

The Farmington Observer

HOW TO REACH US

Susan Rosiek,
Publisher
(734) 953-2100
srosiek@oe.homecomm.net

Hugh Gallagher,
Managing Editor
(734) 951-2149
hgallagher@oe.homecomm.net

Joanne Malliszewski,
Editor
(248) 477-5450
jmalliszewski@oe.homecomm.net

Jim Smith,
Reporter
(248) 477-5450
jsmith@oe.homecomm.net

Mary Rodrigue,
Community Life Editor
(248) 477-5450
mrodrigue@oe.homecomm.net

Anna Lipar,
Ad Representative
(734) 953-2167
alipar@oe.homecomm.net

Bill Bresler,
Photographer
(248) 477-5450
bbresler@oe.homecomm.net

Michelle Austin,
Home Delivery Manager
(734) 953-2242

Dan O'Meara,
Sports Editor
(734) 953-2141
domeara@oe.homecomm.net

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New officer starts 'dream job' in his hometown

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@oe.homecomm.net

When Richard Friess was growing up in the Farmington area, he thought he wanted to become a police officer. And now, to be hired by his hometown city is almost beyond words for the 35-year-old.

"I always wanted to be a police officer and to be a police officer and firefighter in my own town is a dream come true," said Friess, following Friday morning's ceremony, where he was sworn in as the 22nd full-time member of the Farmington Public Safety Department.

Friess already is a certified police officer. Soon he will attend the Oakland County Fire Academy. Members of the Farmington Public Safety Department work in the roles of police officer, firefighter and emergency medical technicians.

Public Safety Director Gary Ose introduced Friess and praised him for having a "tremendous background." Friess then was officially sworn in by Janice Schmidt, of the city clerk's office.

Friess, a 1983 graduate of Farmington High School and resident of Farmington Hills, was hired to succeed the recently retired Officer Hilton Hyde.

Also Friday, in the Farmington City Council chambers, Allison Pennington and Danielle



STAFF PHOTO BY NELA DANKER

Welcome: Farmington Public Safety dispatchers Allison Pennington (left) and Danielle Weber and Officer Richard Friess were introduced during Friday morning's ceremony.

FARMINGTON

Weber were introduced as the department's newest dispatchers.

On hand for the ceremonies were Friess' parents, Maiga and George of Farmington Hills, several members of the public safety department and Bill Hartsock, mayor of Farmington.

Hartsock commented on how Friess recited the Law Enforcement Oath of Honor, which other department members voluntarily did in 1999.

"It really touched on the fact that it is an honorable profession," Hartsock said. "It means they respect the authority that's

'I always wanted to be a police officer and to be a police officer and firefighter in my own town is a dream come true.'

Officer Richard Friess
—Farmington Public Safety

bestowed on them and they'll work with the community for everyone's benefit."

According to the oath, officers "will never betray my badge, my integrity, my character, or the public trust."

Dispatchers Pennington and Weber both said they have been warmly welcomed in their new jobs, which they began in February and April, respectively.

"I'm pleased I made the decision to come here," said Pennington, who came to Farmington in February following a total of nine years experience as a dispatcher in the Plymouth and Plymouth Township police departments. "We received a warm welcome and are impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the department."

Goss said there now are 22 full-time officers, one part-time officer, four dispatchers, one records supervisor and 12 reserves in public safety.

Here are the newest members of Farmington's Public Safety Dept.

Richard Friess - Public Safety Officer

Richard Friess was hired as a public safety officer on May 22, 2000. Friess is 35 and a Farmington Hills resident. His mother and father, Maiga and George Friess, are also Farmington Hills residents.

Friess is a graduate of Farmington High (1983), the University of Michigan (B.S. 1987), the University of Miami, Florida (J.D. 1993), and the Wayne County Regional Police Academy at the Schoolcraft College Reddick Center (January 1999).

He graduated second out of 40 students in the police academy. Friess joins the department

after having worked for the past year with the Hamtramck Police Department. He is currently in the field training officer program and will work with several experienced officers over the next 12 weeks.

Beginning Aug. 14, Friess will attend the Oakland County Fire Academy. The 12-week program will provide him with certification as a firefighter I & II, a medical first responder and training in hazardous materials.

Allison Pennington - Public Safety Dispatcher
Allison Pennington was hired as a dispatcher on Feb. 7, 2000.

She is 28, married and lives in Garden City. She is a graduate of Garden City High School and has attended Schoolcraft Community College. She is the daughter of Patricia and Robert Krause, residents of Wolverine, Mich.

Pennington has successfully completed the dispatcher training program and is now a probationary dispatcher. Pennington comes to the department from the Plymouth and Plymouth Township police departments, having worked as a dispatcher for the past eight years. Her husband, Timothy Pennington, is a city of Westland police officer.

Danielle Weber - Public Safety Dispatcher

Danielle Weber was hired as a dispatcher on April 24, 2000. She is 22, single, and a resident of Wixom. She is a graduate of Fenton High School.

Weber brings dispatching experience to the department, having worked in a similar capacity at Genesee Valley Security in Flint. Most recently, she worked as a dispatcher for Twelve Oaks Mall Security.

She is currently in the dispatcher training program, working side-by-side with an experienced dispatcher.

North Farmington High School mourns death of 'quiet' junior

A 17-year-old North Farmington High School student died Sunday in Detroit of an apparent heart attack.

According to school Principal Rick Jones, Thomas L. Stassinopoulos, a junior, had a heart defect that may have led to his death.

He described the teen as a quiet student who worked hard in the family business and had a good sense of humor.

Teacher Derek Day said Stassinopoulos had an "exemplary" record in his Medieval History class.

"He was a true gentleman in

every sense of the word," Day said. "He had a lot of friends, and he was very soft spoken."

A number of students were affected by Stassinopoulos' death, Day added, because he knew and was liked by so many of his classmates.

Stassinopoulos was born in Detroit on July 30, 1982. He is survived by his parents, Leo and Joy, and brothers John and Leo Jr.

Funeral services were held Wednesday at St. John Greek Orthodox Church.

The family prefers memorials be sent to Children's Hospital.

CLARIFICATION

In a letter to the editor published in the Farmington Observer on May 26, page A12, written by city naturalist Joe

Derek, and thanking helpers for making Kids Trout Derby Day a success, Marty Hauger Jr.'s name was spelled incorrectly.

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