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Teachers settle contract 8 months early

By Craig Plechura
staff writer

In an early settlement that caught many off-guard, Farmington teachers have reached a tentative agreement with the school administration on a two-year pact, 8½ months before the old contract was due to expire.

Because the economy doesn't show signs of improving, teachers' unions have hammered out new contracts as early as a year before expiration of the old ones, as in the case of the Wayne-Westland School District.

The practice of settling contracts months before the deadline is a far cry from the accustomed practice of 11½ hour marathon bargaining sessions taking place around Labor Day and sometimes jeopardizing the start of school. In explaining the "Christmas gift" to

parents of school children, both sides sounded like a mutual admiration society.

"You start with a community that's supportive of education and then, through the years, build up a trust level between the administration, the board and the teachers which is absolutely vital and you can do it," explained Zan Alley, executive director of the Farmington Education Association (FEA).

"We saw what happened this fall in neighboring Novi and Southfield," said Robert Coleman, who represented the administration in bargaining. "We saw the upset it caused the community and felt, as Zan (Alley) said, that it was worth taking a shot at (settling the contract early)."

THE TENTATIVE agreement — which calls for a 5 percent increase in each of the two years — must be rat-

ified by a simple majority of members on Jan. 7 when the FEA votes on the package. If approved, the tentative agreement will then have to be approved by the school board at a Jan. 11 board meeting.

Under provisions of the tentative agreement, entry-level teachers holding a bachelor's degree in the subject they teach would receive \$15,623 or \$17,248 if they have a master's degree certification.

In a 10-step wage scale system, teachers with 10 years seniority in the district are at the top of the scale. They would receive \$29,802 if holding a bachelor's degree in the first year of the agreement and \$34,657 if they hold a master's degree.

In the second year of the contract, teachers at top scale would bring home annual salaries of \$31,292 if they hold a

bachelor's degree and \$36,390 if they possess a master's degree in their area of certification.

The district currently employs 670 persons represented by the FEA with 26 laidoff members who are on a recall list.

Superintendent Lewis Schulman said the early settlement, if all goes well, will make it easier to submit a budget for school year 1983-'84 to the state. School district budgets — once due in the fall — now must be submitted in the late spring.

In the non-economic portion of the contract, the tentative agreement spells out a tighter student-teacher staffing ratio. The ratio, per building, will be 25 students to one teacher in the elementary buildings, 23-1 in the middle schools and 24-1 in the high schools.

THE SUPERINTENDENT said the staffing ratio "really isn't a giveaway" by the administration because there's been an increase in the number of subjects students in middle schools and high schools are taking and more teachers are needed. Schulman said before the graduation requirements were raised from 15 to 21 credits in 1981, students averaged 5.2 classes per semester. The average today is 5.4 classes per semester.

Coleman said the tentative agreement will result in four additional teachers needed in the middle schools and three more teachers needed in the district's three high schools.

"We see an educational benefit there, too," Coleman said, "so it's a dual-edged sword." Union negotiator Tom Chrzanoski, FEA president, said another non-economic gain for teachers in the contract is clearer language in the teacher evaluation process.

In the proposed agreement, teachers would have to be observed at least twice, for a minimum of 15 minutes duration, before an evaluation could be written and placed in the employee's personnel file. If an evaluation is negative, the teacher has the right to invite an administrator back for a subsequent check.

Even without the urgency of a contract expiration date hanging over their heads, negotiators bargained as if their backs were against the wall. Four formal bargaining sessions were held from Dec. 8-12 with 64 hours of bargaining elapsed. The last session was 33 hours straight with both sides locked up from 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 11 through 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12.

New English pub hosted by two boys O' the Green

By Craig Plechura
staff writer

The last thing the Farmington area needed is another Irish pub, say two owners of Col. Clickers Cricket Club in Farmington Hills.

With a name like that, you'd expect to hear the duo humming "Hail Britannia." Despite the English cricket theme, two of the bar owners confess that they're of Irish heritage.

But with established Irish bars such as the Old Village Inn and Dunleavy's in Farmington and newcomer O'Sheehan's in Farmington Hills as competition, the partnership decided to try another tack with their watering hole, which opened Nov. 11. They don't carry the English bit too far — mostly treating it with a tongue-

in-cheek attitude. This is reflected in the story of Col. Cricket printed on the menus, which say the bar's namesake ran a club in the seedy Soho section of London and charged no membership fee but asked patrons "for a donation of a useless (but unique) item of junk, just leftover debris from Penny Lane."

The idea behind all the pseudo-historical baloney is that owners Scott Morris, 36, and Jim Lamb, 28, both of Farmington Hills, and Ed Taggle, 38, of Canton Township, want people who come to the bar to feel like it's "their" bar. A place where the owners know their name and the customers are familiar faces.

To encourage that kind of affinity among regular, local customers, the bar invites regulars to bring in junk to hang from the walls. The parapher-

nals will be genuine — unlike the decor in many trendy bars that offer imitation junk.

Some of the stuff already adorning the walls includes a porthole from a ship, a court jester mannequin, a cricket paddle and a statue of W.G. Fields. For their donations the patrons receive a red, white or blue ceramic mug with their name and birthday engraved on it and a plaque under the item they donated. There are food and drink specials for mug holders.

"You never get a second chance to make a good first impression," says Morris.

He has reason to be concerned about making a good impression.

Please turn to Page 12



Col. Clickers Cricket Club owner Jim Lamb prizes the establishment encourages patrons to part a half-moon recently donated to his new bar in Farmington Hills. Like its counterpart in London, with "useless but unique items of junk."



TOM MANDELKA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

O'Sheehan's bartender Jerry Pautko pours a pint for an eager patron.

The greening of Farmington Hills

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Farmington Hills has grown a wee bit greener with the recent grand opening of O'Sheehan's Tavern, an Irish Eatery, at Grand River and Drake Roads.

Proprietors Larry and Tim Sheehan, a father and son team, are offering patrons a respite from the work-day blues in an airy, Eire-green atmosphere intended to "make eating and drinking fun."

O'Sheehan's, which seats 230, comes third in a succession that began with Livonia's Sheehan's on the Green and O'Sheehan's Tavern in Northville.

"We used the Irish theme because of our background," said Larry Sheehan, formerly executive vice president of the Little Caesars Enterprises whose an-

cestral home still stands in County Limerick, Ireland.

"The Irish are fun-loving people. That's why we wanted to make this a place where eating and drinking with friends is a happy occasion — not just where you have to go because it's lunch or dinner time.

"It's also the reason for serving happy, fun types of food ("O'Houckendorf Irish sausage," "Great Baked Irish Spuds," and "Grandma O'Sheehan's Apple Pie" are a few examples) and the reason why we've decorated with blond oak and not dark wood, and lots of windows.

"Openness, freshness and green plants create a type of place that gives you that life."

O'SHEEHAN'S SLOGAN, Erin Go Bree, is especially enforced during an abundance of happy hours and on the 17th of each month.

"We're going to celebrate St. Patrick's Day every 17th day of every month. We feel it's a happy enjoyable day, and the people of Farmington and Farmington Hills should be able to have that fulfillment more than once a year," said the senior Sheehan, president of Sheehan Enterprises, Ltd. His wife Joan is secretary/treasurer of the company.

St. Patrick Day celebrants will be treated to an Irish favorite — corned beef and cabbage (complete with boiled Irish spuds for \$2.75) — green beer, and all-day Irish entertainment. Guinness and Harp, daily fare in Ireland, also are available at O'Sheehan's.

THOUGH DUNLEAVY'S Pub and Grub, an Irish restaurant and bar, is nearby on Grand River east of Drake Road, the Sheehans say the establishments are not in direct competition.

"The Dunleavys are well-known throughout Detroit, and draw a regular crowd. We're hoping the people who go out once a week to Dunleavys will go out twice a week, and come here the second time," said Tim Sheehan, vice president of Sheehan Enterprises.

"We didn't come in to take business away, but to bring traffic in. We think we'll fill the void that's between McFrocks and the Steak and Ale on Orchard Lake Road and the Holiday Inn and Dr. Doodles on Grand River. The amount of growth out here is phenomenal with all the apartment complexes and condominiums that have gone up in the area."

A bleak economy didn't discourage the principals of the family-owned firm in their latest venture.

Please turn to Page 12

Hills balks at putting lights on the situation

Street lighting for drivers and pedestrians who travel Grand River and Farmington Road will be improved in the coming months, but not to the extent Farmington officials would like.

In an effort to make the roads bordering both cities safer and more uniform, the Farmington City Council asked the Farmington Hills to help pay for the installation of additional street lights.

Lights would be added to an area on Grand River east of Orchard Lake Road, and Farmington Road between 8 and 9 Mile roads.

At the urging of Lawrence Savage, Farmington Hills city manager, the council last week unanimously voted against implementing either of two available lighting methods.

"Of great concern to us is that by

participating in this area, we would establish a precedent," said Savage. (Unlike the city of Farmington, Farmington Hills supplies lighting only in special instances.)

"This is sufficiently different than homeowners making a request."

Savage views the cost of the proposed lighting, which would be \$3,500

to \$8,000 annually, to be too high.

"The most obvious issue with respect to street lighting is its relatively high cost, which is a recurring expense year after year. And based on the last 10 years and projections, utility costs in the future can only be anticipated to rise at a rather steady rate," said Savage in his report to council members.

"Surely, given the rather high cost of providing street lighting today, any new and growing city such as Farmington Hills would be hard-pressed to go up and down all of its major roads as the older central cities did years ago and light all streets.

Farmington, which will pay \$86,000 to light parking lots and major and neighborhood streets this fiscal year, must now institute a watered-down improvement plan, said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman.

Please turn to Page 12

Council regular rates city leaders

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Year-end report cards, some of them unfit for parental viewing, were handed out to Farmington Hills city council members Dec. 20 by one of their keenest observers.

Farmington Hills resident Masie Kurzeja, a familiar face at city hall, decided after many months spent listening to elected officials that it was their turn to listen to her.

"People are always asking me, 'how can you stand going to so many council meetings?' They're so boring and they never do anything," Kurzeja told the council.

someone grade you. You may not like like the way I've graded you, but maybe you can improve.

"Tonight you're the student and I'm the teacher."

Kurzeja polled Farmington Hills residents by phone and kept track of attendance, preparation, input and attitude in order to grade the seven council members.

Asked "Who is the mayor of Farmington Hills?" Kurzeja said assistant city manager Bill Costick got one vote, Coleman Young two votes while the remaining 19 persons surveyed said they couldn't name the mayor.

The current mayor, Jack Burwell, will be succeeded by council member

Fred Hughes in 1983.

"Where is Farmington Hills city hall?" also drew enlightening responses, Kurzeja said.

Eighteen didn't know; Tally Hall received two votes. One person cited the city of Farmington municipal building.

Three of 22 persons Kurzeja surveyed said they'd attended a council meeting.

The report cards of Burwell, Hughes, Jan Dolan, Jody Soronen, Charles Williams, William Lange and Benn Wolf were read aloud as Kurzeja rated each of them on visibility, community involvement, preparation for meetings, participation, attitude and attendance. Burwell earned 87 points for a B,

Lange 55 for an E, Dolan 98 points for an A, Williams a C with 75 points, Wolf 84 points for an E, Hughes 84 points for a C, and Soronen an A with 98 points.

Kurzeja based her findings on 22 council meetings and various civic functions.

She bestowed awards on Soronen for political involvement outside the council and on Dolan for outstanding governmental and humanitarian service, while Burwell was rated as the most improved council member.

"When he was first elected, I thought this man is off the wall, he was so opinionated and cantankerous. He did an excellent job as mayor and has made the greatest strides."

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