

Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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Keeping young

Lida Loftis, who has been dancing all of her life, joins in to add a new ethnic dance to her repertoire. To see what senior citizen life is like in the Farmington-Farmington Hills area read the first of a series by reporter Co Abatt on page 3A. (Staff photo by Harry Maute)

Final count awaited Experts split on enrollment

Closing of elementary schools, alteration of school boundaries or the formation of a middle school all are possibilities facing Farmington area students.

This is the conclusion of a Farmington School District task force which is studying declining enrollments, a problem which has plagued the school district for the last five years.

"We're going to have to come to grips with some difficult decisions," said Task Force member John Washburn.

Dr. Stanley Hecker, of the Michigan State University education department, who recently testified before the task force, had even grimmer predictions.

"I wouldn't be surprised if you lost a school," he told task force members. "You have a smaller kindergarten than last year. Next year, it will be smaller yet."

Farmington, like many other surrounding suburban school districts, has been faced with the unpopular decision of closing school buildings.

At the beginning of the school year officials closed Farmington Junior High School, even though many parents and students protested.

each student over the 14,500, the state will give us \$1,195 more in aid," said Prisk.

Helping boost the state aid figure in the district is the special education enrollment and adult education programs. Without these programs, Prisk's estimate dips to 14,175.

But whatever the enrollment, Farmington district students will have more spent on them per pupil than last year. The district expects to receive \$980,205 more in state aid than last year. In 1975-76, the district received \$193.39 per child in state aid. This year, the state is expected to give \$240.41 per child.

The total amount of state aid last year was \$4,711,315. In 1976-77, the district expects to receive \$5,401,720 in state aid.

But, Hecker isn't optimistic.

"The funding you're getting from the state, now, is as good as you will get," said Hecker.

Because of the high cost of housing in the Farmington-Farmington Hills area, the

population is stabilizing into a pattern of families with older children, who can afford the housing prices.

"People buying their homes in Farmington are probably buying their second or third home," said Hecker. "They have older children. With the price of homes in the area, I don't see young families with children moving into them."

KINDERGARTEN enrollment is a typical example of how enrollment in the district is declining and may keep falling off.

During the 1971-72 school year, the district had 1,027 kindergarten students. This made up 4.83 per cent of the 15,468 children born in Oakland County during 1966, according to Hecker.

In 1975-76, there were 818 kindergarten students in the district. Children who entered that grade in Farmington last year made up 3.49 per cent of the 16,690 children born in Oakland County during the 1970, said Hecker.

Preliminary counts for this year show a slight increase over last, to 873 students. But task force officials believe enrollment, nevertheless, will continue on the decrease.

Hecker predicts that by the 1980-81 school year, there will be 787 students in Farmington kindergarten. By that year, he expects that 12,549 Oakland County children born in 1975 will make the kindergarten eligibility list.

High school registration also is dropping off, according to Hecker. He noted that 1,459 tenth graders decreased to 1,432 students between the 1971-72 school year and the 1974-75 year. In 1974-75 year, 1,437 eleventh graders remained from a 10th grade class of 1,509 the year before.

Of the 1,400 tenth graders in 1975-76, there are 1,474 eleventh grade students this year.

ALTHOUGH OFFICIALS AGREE that enrollment is on the decline, the task force is in disagreement with the school administrators as to how much that decrease will be.

Farmington District Business Manager William Prisk estimates there will be 14,500 in the schools this year. Last year there were 14,894 students in Farmington classrooms.

Hecker, basing his estimates on a preliminary head count in the schools reported to the task force that there were 14,154 students attending the school district.

The true tally will be known on the fourth Friday when an official count is taken. Up until that time "it's all academic," according to Prisk.

But Prisk already figured his upcoming school budget on the 14,500 figure. While the disagreement might be academic it does suggest a possible difference in the number of dollars the district will receive from the state to educate students.

For each student less than 14,500, the state will give us \$1,195 less in aid. For

Bottle bill controversy to be decided by voters

Farmington voters will have the chance to decide, with the rest of the state, if deposits on beer and pop containers will

cause lay-offs in canneries or reduce litter in the streets.

The proposal to put a deposit on all bev-

erage containers also includes the possibility of banning the flip-top cans.

Proponents of the proposal say that the actions will help clean up the environment, save resources and make it safer for animals and children.

"It's been an uphill fight," said Nancy Kourjian of Farmington Hills Earth Alive.

"The packaging people have banded together," she said. Opponents of the bill say it would cause layoffs in canneries faced with reduced production and the a changeover from making flip-top openings.

"They can make other types of cans," she said. "In Oregon, they didn't diversify the production of cans."

Oregon, Vermont and South Dakota have mandatory deposits on beverage containers.



The cheering stopped

North Farmington band member Daniel Hughes valiantly cheered on the Raider football team Saturday, but to no avail. The team was defeated by Walled Lake Central, 14-0. To see the details of the game, turn to the sports section. (Staff photo)

Nutter outlines concepts as secondary school chief

After six weeks in his new post as assistant administrator, former North Farmington High School principal Lynn Nutter is learning how it feels to be on the other side of the policy-making process.

He would like to work additions and changes into the district's vocational program but is mindful of the system's tight budget and last spring's defeated millage.

"I'd like to include a commercial foods program in the schools. I would like to see a version of the one some of our students attend at Walled Lake Vocational Center," he said.

The one at Walled Lake is always received with interest by students in Farmington. There is a real need for such a program in our schools. It offers our youngsters an opportunity for employment.

"People will always eat. There will always be a need for persons in the commercial foods business.

"Most of the changes I want to make in the curriculum are possible because they wouldn't cost that much money. But this program would cost money.

"I don't think I should make a guessimate of the cost at this time," he said.

He would also like to add a building trades section to the vocational training program in the district. That too, is an expensive addition.

"THERE ARE some districts in other states that have a program in the building trades that's quite successful.

"I'd like to see us have one, but I don't know how we could afford it," he said.

Under the program, the students would buy some land, construct a house and then sell it.

Nutter admits that the price of land in Farmington might prohibit the system from building in the city.

"I think we could go to some outlying area. Or we could remodel a house in the city," he said.

Nutter believes that schools should help steer students toward careers that aren't over represented in the job market.

"I think we should even start talking to students in the fifth and sixth grades about careers. A lot of students then want to be teachers.

"We might lose some good teachers that way, but there are far too many teachers in the market now," he said.

"Our high school counseling should help guide students to careers," he said.

He sees vocational school as an alternative or addition to a college education.

OCC sponsors Hawaiian trip

Oakland Community College is sponsoring an eight-day, seven-night tour of Hawaii, departing Detroit Dec. 31 and returning Jan. 7.

The tour price of \$468 per person, based on double occupancy includes air transportation from Detroit to Honolulu, accommodations at the Holiday Inn, full breakfast and a multi-tour around Waikali.

The tour is open to all interested community residents.

College students and high school seniors can earn college credit for the trip by enrolling in Humanities 101. The seminar will meet in a prearranged intercultural exchange with students at the University of Hawaii.

A minimum deposit of \$100 is necessary to secure a reservation with final payment due Nov. 14.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Dr. Charles Braun or Professor John Dewarport at 476-9480.

Rugby tourney set for weekend

The Detroit Rugby Club, composed mainly of north-suburban residents, will host the 20-team Scrub's Great Lakes Rugby Tournament this weekend, Oct. 23, at Detroit's Fawcett Field, Eight Mile east of Ryan. Games begin at 10 a.m. on both mornings. The 20-squad field includes four women's teams. No admissions will be charged.

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There's still time to sign up for the fourth annual Farmington Observer & Eccentric publicity-press seminar to be Oct. 7, at 8 p.m. in the Farmington Holiday Inn, 38123 Ten Mile, Farmington. Whether you're a group representative or just an interested individual, be sure to send in a coupon so we can get to know one another. It will be an enjoyable evening. Mail the coupon to Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, P.O. Box 69, Southfield, Mich. 48037.