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The Farmington Haring Observer

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Ready to serve



BTAFF PROTO BY BEAL BRIDGE Welcome: Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss swears in Frank Barthel Jr., the newest mem-ber of the department, during a ceremony last week at Farmington City Hall.

New officer sworn in

Frank Barthel Jr is the newest member of the Farm-ington Public Bafety Depart-ment, and very well may be among the youngest on the

among the youngest on the force. Barthel is 23 years old and a graduate of Cadillac High School who later attended Grand Valley State University. His graduated with a bacclasureate degree in criminal justice and successfully completed their police academy. On Friday, Nov. 5, Barthel graduated from the Oakland

FARMINGTON **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Fire Academy at Oakland Community College. He ranked first in practical skills and second overall academical-

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area celebrities are leading their support to the Farmington lillis/Farmington Community Proceeds will help support local family organizations and programs, such as Farmington Hills and Farmington Hills. The event is a black-tia exiter.

For more information on the The event is a black-tia exiter.

The event is a black-tie optional dinner dance and special live and silent auction to benefit the

and Secondary, Barthel began Working with seasoned Farm-ington Public Safety Officers in a 12-week field training pro-

Hills, firefighters agree to 3-year pact

BY LARRY O'COMMOR STATE WHITE

Farmington Hills and its fire-fighters union skirted arbitra-tion, agreeing to a three-per-contract though July 2000. The International Association of Fire Fighters Local 2506, rep-resenting 33 Hills employees, worked under a contract exten-sion during 18 months of negoti-stions.

sion during 18 months of negoti-citions.

With talks deadlocked, fire-fighters and city officials went to a pre-arbitration conference under State Act 12, which pro-hibits city energency personnel from striking. All labor disputes are actitled through binding arbi-tration.

At that meeting, they decided

are settled through binding arbitration.
At that meeting, they decided to give bargaining one more shot.
"I think we all agree that a negotiated settlement is always better than a settlement that is assigned to you by a third party," Hills Assistant City Manager Dana Whinnery said.
Under the new pact, firefighters receive annual 3-percent increases back dated to July 1998. Retirement multipliers, which are factored with years of service to determine pension benefits, also increased.
Union members ratified the agreement, which the Farmington Hills City Council approved Oct. 18.
Contract language rather than

Oct. 18.
Contract language rather than money proved to be a sticking point. Union leaders wanted to maintain a clause whereby every advance life support run is staffed by two career firefighters, who are also trained paramedics.

paramedics.
City negotiators asked for more flexibility, using part-time paramedics in some instances.
The department inaugurated advance life support service in 1998.

1998.

Firefighter negotiators saw
the issue as possibly eliminating
future jobe. Those who need critical care benefit from having two
career firefighter/paramedies
respond, a union negotiator said.

People who work together
regularly as career professionals
develop a rapport, a cadence,
said Fire Department Lt. Tom

El 'People who work egether regular ereer professio

> Hills Pire Depi Lt. Tom Shurtleff

Shurtleff, who is vice president of IFA Local 2659. "Each shift develops its own rhythm, its own pace. Those are things that make for scene efficiency."

Such staffing requirements

Buch staffing requirements lead to more personnel being juggled between the department's five stations, city negotators said.

"It's not uncommon for us in the morning to have to shift fire-fighters around from one station to another in order to accommodate having two career people per unit." Whinnery said. 'It's not that we don't have the staffing "is that's we have to do some musical chairs."

The retirement multiplier

do some musical chairs."
The retirement multiplier
goes up to 2.65 from 2.50 for
those under age 65. Those over
65 will see their multiplier
increase from 2.25 to 2.375. As a
result, a firefighter who retires
at 55 with 25 years service
would receive 66 percent of his
salary.
The city also agreed to pay the
full cost of retirement insurance
premiums, removing a \$600

premiums, removing a \$600 monthly can

In exchange, union fire employees will increase their pension contributions from 4.5 to 5 percent of their pay to halo

pension contributions from 4.5 to 5 persent of their pay to help offset those costs.

For a majority of department members, retirement is a ways off yet. Only six firefighters have 20 years or more experience, Shurtleff said.

Despite the stalemate, both sides described the talks as amisable.

cable.
"Sometimes there are differ-"Sometimes there are differ-ences in our positions, but from a relationship standpoint there has never been a strain," Whin-nery said. "We're looking for-ward to getting back to business as usual."



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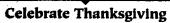
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