

Caseloads growing heavier for city attorneys

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AMONG THE CASES currently pending against Farmington Hills are: a zoning dispute centering on the height of a ham radio tower; four cases stemming from a single auto accident, and a claim for \$20 million in damages to compensate a motorcyclist who "allegedly struck a chuckhole or other alleged defect in the road, causing plaintiff's motorcycle to strike a mailbox... and is apparently confined to a wheelchair."

Several video games operators are challenging in court the license fees charged by the city. A Royal Oak police officer injured by rice pellets from a shotgun during practice maneuvers is suing Farmington Hills, as is the owner of Mulwood Apartments. Mulwood tenants allege the city is discriminat-

ing against them because it will not provide free rubbish pick up.

Bob Sake Oldmobile Inc. is protesting a rule prohibiting its display of flags and pennants.

Bibeau, who also represents West Bloomfield Township and the City of Sylvan Lake, supposes that "the fact we're more populated here and more sophisticated than in other areas, may account for why we're getting a lot of lawsuits. Another factor is 'the fact we are now a city, and quote, unquote, a deep-pocket city. Plaintiffs just sue everybody in sight.' Road commission attorneys say their claims over the last decade or half decade have increased tremendously, he added.

The U-D law school graduate, however, doesn't anticipate as heavy a caseload in 1983, as several suits filed in 1982 arose from the severe flood of

October, 1981 and four cases deal with one auto fatality.

Dubin and Kelly point to the loosening of governmental immunity as still another impetus for litigants.

"Governments used to be completely immune from liability," said Kelly. "Juries started giving bigger and bigger awards, and the courts have nar-

rowed things down. It's become a monster."

Agreed Dubin, "people now can bring certain kinds of claims against cities. Prior to this time they were barred as a result of immunity."

THE ONSLAUGHT of legal advertising has increased accessibility to le-

gal services, and lowered legal rates for routine legal services such as divorce, bankruptcy and certain probate matters, added Dubin.

Still another contributor to city attorneys' growing caseloads has arisen because of generous juries, Bibeau said.

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Democrats to meet

The Farmington Democratic Club meets at 8 tonight at the Botsford Inn at Grand River and Eight Mile roads.

Goals for the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills in 1983 will be discussed by Farmington Mayor Alton Bennett and Farmington Hills Mayor Fred Hughes.

Also on the agenda are: upcoming district and state conventions, election of officers for 1983, communications, and report on county Democratic convention and meetings.

This years dues, \$3, can be paid at the meeting.

Council kicks off Week of Champions

The Week of State Champions was kicked off Monday by Farmington Hills City Council members who presented a proclamation to representatives from Mercy and Harrison High Schools.

The Marlins recently captured the state Class A championship in basketball, while the Hawks now reign as state Class A champions in football.

Mercy's starting five - Amy DeMatia, Annette Ruggiero, Mary Rosowski, Carolyn Bert and Sarah Basford - their coach, Larry Baker, and principal, Sr. Mary Thompson, were on hand, as were Harrison lineman and co-captain Tim Smigilecki, kicker Dave Blackmer, quarterback Ken Klah, line coach Bob Sutton and principal Jim Gieger.

Birthing unit to open

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are interested in natural childbirth. Applicants must take Lamaze classes, classes at Botsford and must have three meetings with hospital staff.

Muncey and Cox said interest in the unit is strong, even before the scheduled opening Jan. 23. Eleven people have indicated they want to use the unit, Muncey said.

Denise Richardson, a secretary at

the hospital, said she planned to use the unit when her baby is born in March.

"It's not all bright lights and sterilized equipment and people you don't know," Richardson said. "It would be nice to know everyone, and it's really a relaxed atmosphere."

Muncey said the unit hopes to make childbirth the happy experience it should be.

"I'm looking forward to someone bringing in balloons and hats and having a real live birthday party," she said with a smile.

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