

# Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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## Junior high fate lingers, cities eye property use

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

He believes that regardless of a four mill renewal election, the junior high will eventually be closed.

The building's age, a decrease in junior high school enrollments and the school's high costs have prompted discussions about closing the junior high school for the last two years.

The school board sent letters to the City of Farmington and Farmington Hills Council asking them if they had any need for land presently owned by the school board.

"IT IS OUR understanding that the Farmington Junior High School may be closed some time in the future. If this should occur, we believe the city would have an interest in this parcel of property," City Manager Robert Dearden told the council.

We can envision the potential of using part of this site for senior citizen housing using part of the existing building as a recreation center run by the Farmington Area Recreation Commission. The athletic field contiguous to our city park certainly should be included as part of our park," he said.

The council voted unanimously to ask the school board for the right of first refusal if the building were to be offered for sale.

That sounds great. Dr. Mervyn Ross, secretary of the school board said when he was told of the city's interest in the junior high.

While the letter wasn't written with the intention of selling or leasing a school building, it was sent out to determine if the cities were interested in using vacant lands owned by the school board, he said.

While the vacant lands owned by the board are located in the 16th, a letter was sent to the city to give both municipalities a chance to express an interest in school lands, Shpeere explained.

"THE INTENT of the letter was to find out if there was an interest in using school property," he said.

Both Shpeere and Ross said at most two elementary schools and one junior high school would be closed if the school system's financial situation warranted it.

Even if the millage is renewed, the amount of state aid and the system will receive is still unknown, Ross said.

There is an absolute need for an additional millage to continue this year's programs, Ross said.

If budget cuts make state aid inadequate, there may be a reason to close some schools, he said.

This is a situation that we've been wrestling with for some time. Last year, there was frank and open talk about anticipated enrollments, he said. The board didn't foresee closing a junior high for about two or three years.

Farmington Junior High School enrollment has dropped from 367 students in 1974 to 329 students in 1975. Another decrease in enrollment is anticipated in 1976 with a projected student population of 324.

Shpeere and Ross said if the junior high was closed, students would be sent to schools nearest to their homes.

**EAST JUNIOR HIGH** District and Junior Junior high schools would take students scheduled to attend Farmington Junior High, they said.

Enrollments at these schools have dropped within the last two years. East had a student population of 833 in 1974 but



Peggy Harding of Farmington presents her monologue on the life of Abigail Adams dressed in authentic costume. (Photo by Bernice Clark)

## District forges safety policy

Two months after the electrocution death of an East Junior High School student, the Farmington School Board finally is considering a district safety policy.

At the school board meeting Tuesday night, the board's safety committee presented its finalized proposed safety policy to trustees for their review.

The board will consider the policy at its next regular meeting and at that time will decide whether to implement the policy throughout the school district.

The safety committee's recommended policy states that it shall be the policy of the Farmington Public School District to take every reasonable precaution for the safety of everyone having business with the school district or using school district facilities.

staff time and funds to begin and enforce the safety policy.

All authorized persons shall operate and use equipment, facilities and materials in a manner which promotes safe conditions at all times, the policy states.

They are prohibited from altering, interfering with or destroying equipment or processes which are intended to create a safe working environment.

Any person who persistently or deliberately violates safe operating conditions of the district's safety rules or endangers the safety of others shall be subject to disciplinary or other action.

The safety committee also recommended that each building principal work with the school district to insure safety district facilities.

UNDER THE proposed policy, the superintendent of schools would be responsible for developing and implementing safety procedures.

This would include the assignment of responsibility and authority, procedures, rules, inspections, safety procedures, monitoring, enforcement, safety education and in-service training.

The superintendent would also designate a trained safety employee to develop and implement the necessary safety procedures for the district.

He also would provide the necessary

material that she began to research the life of American women in the 18th century. Eventually she and her daughter, Mrs. Lois Mitchell of Plymouth, developed work shops and programs on the household arts of pioneer women—spinning, cooking, fabric and candle dipping.

By popular request, she has recently added another program to the growing repertoire.

**DRESSED** in an authentic costume Peggy Harding becomes Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams, second president of the United States and mother of John Quincy Adams, sixth president.

Mrs. Harding says that as she studied early American women, the one who came to the forefront was Abigail. So she decided to do a monologue having Abigail carry on an imaginary conversation with her sister.

Much of the information on the day-to-day life of the colonists from the ordering of household staples to politics was recorded by Mrs. Adams, a prodigious diary keeper and letter writer.

At times the Adams family lived in the sea and when her husband was absent on affairs of the emerging nation for long periods, Abigail ran the family farm in Braintree, near Quincy, Mass.

"She had a sense of history and a desire to sign and write down everything," Abigail and John were often separated for long periods of time, sometimes as much as four years, yet she felt that was part of her duty to her country to carry on.

From the diaries, Mrs. Harding says it is obvious that Abigail was a woman of action and government. Her letters offered advice and counsel to her husband, John. Truman once said that Abigail would have made a better president than John.

"She was a feminist in her own right and spoke out against slavery," Mrs. Harding says. But Mrs. Adams was not an overly aggressive person in those days when women had few rights and were expected to care for the home and the children, but not participate in outside activities.

Mrs. Harding explains how Abigail happened to acquire her unusual command of the political scene.

"She was a lucky child and couldn't go to school. Because of this she spent many winter months with her grandfather Quincy, who was a member of the House of Representatives of the colony of Massachusetts. There was always some important person at the Quincy fireside."

## As Abigail Adams Woman makes history come alive

By CORINNE ABATT

"I can't imagine ever being bored," says Peggy Harding of Farmington on one of the few mornings in the last five years when she has a relaxed hour at home.

The energetic, attractive homemaker, mother of four adult children, wife of high school teacher Dick, said there was a time a few years back, when I wanted to do something other than be involved with my children.

She had always loved history so it was

Mrs. Harding speculates the child was often beside the fire as her grandfather and his sisters discussed the current events taking place all around them. This she thinks stimulated her lifelong interest in politics.

"SHE COULD always converse when asked, but it was more as though she wanted to play a bigger role in shaping her husband than becoming important herself. She was a secure person, far more secure than her husband, I suspect.

Her letters to her husband and diaries chronicled a marriage that historians consider a long and happy one.

It was a very good marriage," says Mrs. Harding. There was never a shadow of a doubt of that. Although John was a hypochondriac, he lived to be 91 and saw his son in the White House. Abigail was 74 when she died. Although she died before her son was elected president, she remarkably proved he would be successful.

Women in her audience frequently ask

Mrs. Harding of Abigail married having to spend so much time alone.

"I felt them the exact opposite, but at times she was very lonely. She wrote him some dear, dear letters. In one written in 1777, she tells him she has spent a bad night that she doesn't want to sleep in, but she'll sleep she will and another can't get to sleep she did, but I was a sad letter.

Another frequent question is whether she did that as a first lady. Abigail hung her laundry in one of the dormitory rooms of the White House.

"Yes, she did. But you see she always had a lot of laundry. She was the first president's wife to live in the White House and there was a real mad as all around it."

As a result of her many programs which she has given all over the state and in many schools, Mrs. Harding was recently appointed to the Michigan Education Bureau's General Advisory Committee by Governor Romney.

(Continued on page 13)

Parents of Harrison High's future 10th graders will have an opportunity next week to find out what high school is all about.

Harrison's administrators and counselors will host one hour parent orientation sessions starting at 9:30 a.m. March 22-24.

The daily sessions will be for parents of incoming 10th graders who are now 9th graders at East and Warner Junior High Schools. Harrison's feeder schools are.

The informal program will include introductions to school staff, explanations of instructional programs and student schedules, and a tour of the building with visits to several classes.

We had quite a good turnout of parents

## Orientation offers high school insights

last year," said Harrison High's James Carter. And we hope these are the most eager parents interested in visiting the school this year.

There isn't a single thing you can't do in the school system. It's a very open place. Parents interested parents, you are invited.

Carter said that any parent interested in attending one of the day orientation sessions should contact Mrs. Joyce King at 477-8111 to arrange an appointment.

Appointments are necessary to avoid overcrowding and to insure there will be enough counselors and administrators on hand to help answer parents' questions.

That was Thaddeus Stokes's report when this classed as ran.

FAIRLARK 1967-68 200-1000  
 (For more information call 477-8111)  
 (After 10:30 p.m.)

Put an ad in the Observer & Eccentric Classified. It's something to talk about.

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Eight Mile Road, between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads, is a well-known mess. Drivers along the narrow two-lane street have been victim to enormous traffic jams, automobile damage and even death. The Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce is out to do something about the problem. The Observer & Eccentric supports its effort. To see our opinion turn to the editorial on page 16A. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Get in shape at community offerings

A variety of recreation classes are on the spring schedule of the Community Education program.

Registration will be from 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 15, in Farmington High School, Room 110D, or the form and fee may be mailed in.

All classes begin the week of March 29 and meet at Farmington High School unless otherwise noted.

**MEN'S RECREATION** is a trim-up, slim-down program using the gym facilities with activities of the student's choice. Monday, 7:30 p.m., \$12.

**BJJUNJASTIC** is for women. The program includes exercises and a variety of games and activities. East Junior High Gym, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., \$12.

**KARATE** combines the techniques of self-defense and physical fitness. Minimum age, 11. East Junior High, Tuesday, 8:30 p.m. Gym, \$12.

**BAJTRIA YOGA** is designed to lead participants toward a healthier life through improved posture, breathing and relaxation. Men and women are welcome. Students, 11 and older, will benefit. Bring mat or rug, wear loose clothing, headbands, light, sweatshirt or slacks. Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. Room 110D, \$12.

**VOLLEYBALL** will be held Wednesday evening, 7:30-9:30 p.m. in the District Junior High gym and Thursday, 7:30-9:30 p.m. in Pioneer Junior High. Ladies only. Volleyball will be in Harrison High, Monday, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Fees are \$12 for married couples and \$10 per person.

**GOLF** will include three beginner and five outdoor sessions. Beginner, intermediate and advanced groups will be formed. The first meeting will run 7:30 a.m. Bring a five iron and putter to class. One hour practice times will be furnished after first class meeting. Mondays or Tuesdays or

Thursdays in the cafeteria, 9:00-11:00 a.m. back-ups of balls at range extra.

**GYMNASTICS** is a six weeks program for elementary and junior high students. It will be at North Farmington High School gym, Wednesday and Thursday. Register first night of class. Fee is \$12. The schedule is 6:15 p.m. daily. Elementary, beginning tumbling and trampolines, advanced beginning tumbling and trampolines, 7:15 p.m. girls apparatus, intermediate tumbling and trampolines, 8:15 p.m. girls apparatus, intermediate tumbling and trampolines, senior skills, competitive gymnastics.

inside

"GREAT RESPONSE"  
20 calls by 8 a.m."

That was Thaddeus Stokes's report when this classed as ran.

News	Section A
Opinion	Section B
Editorial	Section C
Columns	Section D
Suburban Life	Section E
Community Calendar	Section F
Club Circuit	Section G
Beliefs	Section H
Sports	Section I
Announcements	Section J

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