

Minor Injuries



Rollover: Farmington Hills firefighters extricated a family of four from their car that overturned one eastbound I-696, east of Orchard Lake Saturday morning. The Northville residents received minor injuries and were transported to Providence Hospital in Southfield.

Judge from page A1

sified as felonies and gone onto Oakland County Circuit Court, will remain in 47th District Court. The burden is coupled with a civil caseload that rocketed from 1,870 in 1997 to 3,600 last year.

"From a workload standpoint, we're under it," Walsh said. "We need some help."

The third judge plea has been heard and acted on in the past. At one point, a the House and Senate passed a bill for additional district court judges but it never became reality, Parker said.

From a planning standpoint, court officials need to know if a third judge is in their future, Parker said. Though sympathet-

ic, Raczowski and Bullard didn't hold out hope.

"The best thing you can do right is not plan for a third judgeship," Raczowski said.

Both legislators were to push for a third judge. Before judges are added, though, Gov. John Engler wants some subtracted in those district courts where caseloads are diminishing, Raczowski said.

Yet vacated seats for judgeships in those district courts continue to be filled. Those seats could have been removed, "but it didn't happen," Walsh said.

"We're being held hostage because of the inability of those in Lansing to decide what judgeships should be eliminated."

With jurisdictional changes, even district courts with light caseloads are going to see an increase, Parker said. The governor needs to include circuit courts when factoring caseloads, Walsh said.

Added criminal cases also means additional costs in terms of court appointed attorneys; probation services and jury and witness fees. Court-appointed attorneys alone could run \$22,500 more a year.

One option is to go back and ask both cities for more money, "but they don't have it," Walsh said.

Groundhogs from page A1

A woodchuck is actually a rodent that grows to 8-10 pounds and has a short tail. "Actually, they look like a beaver without a tail, or a big squirrel," Derek said. "Most people who move out here don't know what they are."

Woodchucks are vegetarians, feasting on flowers and their favorite mulberries or grape vines. They also like to climb trees and gnaw, but not like a beaver. Babies - called chucklets by Derek - usually come in May or June.

Woodchucks or groundhogs love the suburbs. "We create thousands of places for them to have families," Derek said.

And the favorite spot for a woodchuck is a deck, especially one that is not enclosed at the bottom. "It's a ready-made roof," Derek added.

Residents, many whom have never seen a woodchuck up close, get scared when they do see one and often call Derek for help. But the animals are relatively harmless as long as you don't

bug them.

"The woodchuck is a real burrower," Derek said, adding that they also like to live in wood-piles.

He urges residents to enclose their decks, not so much to keep the woodchucks out, but to keep the next family, generally skunks, from moving in.

"We provide something these animals like," Derek added.

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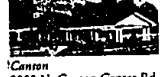
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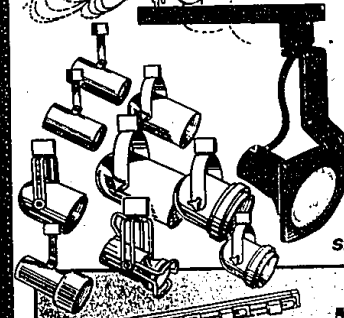
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