



Moving time: Floral designer Tricia Chaston works on a window display at the soon-to-be former location of Farmington Center Florist.

## Florist from page A1

pending relocation. Besides the door sign, she is mailing postcards to regular customers. She tells everyone she sees about it, even the postal carrier.

"She came in today and asked where I was going," Trzciniski said, shaking her head about how someone could possibly miss the detailed sign on the front door.

"Because of such episodes, she wonders about her future."

"I'm nervous," she admitted. "After being here for all of these years, my biggest worry is (that) people are going to think I'm gone, closed up."

"That would be a major blow to the business she has built up since '70. First of all, Trzciniski

said 40 percent of sales are generated from walk-up customers. Secondly, Valentine's Day traditionally is a big seller for florists; the timing of the move probably isn't the best as far as she is concerned.

"I need that walk-up traffic," Trzciniski said. "Especially with Valentine's Day coming."

Meanwhile, she insists she hasn't seen any lease agreement for the new location from Kimco Corp., which is the Downtown Farmington Center landlord.

Even so, Trzciniski is planning ahead. There will be a Grand Opening at the new place, perhaps in February.

Farmington Center Florist's new address will be 23340 Farmington Road.

## Man's death in apartment ruled accidental

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police have ruled the death of a 60-year-old man as accidental after his body was found amid a pool of blood in his apartment Friday.

Police were called to Newport Creek Apartments on Eight Mile Road on the report of a dead body. Officers entered through an unlocked door of the apartment and immediately noticed an 8-inch circle of blood on the entrance carpet.

The victim was found on his knees with his head resting on the couch and a bloody face.

Police initially treated the case as a possibly homicide, but sub-

sequently learned that the medical examiner ruled the death accidental.

He likely fell and struck his head. An autopsy revealed he had a blood alcohol level of more than .30 percent, said Dr. Ljubica Dragovic, Oakland County medical examiner.

"He fell and struck his head and that was due to acute alcohol intoxication," said Sgt. Tim Swanson.

The man was identified as Richard Lee Johnson, 60.

Police also found a large pool of blood on the carpet in front of the bedroom as well as being smeared on the wall. Blood was also found on beer cans inside a

plastic bag. A TV was playing and the stove was on when police entered the apartment.

A woman who lives on the first floor said she heard a loud noise around 11:20 p.m. Jan. 1, which sounded like something being thrown across the room.

The man who called police said he went to the apartment - at the request of a mutual friend - to check on Dick Johnson who hadn't responded to phone messages or knocks on his door.

When he entered the apartment around 4 p.m., he saw a man whom he initially didn't recognize slumped over the couch and phoned police. Police questioned the caller and the

mutual friend.

The medical examiner said the blunt trauma to the back of the head was a contributing factor in the death. The man fell backwards and hit an object, possibly a door, which opened a gash, Dragovic said.

Police evidence technicians were brought in and the apartment secured until police received the medical examiner's findings Saturday.

"He (the scene) led us to initially believe it was more than an accidental death, that it was a suspicious death or a homicide because of the amount of blood in different areas of the apartment," Chief Bill Dwyer said.

## Hockey from page A1

to demonstrate?"

Highlights of the proposal to add hockey include the following:

■ The team would be comprised of players from all three Farmington high schools, and would compete in 1998-99. Both boys and girls would be eligible to try out for the squad.

■ The program would primarily be funded by "participation fees and fund raising revenues," with the district subsidizing coaches salaries (estimated at \$7,000 out of an annual budget of \$35,600).

■ Each player would pay \$750 to join the squad and play 24 games in the Western Lakes Athletic Association. Home games would likely be held either at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena on Eight Mile Road or a new two-sheet facility being

opened this year by Michigan Suburban Hockey.

■ There is strong interest in Farmington and Farmington Hills for ice hockey, with about 1,000 youths between ages 4-17 playing in the FHLA.

"It didn't hurt that the Red Wings won the Stanley Cup," said Jones to the school board.

Spoke was the most reluctant board member about the proposal. "I don't see anything focused here on the building of the individual in the educational role. I don't see anything about building responsibility."

Both during and after the meeting, Patterson said there are significant off-ice benefits for high school players. One of them is they will play for fewer games, and at more reasonable hours of the day, for their high school

team than in the FHLA or other youth leagues. In the latter, some play up to 60 games, compared to 24 in the Western Lakes Athletic Association.

With a less-demanding schedule, players would be able to maintain homework time and get to bed at a reasonable hour.

Meanwhile, Patterson said high school students in the Farmington district want their own prep team to play for, rather than some travel team that might play games in far-away places "in front of maybe a handful of spectators at 10 o'clock" in the evening.

"That (scenario) is not really a big incentive for them. But I haven't talked to any players yet who haven't indicated a strong desire to play for their school."

Building strong values is "all part of why we're doing this," said Patterson, adding that varsity hockey would do no more or less in that department than other sports or extracurricular activities.

Another likely change to the proposal, supported both by Trustee Bobbie Feldman and Secretary Priscilla Brouillette, would entail reviewing the program's success - and whether to expand by one or two teams - in

one year instead of three, as proposed.

"I think we'd like to hear a lot sooner than three years (about) how this is going," said Feldman, the mother of two hockey players who play in the FHLA.

Several other issues were raised by the board, including: supervision of games taking place in facilities away from the district; an additional layer of insurance costs to cover injuries at such facilities; budgetary impact on other prep sport offerings; and high ice time costs.

About the latter, the proposal estimated it would cost \$600 per week for ice time, covering six hours weekly (for after-school practices and "homo" games.) But Patterson later said the actual number of ice hours could be reduced to four or five, depending on the ice time fees.

"Even though it's at a rate we're hoping to be \$100 (per hour), that's something that can be backed down as far as hours and numbers are concerned," Patterson said.

He said there is great potential for excellent revenues generated from hockey games, both from ticket sales and concessions.

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