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Curriculum goal debate gets heated

By MARY GNIEWEK

High school graduation requirements to the Farmington Public Schools will be increased this year, but to what extent is a matter of debate among educators.

Some Harrison High School teachers are vehemently hoping to add two years of mandatory humanities courses to the four-year program.

But an administrative proposal that will be recommended to the Farmington Board of Education for implementation in September would leave humanities as an elective and add a year of math or science, or one semester of each, to satisfy graduation requirements.

One thing a number of teachers, administrators and members of the Farmington Board of Education agree with is that current standards are too low.

The feelings range from School Superintendent Lewis Schulman who "doesn't think we have given (students) enough credit for what they're capable of," to Harrison Music Chairman Paul Barber who believes "any moron can fulfill (current) graduation requirements."

Under the current setup, a student could graduate from high school in Farmington without ever taking art, music, drama, foreign language or forensics.

FURTHER, THE STUDENT would have to take just one year of math to earn a diploma. In addition, three years of English, one of science, two and a half of social studies, and two of physical education complete requirements for graduation.

Most students satisfy five of those in ninth grade with a year of English, math, science, social studies and physical education, leaving just four and a half required credits to take over three years, according to Barber.

"The rest is carte blanche," he says. "Students can take a study hall each year and whatever else they desire."

Ultimately, the board of education will decide what changes to make as the district moves to four-year high schools in September.

The board curriculum committee rejected one administrative proposal earlier this year that extended the number of credit hours to encompass the ninth grade without increasing basic requirements.

Since then, administrators under Lynn Nutter, assistant superintendent of instruction, have added one year of mandatory math or science and will present that to the committee for consideration at its next meeting.

The committee's job is to meet with administrators and hash out a proposal to recommend to the full board of education, who will adopt the final package.

"I'd definitely like to see some changes made in increasing graduation requirements," said Janice Rolnick, committee chairwoman.

"I'M VERY PARTIAL to math, science and the humanities, also bringing in foreign languages and the fine arts."

"We have to look at the whole thing. We can't discriminate against any student or make requirements so stiff that persons not interested in academics would be stifled. That's the problem."

Board Secretary Helen Fritow and (Continued on Page 4A)



Slugging one home

Darnel Krause, 8, felt like a tiger as he wound up to take a swat at this ball while playing down at the Farmington City Park. Like millions of youngsters

around the country, Darnel spends the warm weather playing the great American pastime. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

Condo convert planned

By early summer, Hunters Ridge in Farmington Hills should join the growing number of apartment complexes being converted to condominiums.

The complex on 14 Mile near Orchard Lake Road has been bought by an affiliate of American Inesco Corp. of Chicago which is active in condominium conversions in that city and 17 others.

Letters announcing the switch have been sent to Hunters Ridge residents but the actual sale of the units has been delayed while the developer awaits approval of the master deed by the Michigan Department of Commerce.

Inesco filed for the deed's approval two weeks ago, according to Paul Blatt, director of condominiums, Living Care Division, Corporations and Security Bureau of the Michigan Department of Commerce.

Usually, the procedure (the second portion of a two-step process which must be completed before the sale of the units can begin) takes between three to 25 weeks, according to Blatt.

In the meantime, Inesco, which had been preparing to announce its prices after the Passover and Easter holidays, has temporarily dispersed a large portion of its Hunters Ridge sales personnel to Inesco offices in other cities, according to Jim Gallagher, one of the local sales staff.

WHILE THE developer hasn't announced the sales prices to the public, the firm was required to provide the state Department of Commerce with proposed prices for the 487 units in Hunters Ridge's 73 buildings.

For the 60 one-bedroom units, a price range of \$77,000 to \$79,000 had been proposed. The 269 two-bedroom units were assigned a price range of \$85,200 to \$136,000.

The 135 three-bedroom units carry a proposed price range of \$105,000 to \$159,800, according to Blatt.

"But the prices don't remain the same," he said. "Generally they're either higher or lower at the time of marketing."

In addition to the living units, the complex has 631 garages. Residents of two and three bedroom units are allotted garage space for two cars.

The apartments range in size from 1,000 to 2,700 square feet. There are seven units per square acre in the complex, completed in 1972.

Renters who would like to buy their apartments will be given the chance to do so before the apartments are put on the market, according to Steven Beauchamp, sales director at Hunters Ridge. These buyers will be given a discount for the units, he added.

Persons who have renewed their lease beyond this year will be able to keep their apartment to its termination, Gallagher said.

PURCHASERS of the apartments still under lease won't be able to take possession until the first agreement expires, he said.

Hunters Ridge hasn't stopped renewing leases and is continuing to draw up another agreement with occupants, he added.

Firms involved in conversions must go through a two-step application process before it can place the units on the market.

The developer first acquires permission from the Department of Commerce to take non-binding reservations for the property. This allows the seller to test the demand for the condos, Blatt said.

Permission to take the reservations is acquired after the developer sends (Continued on Page 4A)

Criminal treatment?

Friend of Court gets mixed reviews

First in a series.

"The Friend of the Court is a system that's never been challenged since 1919. How in the world can a system created in 1919 handle the needs of people in 1980?"

Alan Lebow, Equal Rights for Fathers

By LYNN ORR
More than a million adults and chil-

dren in Wayne and Oakland counties are affected by Friend of the Court, the agency which oversees divorces of parents of minors in Michigan.

The handbook given to divorcing parents by the Oakland County Friend of the Court makes no bones about what it can do.

"The name of our agency, Friend of the Court, confuses the public.

"The word 'friend' seems to imply that we are ready and able to assist with all court problems. We are

not... duties are clearly defined by statute.

"We are not a clearing house of information, we are not supposed to explain to you why your attorney is doing what he is doing. We are not a referral agency, and relief from problems stemming from your divorce does not automatically begin with the Friend of the Court."

Michigan's Friend of the Court system nationally is considered one of the best for its high rate of collections. But it suffers from its problems.

Divorcing parents, frustrated by the system, believe the agency aggravates rather than resolves problems of divorced families.

The Michigan Women's Commission, in its comprehensive study of Friend of the Court — "In the Best Interests of the Child" — recommends statute use of generic terms — custodial and non-custodial parents. But it's clear that wars between fathers and mothers in their roles as parents cannot be resolved with non-sexist categories.

Parents, children, attorneys, psy-

chologists, court personnel, social workers and even judges are affected by how Friend of the Court operates and any changes that may await the agency in the next decade.

FRIEND OF THE Court is the title of the agency as well as the person who heads the agency in each county. It was established by statute as an arm of the judiciary in 1919 to protect minors and enforce court decrees in divorces involving minors.

The agency investigates cases and submits recommendations of custody, visitation, child support, alimony, and other provisions to the Circuit Court judge who decides the judgment of divorce.

Contrary to what divorcing parents expect, Friend of the Court is primarily concerned with the law, rather than resolving parental disputes. The Friend of the Court usually is an attorney, as are most of the people involved in the decision-making process.

In Oakland County, the Friend of the Court estimated the caseload at more than 47,000, involving more than 125,000 children. The county's population is estimated at 1 million.

Wayne County's Friend of the Court has a caseload of 248,000 involving more than 375,000 children. By con- (Continued on Page 2A)

While on the job or at leisure, promoting the arts is her life

By MARY GNIEWEK

You might call Beverly Ellis Farmington's public relations director for the arts.

Professionally she's an elementary school art consultant. Off the job, she spends most of her time trying to get the community to appreciate art.

The community said thanks this year by nominating Mrs. Ellis for the 1980 Service to the Arts award sponsored by the Farmington Area Arts Commission (FAAC).

She clinched the award and will be recognized with a plaque and formal tribute at a public reception May 18. Among her nominators was Farmington Hills Mayor Joann Soronen, who remembered Mrs. Ellis for service to the Farmington Community Arts Council from its inception in 1965 to its disbandment in 1976 and her continuing involvement with the arts commission.

The Farmington Chamber of Commerce lauded Mrs. Ellis for initiating an 'Art-In' tent for kids during the Farmington Founders Day Festival, a regular part of festival happenings since 1977.

Other nominators — Mrs. Ellis was cited nine times — mentioned the student-made art she exhibits annually in the lobby and halls of Boisfort General Hospital, local libraries, a traveling

community art show she heads up, and a lending program she helped establish for college students through her affiliation with Delta Kappa Gamma, an honorary teaching society.

"I'VE JUST GOTTEN over the shock now from all the people who nominated me," Mrs. Ellis said during a spring break interview last week.

"It's really a big honor. When you've been involved and in on setting up the (award) program originally, you don't think of it in terms of you. It's nice to know you have so many friends."

Teaching art in the Farmington Public Schools for 20 years helped open the doors to community involvement, she says.

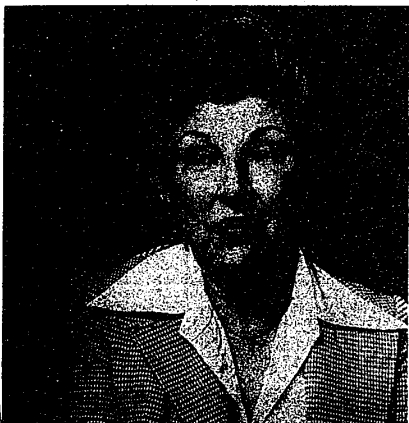
"I try hard to promote the importance of art for kids. You don't go out in the community without the cooperation I've had from administrators, parents and others."

She views kids' art displays as a public celebration of art and keeps ongoing exhibits somewhere in the city at all times.

"It's good public relations. It's well received," she says.

Mrs. Ellis' appreciation of the arts has led her to treat all student efforts with equal enthusiasm.

"My philosophy is that elementary (Continued on Page 4A)



Beverly Ellis talks about her love of art. She is being honored for her effort on behalf of the art community. (Staff photo)

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PUBLIC DEBATES
As the discussion over mandatory curriculum continues, the letter box is getting filled. To see what a department head in the Farmington School District and a resident think of what's going on, turn to letters to the editor on Page 6C.