

# He Recalls 21 Years As Fireman



**FARMINGTON**  
Tom Weisheit retired as chief of the volunteer firemen who work out of fire station No. 2 on Northwestern Highway in the northeast corner of Farmington Township.

He takes with him 21 years of memories, and a record of service to the community.

It all began in 1951 when he and some others in the north end of the community began talking about the need for a fire department. The group had their first meeting at Roy Bell's garage, a sort of landmark on Northwestern Highway. Weisheit's business, a General Electric outlet, was across the street and down the road a bit.

"Those men stimulated an interest in a fire barn at that time, and it took hold. They didn't have a truck or anything else," Earl Teeples, township supervisor, recalled recently.

Tom was made assistant chief under Bell, and in January, 1952 they took delivery on their first truck. Other modern equipment such as radios and Plectron alert devices were luxuries the township could not afford.

"We had no hydrants, but the truck held 500 gallons of water, and we could put out a lot of fires. We went to Lansing to John Bean (fire equipment manufacturers) for training," Weisheit said.

The first official fire run was a grass fire, as best Tom can remember. "We had a lot of them over the years; some of them got into brush and the flames can be 10 feet high. They were tough to put out."

Many times Weisheit pulled out of the station by himself. The "station" was really an addition to Bell's garage that Bell built to house one fire truck.

His wife helped too, calling the men to the fires, and serving coffee to weary firemen after the work was done.

Rescue work brought its share of troubles and sorrow. "I remember one Sunday afternoon we went to a home and a baby was choking to death. They are so tiny and you don't know exactly what to do. But we got him breathing again. Boy, was that a big relief. You've just got to go ahead and do what you can," Weisheit said.

The worst fire ever? "It wasn't in Farmington. We went to Walled Lake and assisted on a bad fire out there, when a factory, railroad ties and rails, houses and power lines burned up."

"A power line fell near our truck and we stopped short. I thought it might hit one of the men on the back of the truck. That scared the heck out of me, because we were caught in the middle of a fire all of a sudden."

The biggest fire in Farmington that he can remember was an office building fire near 13 Mile Rd. and Orchard Lake Rd. "That burned down before we could even get there," he noted.

Other firemen joined their ranks - all volunteers - and finally, in 1957 Roy Bell retired and Weisheit was elected chief. He began asking for a new truck, and was finally rewarded in 1970 when he and some other firemen went to Tipton, Indiana for training and breaking in on a new truck.

"We owe you a lot," Teeples told Weisheit at a retirement dinner. "We can't possibly repay you."

Most would agree. The pay for volunteers is low, especially if you are aroused from sleep in the middle of night.

"I guess I became a fireman because we needed one. It was a situation where I was able to help out," Weisheit said. He is also a master electrician, a skill that helps when having to disconnect utilities at fires. And, he says, other volunteers have other skills. "That's the good part of a volunteer fire department."

Weisheit retired from his business in 1969, and quit in May as fire chief.

"There's no need to kid myself. I can still climb a ladder, but I don't have what it takes. Someone is depending on us, and you could let them down."

And after over 21 years of service, Tom Weisheit doesn't want to do that.

RETIREMENT -- Tom Weisheit, one of the founders of fire station No. 2 in the township,

has retired. (Observer photo by Ralph Evert)

## Family Car Welcome In Festival Road Rally

**FARMINGTON**  
An interesting feature of the Founders festival that could prove to be fun for the whole family is a road rally scheduled for Friday night, July 28, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The rally is being run by John Campbell of Plymouth, who is the director of a famous Michigan race, the Press On Regardless Rally, which begins in Detroit and covers much of Michigan.

Campbell more or less fell into directing this year's rally by winning the event the last two years at the festival.

But this year he'll be on the sidelines for the rally, which will begin at Farmington High School.

"We hope to finish in about two hours, in time for the fireworks," Campbell said. The rally is not a race, but is instead a "fun" event. The whole family can enter, even with a stationwagon.

The rally is a type of gimmick rally, where the driver judges to make their selections even though these two were outstanding.

With darkness the Queen faded away and another wonderful event came to an end - never to be forgotten.

JOHN and HILDA Deamars are the English aunt and uncle (even though somewhat younger in years than Betty) who come over to visit here - this is their seventh trip.

This is their second home which they love dearly.

Of course Charlie and Betty also go over to visit them in England. This time the

About five check points will be set up. Entrants must pay a \$4 fee, but can win \$50 first prize, \$25 second prize or \$10 third prize. Profits from the rally will go to the Founders Festival board.

These are "minimum" awards, Campbell said.

Those wishing to enter the rally should begin gathering at the high school by about 6 p.m., Campbell said. "We can accommodate up to 200 cars, the way I figure it. But the later they start the later they will finish."

## wood creek farms

By ANNE M. PHILLIPS MA 6-6335

What a trip on the Williamsburg Queen!

Yes, the river boats are still operating. The Williamsburg Queen was in port on Mattituck in Southfield last week so some hundred of Bill and Helen Weightman's old friends and neighbors gathered there for a levee.

Many boarded the Queen to make sure their accommodations would be satisfying. There was much visiting, singing, and a wonderful meal provided by our fine restaurateur - Dick Carlson.

It was a costume party with many fine and original ones including several authentic costumes of over a hundred years ago. Marj Kreider wore a chocolate brown dress of a great aunt; I wore my grandmother's chocolate brown wedding gown; there

were others in lighter colors. Prizes were awarded for the most original costumes.

Maxine Carlson won the women's prize and John Deamars, Betty Brown's uncle, won the men's prize. It must have been difficult for the judges to make their selections even though these two were outstanding.

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Deamars arrived June 22 and will leave on their return trip Aug. 3.

David and Harriett Goldman returned from a 10 day trip to Colorado just in time to make the Williamsburg levee. They flew to Denver to attend the marriage of their son Alan now Dr. Alan Jay Goldman, to Shari Nan Levitas of New York.

The young couple will reside in Denver where Alan is doing his Residency at the St. Joseph Hospital in Internal Medicine. The new Mrs. Goldman is a nurse at the same hospital.

After the wedding festivities Dave and Harriett rented a car and motored through the Rocky Mountains before returning to Denver for the flight home.

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