

# Parental group's concern: youth violence

Continued from Page 1

"They have personal problems. They take revenge on their own private feelings," Efstahiou said about the teenagers who have made the restaurant a hangout.

However parents, police and merchants describe the problem, the issue appears to be growing murkier as criticism and disagreement plague attempts by police and parents to work together in solving the problem.

Angry about what he considers sensationalized publicity prompted by concerned parents — Dwyer believes the problem has been "blown out of proportion" by news media reports.

Despite "sensationalized" reports of alleged gang violence, including the killing of dogs and cats, Dwyer denies that the groups of teens are honest-to-goodness organized gangs lying in wait for Farmington Hills youths.

"There are no gangs. When you talk about gangs, you are talking about knives and guns and shootings," Dwyer said. "We are not denying the fact that there is a problem. We have been active in dealing with the problem."

IN FACT, Dwyer believes parents, with the help of the media, are making more of the problem than exists.

"We have had, like any other city, some isolated incidents, such as assaults. No one has been hospitalized but there have been some injuries," he said.

West Bloomfield Township Police Sgt. Michael Madigan says you can't totally blame the teens because they have nothing else to do but congregate. "We don't see anything gang-related. They are still congregating at Americana West, McDonald's and the 7-Eleven," he said.

While some teenagers have been assaulted with baseball bats, much of the problem is bullying, disruptive behavior, loitering, shooting obscenities, and terrorizing merchants and employees, according to parents, merchants and police.

Parents say they are unhappy with Dwyer's reaction to the teen problem as well as police efforts in controlling disruptive, violent and destructive behavior along Orchard Lake Road.

Their dissatisfaction and fear that the problem will worsen prompted parents, such as Mary Ann Zarb — the mother of a 17-year-old football player who has been assaulted twice by other teenagers — to form Parents Against Violence.

DESPITE PLEAS from Dwyer

to postpone a planned public meeting, the group will meet with an estimated 50 members, will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday, at North Farmington High School.

Whether the meeting will be at North Farmington remains to be seen. Farmington Public Schools Assistant Superintendent Lynn Nutter said he is concerned that people will think the teen problems are also occurring at the high schools if the meeting is held on school property.

"Neither at Harrison or North Farmington has there been incidents," Nutter said.

But Dwyer and City Manager William Costick met with North Farmington Principal Don Cowan and Harrison Principal Clayton Graham Friday to discuss concern about the teen incidents, Nutter said.

"The best we can understand is that the youngsters are from outside of the community," he added.

Parents maintain that violent teen gangs are hanging out in and near some Orchard Lake Road businesses — Tally Hall, Burger King, Taco Bell and Ram's Horn.

The alleged gangs, whose members are primarily from other communities, are bullying and beating Farmington Hills teenagers and claiming the retail corridor as "their turf," according to parents.

"A GANG of about 20-50 youths hang out on Orchard Lake and have told the kids to stay off Orchard Lake," Zarb said.

Her son suffered a broken hand after two assaults on him by teenagers.

"My son has never been bothered before," she said, adding other Farmington Hills teens have been hurt, one requiring stitches because of a head injury.

Efstahiou agrees with Zarb's description of teen activities. "We've been victimized."

Teens — about 30-40 of them at a time — enter his restaurant, complain, shout obscenities, fall to pay their bills, smash car windows and generally harass other customers and employees, Efstahiou said.

The teens allegedly vandalized one of the restaurant's restrooms last week, causing about \$500 in damage. Breaking up fights in his parking lot, calling police and watching the fights begin again is Efstahiou's latest headache.

"I am very, very concerned. They are gangs. They are 16-20 years old, and I think there are some from this area," Efstahiou said.

YET PARENTS and those teens

who have been assaulted are, in most cases, not contacting police or filing complaints because they are afraid of retaliation, Dwyer said.

But Dwyer also maintains the teen problems are not new and that police immediately took action when problems began to surface.

Last summer, when police became aware of problems with teens, particularly at Tally Hall, a task force was formed with beefed-up patrols on weekends.

As a result of the crackdown, police ticketed 43 people — juveniles and adults — on misdemeanor violations, such as obstructing public passage, improper conduct and disorderly conduct.

Although police patrols were reduced during the recent holidays, Dwyer said patrols will again be beefed-up to control the growing teen problem. But Dwyer said his actions are not in reaction to publicity.

Yet increased patrols are what parents and merchants appear to want. After all, Zarb said, "he (Dwyer) completely solved the problem in three weeks" when patrols were beefed-up in November.

At 7 p.m. Wednesday, at North Farmington High School.

WHEN ZARB contacted the Detroit-area news media to publicize the teen problem and scheduled the meeting, Dwyer — upset with the growing publicity — asked her to instead meet privately with police to avoid sensationalizing the problem.

"Quite frankly, I got upset. If the media is there, it won't be productive," Dwyer said. "I find it very unproductive . . . to work with the community when you make it quite a media event."

But Zarb disagrees. She has refused to cancel or reschedule this week's meeting and to meet privately with police. "It's not going to hurt us if people know what's going on," Zarb said.

Though Zarb and other parents have refused to meet with Dwyer, the police chief was expected to meet Friday with Farmington Public Schools officials and Orchard

KAIN CONFIRMED the effectiveness of heavy police patrol in controlling teen incidents.

"We have not had any problems with the kids since October when we called police," she said. "We feel we have quite a bit being done. And we continue to work with police on a weekly basis."

Increased police patrols is one subject parents and merchants plan to discuss at their meeting. While Zarb agrees with merchants and police that parental control over teenagers is an integral part of solving Orchard Lake Road problems, police help is also required.

"We want it to be the responsibility of the parents. But the police have to continue patrolling Orchard Lake Road," Zarb said. "They have to face up to the problem. Own up to the problem. Do something about it."

Yet police, merchants and school officials are hoping parents will take responsibility for their children — controlling their activities and working to solve what appears to be a growing antagonism between the cultural groups that are moving into the community.



Conny Efstahiou, owner of the Ram's Horn, stands near the door of one of the stalls in the men's room that was torn off, allegedly by rowdy youths.

RANDY BORG/Staff photographer

## Teen problem brings in media

Continued from Page 1

Lake merchants. Dwyer emphasized the Friday meetings were not scheduled in reaction to television, radio and newspaper publicity.

"I am not overreacting to a situation that has already been a problem," Dwyer said. "But I want to hear firsthand . . . I had not been personally called by any of the merchants 'so that we can be in unison as far as (determining) some of the problems.'"

When Dwyer realized television, radio stations and the newspapers were calling police officers, he decided to serve as department spokesman. Despite that move, the publicity has, to Dwyer's dismay, continued.

He is considering filing complaints against some media organizations for irresponsible and sensationalized coverage of a teen problem that has existed for quite some time, he said.

SOME OF the information reported about just last week, such as teen gangs killing dogs and cats, Dwyer said. His greatest fear is

that the publicity will "just draw negative people into the community. I think it's been blown out of proportion," he said.

Some merchants agree, some disagree.

Tally Hall manager Kim Kain wonders why there is so much publicity now about the teen problem when it has existed for quite awhile. No one seemed very concerned when Tally Hall was experiencing a problem — disruptive and disorderly behavior, disturbing the peace — with teens back in late October and November, Kain said.

In a three-week crackdown on disorderly and disruptive behavior, Farmington Hills police issued 43 misdemeanor tickets to both juveniles and adults. Of those ticketed, only 10 were from Farmington Hills. The tickets were issued to 23 adults and 21 juveniles ages 13-24. Average age was 17. Of the 43, 34 were males.

"The media didn't care then," Kain said.

### short takes

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion or are planning a new venture or project — and there's a Farmington-area business angle — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Farmington Observer readers. Send items to: Short takes, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

● **BUCKLE UP**  
Reliance Forms & Supplies Inc. in Farmington Hills is participating in a campaign launched by the National Business Forms Association (NBFA).

Entitled "A Form of Safety," the campaign's purpose is to encourage businesses to print the U.S. Department of Transportation's "Buckle up" logo in the studs and margins of the forms they produce and distribute.

NBFA officials and members believe the logo message — "safety belts save lives" — must be seen daily to be effective. By printing the logo on forms, they are hoping the logo's message will subliminally

get through to employees, clients, colleagues and others.

Jonathan Grant, Reliance Forms & Supplies president and co-owner, believes "millions of people deal with paycheck, sales slips and computer printouts every day — hopefully, this campaign will eventually help save millions of lives."

He added, "I hope to encourage our clients to have these logos printed on their forms as well."

● **MOVING UP**  
Dane Martin of Farmington Hills is a new project manager for Horton Cos., a design, construction and development firm based in Wixom.

He will be in charge of several projects, including employee and quality control facilities for Great Lakes Steel, Ecorse, and the new headquarters for Delval Corp., Novi. Martin has 15 years of experience as an engineer, estimator and project manager in residential, commercial and industrial design and construction.

● **SALES GOOD**  
A new national poll indicates that

sales in the North Central region, including Farmington Hills, will remain about the same as the previous period.

The survey, conducted by Sales Consultants International Inc., the country's largest search firm of sales and marketing professionals, asked 1,800 executives in companies across the country to project their hiring plans for the next six months.

A total of 41.5 percent of those surveyed in the North Central area indicated they were planning to expand their sales and marketing staffs during the next six months. Another 46.3 percent in the region said they would maintain present staff levels; 11.7 percent planned staff reductions.

This is a 4.1 point increase from the last six months for staff additions and a 1.1 point increase among those who planned to maintain staffs.

By comparison, 43 percent of those polled throughout the country were planning to increase staff size; 44.9 percent said they would maintain staff size; and 10.9 percent indicated possible staff reductions.

Mary Walsh of Sales Consultants of Farmington Hills felt the results showed a strong overall picture for the region.

"In the last half of 1986, we had a total projected employment picture of 88.5 percent. Our new projection is almost the same at 87.8 percent. This shows that employment opportunities in our region are still available and will continue to be such through the new year. We have to feel good about that despite some of the doom and gloom philosophies of economists."

"Our region falls in line with the rest of the nation. All of us realize how important the development of people skills really are in the marketing program," Walsh said.

Sales Consultants of Farmington Hills is part of the nationwide network of 100 Sales Consultants International offices in the country. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, Sales Consultants recruits qualified candidates for sales, sales management and marketing on a contingency basis, with fees paid by the client company only after a candidate has been hired.

● **HONORARY MEMBER**  
Dr. Charlotte Neuhäuser of Farm-

ington Hills, dean for the division of business administration and computer systems at Madonna College in Livonia, was named an honorary member of Delta Mu Delta National Honor Society.

● **MA BELL**  
Mary Jo Fiferak, local corporate affairs manager, said Michigan Bell is planning a series of meetings in early 1987 with contractors statewide to discuss what can be done to minimize damage to the company's underground facilities.

"With the advancements in telecommunications, two strands of fiber — less than the thickness of a single strand of hair — can transmit 8,000 telephone conversations at the same time," she said.

"A major cable cut has the potential to disrupt emergency calls to police, fire and hospitals. It can also cause millions of dollars in losses each year to businesses which rely heavily on computers and sending data — like insurance and brokerage firms, travel agencies and government offices and many others."

Under a statewide cooperative plan, contractors can notify utilities of their plans to dig, blast or drill with a single call to "MISS DIG."

### Farmington Observer

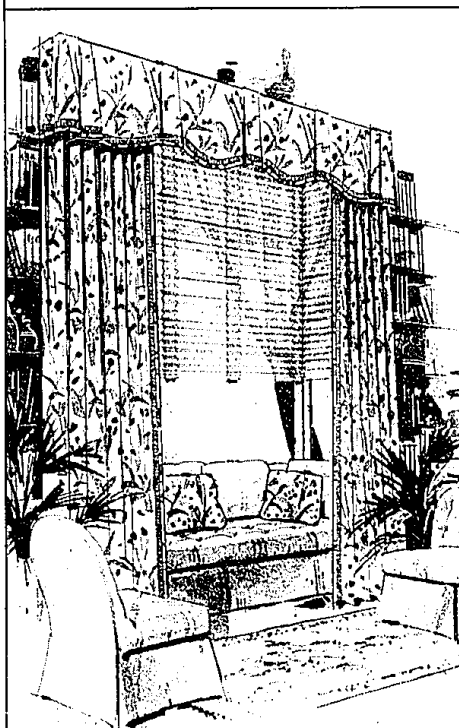
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