

# Farmington Observer

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## Hills Council will pay in discrimination case

By STEVE BARNABY  
Farmington editor

The Farmington Hills city council has gone public in its sex discrimination case settlement with Community Service Officer Bonnie Swadling.

In a 5-0 vote, the council agreed to pay Ms. Swadling \$75,000 in an out-of-court settlement.

Mayor Earl Oppenheimer said the payment wasn't an admission of guilt. It was to pay the \$75,000, he said, than to incur legal costs in a trial which could be higher.

Voting for payment were Oppenheimer and councilmembers Joe Alkatech, Jan Dolan, Cathy Jones and Joanne Smith. Councilmembers Joanne Soronen and Keith Deacon were absent.

Although council voted to issue the check this week, it had met on April 12 in secret session to ratify the agreement.

The settlement was made earlier that day between Ms. Swadling's and the city's attorneys before Federal District Court Judge Patricia Boyle in a pre-trial conference.

Ms. Swadling had charged she was denied a police officer's job because of her sex.

"Perhaps we should have fought this case as a matter of principle," Oppenheimer said at last week's council session. "But the cost involved is horrendous."

ALKATECHES WARNED that because the council paid the out-of-court settlement, it didn't mean the city would be "easy prey" in the future for other persons wishing to file suit.

"I can't emphasize enough that under different circumstances, we would have gone another route," he said.

The suit originally was filed when George Majores was city manager and Ronald Holko was police chief. Both have left city employment.

Mrs. Smith said the city should examine the employment situation in the police department, saying that although the city has a non-discrimination policy, few women do work in that department.

One woman was a Farmington Hills police officer.

"Some city departments are heavily laden with women. There are many fine young women who could be in the police department," said Mrs. Smith.

The 23-year-old Ms. Swadling filed suit in July 1977, contending her rights were violated when the police depart-

ment failed to promote her to a position as a police officer.

Ms. Swadling was hired as a CSO in October 1975 under the federal Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). Three police cadets at the time were transferred into the CSO division when a federal grant for the cadet program expired.

All three cadets were hired into the Hills department and sent to the police academy without further testing. When another spot in the department opened, Ms. Swadling said she expected to be hired.

## Scherrer refuses to discuss assets

By MARY GNIEWEK

Farmington Hills attorney P. Scott Scherrer took the Fifth Amendment Friday morning at the first meeting of creditors held before Judge Harry Hackett in Federal Bankruptcy Court in Detroit.

Scherrer, 30, refused to discuss his assets, reported to be \$1,160,000. Some 50 creditors are involved.

It was the first legal step taken since Scherrer was forced into involuntary bankruptcy by three creditors in April. He has since consented to the bankruptcy first initiated by Max McKinney, Victoria Banka and Mark Staniszeski through their attorney, Irving August of Birmingham.

"After the bankruptcy, priority claims will be paid first. Then the money will be divided on a pro-rata basis," August said.

"Considering the nature, this case

may take considerable time. Well in excess of a year."

The bankruptcy has no effect on dozens of criminal charges filed against Scherrer since his arrest by Farmington Hills and Michigan State police March 15.

Scherrer was slapped with 50 warrants related to bogus municipal bond sales and land investment deals that involve about 80 people in Oakland County and Farmington Hills investigators said the schemes ran in excess of \$3 million.

"HIS FINANCIAL dealings must be thoroughly investigated," Judge Hackett said Friday. "The trustee must obtain all of his (Scherrer's) books and records and recover the money for his creditors."

Trustee Herbert Keidan said Friday's action was the first legal proceeding set forth under bankruptcy.

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Color show

Spring may have passed us by, but summer is in hot pursuit. The time is ripe for planting summer flowers and getting vegetable gardens under way. Some indoor gardens are already in kaleidoscopic bloom as Lynda Jaffe found at a recent flower show. (Staff photo by Charlie Kidd)

## School secretary to retire

### She caught every word

By MARY GNIEWEK

Bea Schofield discovered something about herself in 1966. She found out that after a 27-year absence from the work force, she was able to pick up where she left off without skipping a beat.

"I was surprised it wasn't hard to make the adjustment," said Mrs. Schofield, who is secretary to Farmington School Superintendent Lewis Schulman.

"Of course I typed papers for my children when they were in college, and I kept up with my shorthand by using it to take down recipes," she said.

Mrs. Schofield gave up her profession as a legal secretary and court reporter in Greenup, Ky., when her husband, Elroy, was transferred to Oxford, Mich., because of his job. A move to Redford Township, five children, and nine grandchildren later, she is responsible for the routine tasks associated with operating the school district.

She must prepare all board of education notices, agendas, minutes and reports. She attends all board meetings to record and transcribe the minutes, which she takes down in shorthand.

"When I was a court recorder, I could get down every word. I can still get down almost every word," she said. Her job also includes explaining board policy to the public and maintaining reams of files at the central office, 32500 Skiauwasee.

AFTER NEARLY 13 years' employment in the district, Mrs. Schofield plans to retire next month. She began as secretary to Farmington Junior High principal Alton Bennett and moved to the central office in 1968 as secretary to then-assistant superintendent Marius Van Ameyde.

"Bea is more than an executive secretary. She is an extension of the board and myself," said superintendent Schulman. "She carries on the work of the district in a professional manner with finesse, wit and charm."

Dealing with the public is also part of her job.

"If parents have a problem, they want to talk to the superintendent. When there was a teachers' strike a few years ago, the phones were ringing off the wall," she recalled. "But sometimes we get a call commending us for something. Those are always nice."

Mrs. Schofield said board trustee meetings have calmed over the years as new members have joined the policy making board.

"This board greatly compliments each other. There was a time when tempers flared easily. Sometimes meetings went to 1:45 a.m. We seldom got out before midnight," she said of the sessions that would begin at 8 p.m.

As far as students go, Mrs. Schofield doesn't think they've changed much over the years.

"WHEN I WAS at the junior high, I remember parents were called if their boy's hair was too long or their girl's skirts were too short. Those things have changed, of course, but basically I think kids are the same today."

Though she still considers Kentucky her home, Mrs. Schofield and her husband, who retired last year, will continue to live in their Redford Township home.

"We've been in Michigan 40 years — we're not going to move now," she said. A party in her honor is scheduled for May 22 at the Botsford Inn in Farmington Hills.

## Youths 'adopt' towns

### Mayor Joey takes office

By MARY GNIEWEK

Mayors come in all shapes and sizes, but 10-year-old Joey Stewart of Farmington is probably the youngest person to ever serve as a top city administrator.

The Flanders Elementary School fifth grader played hockey last Wednesday to tend to official business in Keego Harbor. His day included meetings with city department heads, a stop at the fire station, and lunch with other city officials.

Joey returned home with an official proclamation from Keego Harbor's full-time Mayor Robert Whitmore and a key to the city too big for his pocket.

Joey's one-day adventure from grammar school to city government was part of a school-wide project designed to familiarize students with their home state in honor of upcoming Michigan Week (May 20-26).

All 320 kindergarten through sixth graders at Flanders school in Farmington wrote letters to the mayors of different towns or cities in Michigan, asking to be made an honorary citizen May 9 to coincide with the school's old-time country fair.

To date, 230 city officials have responded to the youngsters' letters with proclamations, phone calls, written material about their towns, plus an array of extra goodies — like books, candy, and invitations to visit the "adopted" towns.

"We have 209 proclamations hanging in the hallways," said principal Weldon Petz, who came up with the idea. "The response has been unbelievable."

HIGHLAND TWP. MAYOR Thomas Dunleavy came to Flanders May 9 to personally present two proclamations, for Clyde and Highland, to the students

who contacted him. The first-grader who wrote to Mayor Dunleavy began his letter: "Dear Clyde."

"We got calls from as far away as Iron Mountain in the Upper Peninsula," Petz said. "The Mayor of St. Ignace sent his boy two pounds of fudge."

"Some youngsters were invited to be guests of their adopted cities for a weekend, some will be parade marshals this summer, some mayors sent books for our media center," Petz continued.

Every student was told to choose a city they had visited on vacation, or a town their family ancestors hailed from, or a place they wanted to learn about. No duplications were allowed. Only one slipped by. Two students wrote to the mayor of Hell. The mayor solved the dilemma by appointing one youth the mayor for a day, and the other an honorary citizen.

"The project took on dimensions in different ways. For many, it was a first opportunity to write a business letter. They learned about a new place," said Petz. "Children have been reading the

proclamations on the walls instead of going outside at recess time."

A BROWSE OF the displayed letters revealed that Mayor John Monahan of Hudson invited Michael Waker to Mayors Exchange Day later in the month.

Iron Mountain Mayor John O'Donnell sent Debbie Law a hardcover book called, "Born from Iron." Belding Mayor Roger Lakin declared last Wednesday "Aaron Sims Day" and invited the youngster to "come in on any day for a key to the city."

Mayor E.P. Harris of Coopersville wrote first-grader Billy Senior: "If you ever visit Coopersville, I will have the police chief give you a ride around town in the cruiser, and maybe you can even blow the horn."

Holland City Manager Terry Hofmeyer declared third-grader Adam Krause an honorary member of the Tulip Festival Committee — with all rights and privileges extended.



School Superintendent Lew Schulman describes his secretary, Bea Schofield (above), as "an extension of the board" who "carries on the work of the school district in a professional manner with finesse, charm and wit."

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### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A longtime problem is finally coming to light. Read Louise Okrusky's report on sexual harassment on Page 2A.