

Layoffs, school closing tied to student drop

By MARY GNIEWEK

The sting of declining enrollment was felt sharply Tuesday as the Farmington Board of Education laid off four school administrators and confirmed the closing of Highmeadow Elementary School at the end of the 1979-80 school year.

Three administrative assistants and one principal will be terminated in June. They are Gerald Morawski, principal of Wooddale Elementary, and administrative assistants Richard Tyler, community education, John Summer-

lee and Dr. Joseph Chiasson, both of Harrison High.

"The protests were vociferous. We do this reluctantly," said School Supt. Lewis Schulman. "Should there be an upturn, we will ask the board to rehire them quickly."

"Laying off administrators is not an easy thing. Later on, there will be a recommendation for laying off teachers. These are the results of declining enrollment."

"It's a sad thing. But the board must be prudent and match expenses with revenue."

The layoffs were based on seniority, Schulman said. The administrators have been assured teaching positions in the district next year. Seniority will be accrued for the time they spent as administrators.

The original recommendation to the board included the name of a fifth administrator, Mildred Bennett, principal of Longacre Elementary.

BUT AFTER SOME discussion, the board decided the district could survive with cutting just four administrators since only one school, Shiawassee Ele-

mentary, is slated to close at the end of the current school year.

"Our opinion is that in spite of fluctuation of the budget, it won't be necessary to close a second school this year," Schulman said. "The board can remove the name of Mrs. Bennett from the list."

Like the administrative layoffs, the recommendation for the closing of Highmeadow a year from June was approved unanimously by the seven member board.

"The reason for the early resolution is that the board was presented with the information well in advance following a thorough study of school closings and reassigning of students by a special task force," Schulman explained.

Also on the agenda at Tuesday's meeting was the discussion of boundary changes that will be necessary with the implementation of the middle school in the 1980-81 school year.

The middle school will take sixth graders out of elementary schools and move ninth graders into high school, thus eliminating junior highs. In part, the new format is designed to use more

fully the more expensive secondary schools.

"SOME BUILDINGS are at maximum capacity while others are hardly used," said Lawrence Freedman, assistant supt. of instruction.

"We've experienced heavy growth in the west and a decline in the east end. Our aim is to find an optimum size that will allow good class offerings."

Some parents questioned the task force's decision to cut boundaries through subdivisions. Others wanted to know if younger children could attend the same high schools as their older siblings.

The consensus of school officials was that exceptions will be made if boundary changes split families. But all decisions will be left up to individual school principals.

The board will take action on boundary changes at its next meeting, March 20.

Educators eye future students for planning

A new district-wide preschool evaluation program designed to give administrators an idea of size and needs of incoming students is planned this month by the Farmington Public Schools.

Parents of 3- to 5-year-olds who live in the school district are urged to make an appointment for the conference. Hour-long sessions will be held March 19-30 at Fairview Early Childhood Center.

"Our intent is to allow every pre-kindergartener to be evaluated by a professional team before they enter school," said Graham Lewis, director of special services.

"We're trying to get a handle on our preschool population. We need to know what that population is. We are anticipating a preschool program, but we need to know if there's a market for it."

The evaluation will also provide each school with a profile of its incoming students and better equip educators to prepare programs of study.

"At this point, we have no evaluation prior to entry to school. We have approximately 500 children at the kindergarten entry level and another 400 3- to 4-year-olds."

"We hope to make the evaluation an annual event. We thought it would be a good idea to kick it off this year, since this is the International Year of the Child."

YOUNGSTERS WILL be tested on motor skills, readiness and ability to follow directions. The testing will last about 15 minutes and parental input will be encouraged. Parents will also have an opportunity to watch their child play in a mini-preschool class and (Continued on page 4A)



Pavon Rigoulot and her prize winning Brittany spaniel Chopper share a happy moment. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Trustees make bid for seats

Farmington School Board Trustees Michael Shpiece and James McGlinicy announced Tuesday night that they will seek re-election in June.

Shpiece, 22, will complete a four-year term in June. At 18, he was the youngest trustee ever elected to the board in Farmington.

"At first, I thought it might be time to step down and let younger blood take over," Shpiece joked.

"I've given this a lot of thought and based my decision to run again on the board's action over the past year. The district will face many challenges in the next four years. I hope the community will allow me to continue my work."

Shpiece is running for a four year term: July 1, 1979 through June 30, 1983. McGlinicy, appointed a year ago to fill the seat of resigning trustee Mervyn Ross, is running for a one year term that will expire June 30, 1980.

Irish Mike Hand to lead parade

By MARY GNIEWEK

Hand feels his appointment has something to do with the fact that his good friend, fellow Farmington resident Michael Sullivan, is president of United Irish Societies this year (the group that selects the grand marshal).

Not that the judge isn't qualified. After serving as parade marshal in the U.S. Air Force in Spokane, Wash., in World War II, he feels this job ought to be a cinch.

"The air base was headquarters, so we held ceremonial parades for returning veterans," he recalled. "This will be much easier. I won't have a general looking over my shoulder to point out the mistakes."

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District Judge Michael Hand will lead the Irish merriment down Woodward Ave. this year in celebration of St. Patrick's Day.

Devotion Dog buff's determination pays

Pavon Rigoulot was a spunky 5-year-old in pigtails when she entered her first dog show. Nine years later, all she remembers of her first appearance in the rink is that she showed a golden retriever which was almost larger than she was.

But it was almost natural that Pavon showed an early interest in dogs. Her parents have been dog handlers for about 15 years.

"The 14-year-old Power Junior High student fills her weekends and spare time participating in shows or taking care of dogs. She earns the money needed to enter the shows. Some of the competitions carry a \$15-\$20 entrance fee."

But Pavon's determination paid off recently when she was named the best junior dog handler in the state by the Brittany Dog Club and Dog World magazine.

In the rink with her Brittany spaniel, Chopper, Pavon's main goal is to make her dog look as good as possible.

Dog handlers hold the head and tail of the animal to create a square look. The dog is shown to his best advantage. Canine figure faults are hidden through stance and movement.

WHEN SHOWING CHOPPER, Pavon moves his front legs out a bit to compensate for a slight case of knock-knees.

Other handlers find tricks to make their dogs look like champions. For dogs that have a ungainly walk, handlers will try to slow them down or have them walk in a crowd of other dogs. Dogs which have a graceful gait can be kept behind the pack of show dogs when they are told to walk. By staying behind the group, the dog's gait is more clearly seen, according to Pavon.

When a dog behaves well and wants to be in the rink, a handler's task is easier, she says. But when the dog obviously wants to be elsewhere, the handler must compensate for the lack of cooperation on the part of the canine partner in the duo.

Pavon participated in 25 shows last year and failed to place in two of the contests. Her room is covered with more than 100 ribbons and trophies.

After classes and on weekends, Pavon devotes her time to taking care of Chopper and the other family dogs. — a study in doggie devotion.

MOST OF THE DOGS which the Rigoulot family raises are groomed to be champions. If a dog quits winning in the rink, then it is given away to a good home.

"I interview the people I give my dogs to," said Cathy Rigoulot.

Some might find the family's policy of giving away the losers a bit hard, but Mrs. Rigoulot views the dogs as part of her business.

One dog which will stay with the family until "his ears drop off" is Chopper, Mrs. Rigoulot says.

When Chopper entered the show rink at six months old, the family decided that Pavon would handle him for the basic shows and the parents would handle him for the championship trips around the rink.

During the first show, Pavon and Chopper walked away with the honors, beating professional handlers to the prize. Her father was among the professionals who were beaten by the girl.

After that, the family decided Pavon could show Chopper without any help.

Sometimes, in the rink, an older handler will try to strike up a conversation with Pavon and offer help.

PAVON USUALLY ignores that, her mother says, because she has been told that showing dogs is serious business.

"I feel that in my short period of time with the board, I've contributed to its relatively smooth operation," McGlinicy said. "I feel this board has been operating with a good deal of efficiency. Members have good support. We all contribute to making the operation of the schools smoother than times in the past."

Candidates must file nominating petitions no later than 4 p.m. April 9 in the board offices, 32500 Shiawassee. Petitions are available from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

School personnel will assist candidates with information about filing and campaign finance laws. Candidates must be registered and qualified electors, at least 18 years old and a resident of the district at least 30 days prior to the election on June 11.

Car wreck injures 3

A three-car pile up at Fourteen Mile and Farmington roads early Tuesday injured three persons, one seriously.

Carol Jones of Westland was injured when the car she was driving west on Fourteen Mile was struck by an automobile which crossed the center line as it was proceeding eastbound, according to West Bloomfield Police.

The car which crossed the center line was driven by Antoinette Robes of Farmington Hills. She and her husband, Sylvester, were treated and released from Beaumont Hospital Tuesday afternoon.

A third car driven by Jack Colpits of Walled Lake was also struck by the Robes' vehicle, according to Police Sgt. Daniel Pitsoo. Colpits did not require hospital attention.

The accident occurred at 6:50 a.m. Ms. Jones was transported by emergency vehicle to the West Bloomfield Henry Ford Hospital, where she was treated. She was then transported to the hospital's Detroit facility where she was listed in fair condition in a special care unit late Tuesday.

She was suffering from injuries to her neck which made it difficult for her to breathe.

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