift package and Olive Garden gift certificates.

Applause for her!

Carol Lewis has been named the "Applause! Applause!" winner for March at Botsford Continuing Health Center in Farmington Hills.

Lewis, a resident of northwest Detroit, has worked in the long-term care industry as a nursing assistant for five years, the past three at BCHC.

Lewis provides assistance to residents with a variety of activities. "I try to put my best forward when working with the patients because I know they need me to care for them," she said. "They really need my assistance, and I am able to provide a necessary service for them."

Lewis also is responsible for orientations for the new nursing assistants on her floor.

Overtures to spring

The Farmington Community Band will present several overtures at a concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 20, in the auditorium of Harrison High School on 12 Mile Road, west of Middlebelt.

Tickets at \$3 for adults, \$2 for students and \$8 for families may be bought at the door. Seniors citizens are admitted free.

Items for Farmington Notes may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21899 Farmington Road, Farmington 48036, faxed to 477-8722 or dropped off at the newspaper office.

# Emergencies, few fires, fuel runs

■ Fires are down in Farmington Hills, but the fire department is keeping busy with other work, such as emergency calls having nothing to do with fires.

By BILL COULTANT  
STAFF WRITER



The Farmington Hills Fire Department had fewer fires last year but was a lot busier.

In fact, fire Chief Richard Marinucci said the department's paid-on-call budget has been a lot higher than expected because of an overall 12 percent increase in emergency calls for 1993. "Our aggressive fire prevention programs, such as smoke detectors and education, have helped reduce fire calls," he said. "But everything else is up."

And if January is any indication, there is real cause for alarm.

"Our calls were up by 40 percent from last January," he said. "I know that we had a lot of calls related to the extreme cold. But that doesn't account for all of it."

A breakdown shows that of 4,241 emergency calls last year, only 276 were for fires, down 8.3 percent from 1992. But medical emergency calls were up almost 14 percent and personal injury accidents were up close to 22 percent.

Marinucci said that although a higher percentage of people are wearing safety belts, there are more businesses and more commuters, which may account in part for the increase in personal injury accidents.

"It's surprising because of the increase in safety belt use," he said. "Maybe we're not going to as many



FILE PHOTO

Report from the chief: "We can have 20 people at an incident before most people can have 10," says Farmington Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci (center).

serious accidents."

The chief said because so many older people choose to live or retire in Farmington Hills, there is a natural increase in medical emergencies.

Marinucci said the city is limited in the amount of money it can budget for the department, especially in light of decreasing tax money for local governments.

That's why the city must develop a long-term strategy to meet the demand for those services.

"If we don't start taking steps today, someday we're going to wake up with a bigger problem," he said.

Marinucci said the department's

equipment is, for the most part, in good shape. But the increase in runs consumes more fuel, puts more of a strain on equipment, adds maintenance costs, means more uniform costs and adds to the amount of paperwork for the department as well as overtime.

"We can't stop responding in May because there is not enough money in the budget," he said. "We're emergency-driven."

Marinucci said the department has been on target in its response time of six minutes on average. And although other departments with full-time firefighters are often responding

in half the time, they can't bring as many firefighters or EMTs to an incident as fast as the Farmington Hills Fire Department can.

"It's easy to look at response time," he said. "But we can have 20 people at an incident before most departments can have 10."

Marinucci also pointed out that because there are only 16 full-time firefighters with the rest paid "on call," Farmington Hills taxpayers pay \$2.2 million a year for their department as compared to about \$6 million in Livonia and \$9 million in Southfield where the departments are full time.

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