

# State rep from page A1

...tive was not particularly responsive to the community. The issue of local control prompted former Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi's candidacy, opposing Raczkowski for a two-year term in the November election.

But palpable uneasiness crept to the surface, particularly during a lengthy discussion about the recent passage of House Bill 4530 - co-sponsored by Raczkowski - which loosens the grip of local authorities on the issuance of concealed weapons permits.

Nonetheless, Farmington Mayor Bill Hartsock said he was glad that city officials were able to meet with Raczkowski.

"It's a start," Hartsock said after the meeting. "And we'll see what happens. It certainly hasn't been a lack of effort on our part in keeping contact with him."

The gun bill was adopted and signed by Gov. John Engler, following the December "lame duck" session of legislators, and will take effect July 1, barring any reversal. Several council members were critical of such an important measure being passed during the weeks following the November election.

During that session, 24 lawmakers (including Raczkowski) who are in their final term and not worried about re-election voted in favor of the bill, which opponents believe will lead to a huge increase in the number of guns on the street.

"Something this serious should not happen in a lame duck session," said Mayor Pro-Tem James Mitchell.

**Why change?**

Raczkowski, however, said he voted on the bill prior to the election, after it came out of conference committees of the House and Senate. "I didn't see a major problem with it."

Meanwhile, Hartsock asked the Farmington Hills resident about why he would "vote for a change from the current way things are being done? ... These are things that should be decided at the local level, instead of being standardized."

Under the existing format, local gun boards have the authority to reject a permit for a concealed weapon if it finds the applicant does not need one or might be harmful to society if he or she carried a firearm.

The new bill requires gun boards to allow CCW permits be granted unless there is "clear and convincing evidence" not to, including having a felony record or history of mental illness. If a request is denied by a gun board, the decision is automatically appealed to the circuit court level.

"If the circuit court decides the board did not act in good faith," said Farmington Director of Public Safety Gary Goss during the meeting, "than the state and county bear the costs of the other person's attorneys fees."

"Which I think is going to put a real chilling effect on any board who is going to try to deny a permit."

Raczkowski said he was comfortable with the bill, which he added was tightened and toughened during the lame duck session.

It requires permit recipients to receive eight hours of firearm training, compared to zero hours currently. Gun owners operating a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol count of just .02 percent also face a misdemeanor charge, instead of a civil infraction.

Another reason for his vote, he said, was the fact 66 percent of constituents he had contact with about the issue favored such a bill.

The perception that Raczkowski's constituents aren't the same as city officials" was noted by Mitchell.

"When you speak of constituency contact," Mitchell said, "... we've been hearing people screaming 'not to loosen control on CCW permits.'"

Goss later said the loss of local discretion over granting CCW permits is an important one. But he emphasized that people need to "read the law" and not jump to conclusions.

"They won't be handing out gun permits like candy canes," Goss said. "But this takes away

important local discretion (for) situations where someone might have knowledge about somebody as to why they should not grant a CCW permit."

**Also on the agenda**

Meanwhile, Raczkowski quickly ran over several other items during the one-hour meeting:

■ He assured the city officials that state funds could be found for the Governor Warner Mansion, but that grant money for the Civic Theatre was less likely.

■ With his involvement, chances are improving for 47th District Court to receive a third judge, although that probably wouldn't happen until 2003.

The Farmington court - soon to be expanded - is third in line to add a judge, instead of being fifth, because Raczkowski and 47th District Court Administrator David Walsh went up to Lansing and demonstrated there is a greater case load than previously determined.

■ He indicated that there is new legislation that could move school elections from June to August, when they could be held in tandem with state and local primaries.

"I think you'll see it move this year," Raczkowski said. "... I have been working with school people to come to a compromise."

Farmington City Clerk/Treasurer Patsy Cantrell, who was at the meeting, said various bills to consolidate elections have been making the rounds for two or three years.

She thinks there may be some teeth in the version Raczkowski referred to.

"With the presidential election I think you're going to see some serious reform," Cantrell said.

# Police checking into pizza parlor break-in, stolen Chevy Suburban

The following reports were filed with the Farmington Hills Police and Fire Departments during the past week:

**FIRE**

Homeowners away on vacation over the Christmas holiday got an unexpected and unwelcome call just before the New Year. Firefighters from Stations 3 and 6 responded to a home on Glenbrook at 11:13 p.m. on Dec. 27 to find damage from a fire in the basement and light smoke throughout the house. Investigators determined the fire had been extinguished by a broken water pipe, but an investigation continues into how the fire started. A relative was called to the scene, along with a repair company to fix damage to the pipes and electrical utilities.

An overhead, gas-fired heater was to blame for a fire that damaged a business on Industrial Drive Jan. 2. The fire was out when units from Station 1 arrived; firefighters secured the gas supply to the unit. Plant employees used several dry chemical extinguishers on the fire.

**LARCENY**

Thieves broke into Hungry Howie's Pizza sometime after 11:30 p.m. on Jan. 1, smashing the front door and stealing \$25.62. The shop's owner said a register till with \$200 in it had been left out. The drawer and the balance of the cash, \$174.38,

were strewn around the store.

Two men, one from Farmington Hills and one from West Bloomfield, reported items they'd left in unlocked lockers had been taken while they were in a health club on Farmington Road, on Jan. 2. One man lost a money clip and \$36; the other, a wallet that contained identification and credit cards.

Thieves who took a wallet from the purse of an employee at Designer Discount on Orchard Lake didn't get far, as officers responding to her 9-1-1 call stopped the suspects' car. The clerk said while one of the two men asked her to show him dresses his girlfriend might like, she saw the other man near the door to the store office.

After a while, the second man walked out of the store and began running. Concerned, the clerk talked to the first man, until his cell phone rang. When she went back into the office, she discovered her wallet had been taken and called police. Officers who stopped the car saw one of the occupants throw something out the window; they later recovered the wallet, which contained \$1,000 in cash, on Orchard Lake Road.

**IDENTITY THEFT**

A 31-year-old Canton man told Hills Police on Jan. 2 that someone had opened a charge account in his name at ABC Warehouse in Ann Arbor. The account was opened on Dec. 9 and used at the

Farmington Hills store on Dec. 18 to charge more than \$3,600 in merchandise.

**EMBEZZLEMENT**

Two employees of Busch's grocery store were ticketed for taking items and eating prepared foods from the store without paying for them. Both were arrested because they were wanted on outstanding warrants.

**AUTO THEFT**

On Jan. 3, a 29-year-old South Lyon woman discovered her 2000 Jeep Cherokee had been stolen from the parking lot at Botsford Hospital, sometime between 8:15 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Later that evening, a hospital employee told police a 1994 Jeep Wrangler, driven by a young black man who looked about 14 or 15 years old, nearly hit her Explorer as it pulled out of a parking space in the same lot. The boy, who was wearing a maize and blue University of Michigan jacket, backed up quickly and struck a Toyota Corolla and Mercury Villager. He met two young men, all about the same age, and they fled on foot into a nearby apartment complex.

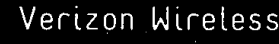
A salesman at Bob Saks car dealership got a call on Jan. 3 from a man who asked whether a 2000 Chevrolet Suburban had been stolen from the lot. A check revealed it had been. The informant said the vehicle was parked in front of a home in

## POLICE AND FIRE CALLS

Detroit with temporary license plates, and he knew the resident couldn't afford to have bought it. He had also heard it would be "chopped" that night. When investigators went to the address, they found no sign of the Suburban.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Today the postage rate jumps a penny to 34 cents - a far cry from the price of mailing a letter when Dr. Ezekiel Webb founded the first Post Office in Farmington in 1826. Read about Farmington's first Post Office in Thursday's Home Town Life.



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**MALL LOCATIONS**

<b>Briarwood Mall</b> 734-623-8620	<b>Great Lakes Crossing Mall</b> 248-975-6729	<b>Lakeside Mall</b> 810-247-7286	<b>Northland Mall</b> 248-514-4282	<b>Twelve Oaks Mall</b> 248-735-3973
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**WAL-MART LOCATIONS**

<b>Commerce</b> 3301 Pontiac Trail 248-669-9860	<b>Howell</b> 3599 Grand River E. 517-546-5611	<b>Port Huron</b> 4475 24th Ave. 810-385-7600	<b>Warren</b> 29240 Van Dyke 810-751-0747	<b>White Lake</b> 9190 Highland Rd. 248-698-0043	<b>Ypsilanti</b> 2515 Ellsworth Rd. 734-528-3137
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**AUTHORIZED RETAILER**

**RadioShack.**  
Equipment offer may vary.

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