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ACLU examines house-party law

'I personally feel that it (the ordinance) is constitutional and it does guarantee the rights of individuals.'

— William Dwyer, police chief

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

American Civil Liberties Union is investigating the Farmington Hills "house party" ordinance.

"We are doing some research to see if there has been a constitutional violation," said Dan Avramin, legal assistance chairman for the ACLU's Oakland County Branch in Birmingham.

The ACLU's September decision to investigate the ordinance was prompted

by a complaint from a Farmington Hills resident, Avramin said.

While suppliers can be prosecuted under other statutes, the new law metes out stiff penalties for adults 17 or older who knowingly allow minors to consume alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs at open house parties under their control — and who fail to take preventive steps.

The Farmington Hills City Council adopted the ordinance in May after Families in Action's Farmington chapter

lobbied for its passage as the high school prom and graduation party season was drawing near.

IN JULY, the Farmington City Council unanimously rejected adopting a similar ordinance. In doing so, the council questioned if the ordinance could be enforced.

Aware of the ACLU's investigation, Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said, "I personally feel that it (the ordinance) is constitutional and it

does guarantee the rights of individuals."

The police department's policy toward suspected ordinance violations requires officers to "use good judgment and discretion," Dwyer said. "I think we have a good and sound policy for our officers."

In most situations, Dwyer said, Hills officers have given warnings on suspected first violations of the ordinance.

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Student takes to the sky

By Lisa Simon
staff writer

Learning to fly is innate for some, but others have to spend years mastering the skill.

One novice pilot, Farmington High School junior Patrick Techudi, has been flying for just over a year. On Aug. 14, his 16th birthday, he made his first solo flight.

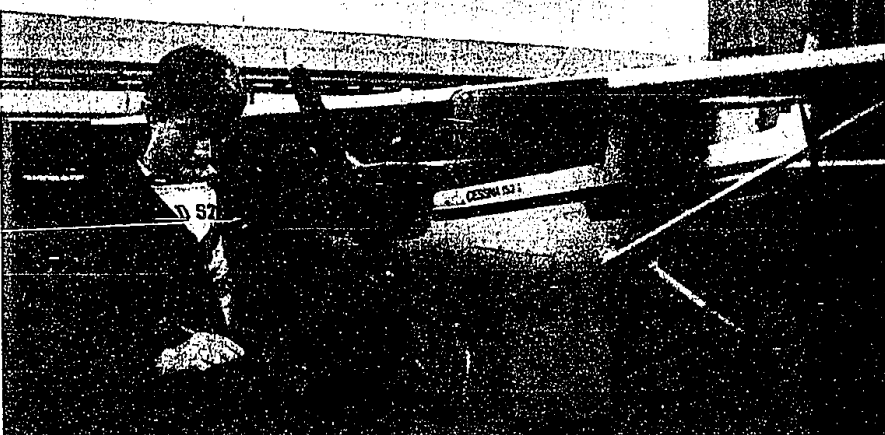
John Dowling, Techudi's grandfather and a retired Republic Airlines pilot, helped his grandson's acquire a passion for flying.

Dowling pays for flying lessons and plane rental. Dowling made his first solo flight on his 16th birthday, and he encouraged his grandson to do the same.

Nasty weather prevailed on Techudi's birthday, and he was unsure his long-awaited solo flight would take place.

TSCHUDI MADE A few practice runs with his instructor, St. LeVine, a former Air Force pilot in World War II and now a Livonia Public Schools teacher. Then Techudi rolled out on the runway in his two-seater, a Cessna 152.

His parents heard the New Hudson Airport loudspeaker announce that a soloing student was preparing



Farmington High School junior Patrick Techudi, outside his Cessna 152.

for takeoff. It was about 8 p.m. "I was excited to go out there (in the air)," Techudi said.

Once Techudi was airborne, he took 15 minutes to complete his flight pattern, an organized route in which turns are made at specific altitudes. Since that day, he has soloed twice more.

When he turns 17, Techudi will be

eligible for a license enabling him to take passengers.

IN ADDITION TO enjoying flying lessons, Techudi is a cadet in the Civil Air Patrol's Starfire Composite Squadron, an official auxiliary of the Air Force.

Through membership in the club, Techudi and 30 other Farmington High School students meet once a

week for flight-oriented activities. One of 70 Michigan squadrons, the club offers instruction in aerospace education, leadership training and military bearing.

A squadron technical sergeant, Techudi is part of a drill team that participated in a national competition in Illinois. The five-minute innovative drills are "like military

dancing," Techudi said.

After high school, Techudi plans to attend the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., to study aeronautical engineering. He chose a tough academic junior schedule as preparation.

Techudi enjoys flying. "I like it. It's so different than being on the ground. It's like a bird."

RANDY BORG/staff photographer

Seat belts on school buses debated

By Chris Mather
staff writer

Should students be required to buckle up when they get on a schoolbus?

No, according to many local school administrators and bus drivers. Buses are designed in such a way to make the vehicle safe in an accident — and there

have been no fatalities involving children inside a bus in at least 30 years, they contend.

"They're turning the safest vehicle on the road into a death trap," contends Farmington bus driver Mickey Ayers. "I see it as a problem in case of an evacuation."

But many parents, including a woman

from Rochester who believes her son escaped injury in a bus accident because he was wearing a seat belt, are joining the push to have seat belts required on buses.

Two bills have been introduced in the State Legislature to require the seat belts, and three school districts, including Rochester, are conducting a pilot

test of schoolbuses with belts.

Safety laws require buses to be designed in compartments and some school officials, like Robert Hubley, business manager of Bloomfield Hills School District, think that is enough.

"THE ISSUE is becoming political," Hubley said. "The bottom line is what are you piloting with the belts in the bus? There hasn't been a person internal accident to a child in a bus in years."

Compartmentalized buses have a six-inch foam covering ahead and below the student as well as to the right and to the left.

Some opponents of the belts say the school buses aren't strong enough underneath to fasten the belts. Others point to a cost, \$2,500 by one bus company, to outfit a bus with belts.

And if the bus overturned, the students wouldn't be able to get out of the

bus soon enough, opponents contend.

"We have had discussion for the last two years at PTA and school board meetings," Bloomfield Hills superintendent Roger Garwood said. "There has been conflict over the issue."

STATE LEGISLATORS are about to join the debate. One bill which is under study would require that seat belts be installed on all buses sold in Michigan. The other would require all school bus passengers to buckle up.

A recent series of tests conducted by the Canadian government calls into question the safety of seat belts. In those tests a school bus with dummies belted in the seats was crashed into a concrete barrier at 50 miles per hour.

According to the results, the dummies wearing seat belts hit their heads on the seat ahead of them with a force

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On liquor

Pending tax boost sparks sales boom

By Lisa Simon
staff writer

A higher liquor tax caused a run on hard liquor in Farmington-area liquor stores Sept. 28-29. The state Legislature provided for a new 4 percent tax on liquor, effective Oct. 1.

Money generated by the state tax will be earmarked for expanding and updating Michigan tourism and recreation centers — and, as a result, for increasing state employment, said John Patrick, Michigan Liquor Control Commission operations analysis manager.

A higher federal floor tax on liquor also took effect Oct. 1. The \$10.55-per-gallon of liquor had been unchanged since the 1950s. The price was raised \$2 per proof gallon. Any hard liquor remaining in stock after Oct. 1 was subject to the new floor tax, Patrick said.

The majority of buyers Sept. 28-29 walked away with half gallons of the hard stuff, according to Farmington and Farmington Hills liquor retailers.

"The only time I've seen a rush like this, volume-wise, is the day before Christmas," said Albert Abdelnour, owner of Meadows Party Store in Farmington.

BUSINESS ON that weekend was five times greater than it would be on a normal day, Abdelnour said. Half gallons of every type of liquor — vodka, gin, whiskey — were bought, he said.

"It was 95 percent prepared for (the rush). There's a few holes on my shelves," Abdelnour said. "I knew it was coming. I planned ahead."

"It was a good time to sell. People took advantage (of the situation)," said Dave Baroli, owner of Grand Square Liquor Shop in Farmington Hills. "My last (liquor) order was \$11,000. I ordered in advance."

Customer bills averaged \$100-200 for the weekend, Baroli said.

"Never, not even on Christmas Eve, has it ever been (sales) like this," said Sammy Dennis, owner of the Grape Vine in Farmington Hills.

Patrick said that liquor sales were evident even on the weekend, he said. "I believe sales will go down a little in the coming months. We know this was going to happen."

"I have to restock," said Dennis, not

ing that his liquor stock was depleted.

A BILL of \$873 was the largest weekend sale at Wines Tasters Number One, Farmington Hills, according to owner Darrell Marshall. Quite a few customers spent \$200-300, but the average sale was \$90-100, he said.

Half gallons of hard liquor were what most people bought, Marshall said. Last week, he said he didn't have a single half gallon left.

As for area restaurants, O'Sheehan's Tavern in Farmington Hills and Duncavy's Pub and Grub of Farmington raised prices on alcoholic drinks 25 cents. Glenbrook of Farmington Hills raised drink prices 15 cents.

McFrocks of Farmington Hills raised drink prices 15 cents but are running specials all month on both beer and wine.

Cowley's Village Inn in downtown Farmington did not raise drink prices. Drink prices at Duncavy's Seafood Tavern in Farmington Hills remain unchanged, although prices were raised several months ago when liquor liability insurance rates skyrocketed, restaurant officials said.

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