

Carrier ends 41 years of service

By Sue Buck

Four decades ago Leonard Weems went looking for a job out of doors. He found it as a postal carrier for the post office in Farmington Hills.

Recently, Weems' co-workers gathered to wish him adieu. He's retiring after 41 years of service. They reminisced about workdays with Weems, a Farmington Hills resident.

For 15 years Weems worked a mail route that began with the McAuley Center and Mercy Center on 11 Mile Road in Farmington Hills. The route, which took about four and a half hours to complete, took him to Ten Mile and Middlebelt, down Inkster and to Skye Drive.

"The people are just wonderful," Weems said. He's particularly fond of the Catholic nuns and their kindness.

Weems is known as a man always willing to volunteer for overtime, according to Jim Noud, a fellow mail carrier. Noud recalled when Weems volunteered to mop the concrete floor of a former postal annex 20 years ago. Weems and Noud were both paid \$4 an hour then.

"There isn't much that I wouldn't do for \$6 an hour," Weems reportedly said.

His willingness to work overtime is well-documented in memory. Noud also recalled a time when a former employee went berserk and flung mail into a man's room urinal and stormed off. Weems willingly became the retriever.

"He wasn't picky about overtime assignments," Noud said.

On a serious note, several years ago Weems was dining at a Hamtramck restaurant. A man was stabbed and was lying on the ground



ANN HEALRY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

All smiles: Mail carrier Leonard Weems, retiring after 40 years with the Post Office, shows his delight at the awards given him recently at the Farmington Hills Post Office.

outside. The attacker said to no one in particular that he had to get out of there.

The story goes that Weems — a former Golden Glove boxer and Army boxing champ who qualified for the Olympics in 1948 and 1952 — made sure that the attacker went nowhere.

He knocked him unconscious with one punch.

"Len is a man who always stood up for what

he felt was right," Noud said.

Robert Willert, the officer-in-charge, said teasingly that Weems will have to give up his habit of swimming at Mercy Center on his lunch hour to keep fit.

In 1972, Weems gained the limelight as the first Detroit-area carrier to wear a safety-style shorts on duty when postal regulations on attire were eased. The Farmington Hills postal archive still holds a newspaper clipping about Weems.

Never one to call in sick, Weems recently turned in 2,600 hours of sick time that was credited toward his retirement.

"That's quite an accomplishment for an employee," Willert said. "He's a real asset. I really hate to lose him."

Additionally, Weems received his Million Mile plaque for driving with no accidents.

"I'm just doing my job and giving people the service they are entitled to," Weems said.

"When you think about it, that's all we have to offer people . . . to give them service."

Weems and his wife, Beverly, have four children: Cameron, Lawrence, David and Claudette.

Since Beverly Weems has two more years to retirement, Weems knows that he will be busy with the "honey-do" jobs for which he enthusiastically hasn't had the time.

The couple eventually hope to make their retirement home in Tennessee.

Joining Weems in a retirement celebration were window clerk Guy Bowman of Birmingham and Elizabeth Garcia, a Novi resident, each retiring after 22 years and 19 years respectively.

Retirees received postal certificates as well as gift certificates to the Steak and Ale Restaurant.

INKWELL

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every four books read, an incentive prize is given. Students reading eight books will be invited to a special author program, featuring Jamie Gilson. Any student reading 14 books will receive a hard-cover book.

PERFORMANCE

Marc Thomas and puppet friend Max the Moose will be performing at 7:15 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 28, at Kenbrook Elementary School. Marc and Max will also perform 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 28, at Flanders Elementary School. The program, "Give Yourself a Star," is a designed to build self-esteem and features original music. Thomas is a Farmington resident and has performed at coffee houses and local open stages. In 1991, he formed Joyful Heart Music record company and has released two albums: "Max the Moose" and "Beautiful Moose."

HONOR STUDENT

Zaid Zakaria of Farmington was named to the Dean's List at Wayland Academy, college-preparatory school in Beaver Dam, Wis. To be on the Dean's List, a student must have a grade point average of 3.60 to 3.99. Zakaria is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ismail Zakaria of Karachi, Pakistan. His state-wide guardian is his sister, Farah Zakaria of Farmington.

FORENSICS

The Warner Forensics Team competed in the Michigan Inter-scholastic Forensic Middle Level Tournament Jan. 9 at the University of Michigan. The team entered a multiple interpretation. Each student received a certificate of merit for superior honors and the team received a fourth-place trophy. Those on the team include: Erika London, Jenny Ehland, Jenny Lubin, Leslie Schrok, Shayna Levine, Daniel Katz and Samantha Rollinger.

BOOK PARADE

Fourth- and fifth-graders in the Farmington Public Schools are participating in the seventh annual Book Parade. The reading incentive program started in the first week of the month and asks students to read 14 books from a list of 16 titles in eight weeks. Students must prove they have read the book in an interview. For

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chairman & professor OB Gyn University of Michigan

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