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Big switch due in education ranks

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington school trustees are expected to approve the appointments of three administrators, two at the secondary and one at the middle school levels at their next regular board meeting Tuesday, April 23.

Don Cowan, currently assistant principal at North Farmington High School, is expected to be appointed as a high school principal. Because administrative assignments throughout the district are not yet finalized, it's uncertain whether Cowan will replace Principal James Gelger at Harrison High.

BOTH PAMELA O'Malley, an assistant principal at Farmington High, and **Walt Scobie**, an assistant principal at Warner Middle School, were given one-year contracts for those positions a year ago. School trustees Tuesday are expected to approve the extension of their appointments.

O'Malley and Scobie were given one-year contracts when Gil Henderson, then principal of Warner Middle School, took a one-year sabbatical. Scobie, who had been an assistant principal at Farmington High, was appointed to fill Henderson's position.

In turn, O'Malley, formerly a North Farmington High counselor, was appointed to fill Scobie's post at Farmington High. O'Malley is the first woman in the school district to be appointed to an administrative post at the secondary level.

With Henderson's return, both O'Malley and Scobie will continue in their year-old assistant principal posts because Henderson will move into the secondary level.

Woman joins top echelon in district

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Pam O'Malley considers herself fortunate. After more than 17 years as a teacher, counselor and now an assistant high school principal, O'Malley still loves her job.

"I'm still enthusiastic. I like coming to work. Certainly I have my frustrations and disappointments. But there are successes, things we have accomplished," O'Malley said. She is the first woman in the Farmington district to be a secondary school administrator.

After a one-year contract as a temporary assistant principal at Farmington High School, O'Malley is expected to be appointed permanently by school trustees Tuesday.

"THIS ALL went through an interview process," she said. O'Malley spent one year at North Farmington High as a counselor and 12 years in the same position at Power Middle School.

O'Malley made district history this year as assistant principal at Farmington High.

Although she was the first woman secondary school administrator, O'Malley doesn't want to make a big deal of that.

"I can't say enough good things about the staff here at Farmington. They have gone out of their way to make sure I am not treated differently."

BECOMING ASSISTANT principal because of her qualifications, not her sex, is what's important, she said.

Superintendent Lewis Schulman agrees. "She, very frankly, is qualified. The quality of the person is the first factor to be taken into account," Schulman said of promotions.

"She is an outstanding human being. It isn't as though she just walked in the door," he said.

O'Malley earned her administrative



Pam O'Malley (second from left), assistant principal at Farmington high school, strolls through the halls with students Matthew Lundh, Bruce

Kratt, Sharon Wilson, Becky Philip, Chad Ravan and Dave Sanders. O'Malley is the first woman to hold the post in the Farmington school district.

It's kids who count for Cowan

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

When Don Cowan graduated from high school he was unsure of what to do with his life.

After a year of working to earn money for college, his two great interests — sports and people — led him into education.

"I'm a very child-oriented person," said Cowan, 46, an assistant principal at North Farmington High School. "I enjoy the relationship of people, whether students, staff or parents. So why not education?"

Now after 23 years in education as a teacher, coach, elementary principal and high school assistant principal, Cowan is about to take another step in his career as the district's newest high school principal.

The Farmington Board of Education is expected to appoint Cowan to his



Don Cowan enjoys the rapport he has with the students at North Farmington High School. Here he discusses upcoming senior class events with student representatives Moe Benda and Colleen Caray.

new post at their regular meeting Tuesday evening.

Cowan won't know, however, whether he will be the one to replace Harrison High School Principal James Gelger who is retiring at the end of the school year.

Cowan's expected appointment this week as a high school principal is another notch on his increasingly well-

rounded educational career. Besides his positions within the Farmington district, he also serves as a member of the Huron Valley Board of Education.

As a member of the Huron Valley board, Cowan has been able to add to his teaching and administrative work with experience on the policy-making

Just like you are."

Scobie enjoys middle school challenges

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

After about eight years as an assistant principal at Farmington High, Walt Scobie has been enjoying his return to the middle school world.

"Their energy level is really interesting to deal with on a day-to-day basis," said Scobie, who was given a one-year contract last year as assistant principal at Warner Middle School.

School trustees Tuesday are expected to officially appoint Scobie as the middle school's assistant principal.

Scobie's appointment marks his return to the junior high/middle school grades in which he originally began his career in education.

"I am very happy with this," Scobie



Walt Scobie

Public joins park debate

By Julie Brown
staff writer

In a move to garner more ideas on how to develop the 200-plus acre Spicer property, the city will hold a public hearing in mid-May.

The hearing on proposed uses of the property is scheduled for 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 14, in the Farmington Hills City Council chambers.

"It's a forum," said Eric Wurminger, Farmington Hills' assistant director of special services. The meeting's purpose is to get "as much public comment as can be made."

Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission will then make recommendations to the Farmington Hills City Council.

The 212-acre Spicer property is located west of Farmington Road and north of 10 Mile Road. A variety of uses have been suggested for the property.

A CITIZENS' advisory committee has been studying different uses for the property for the past several months. The committee recently came up with a list of suggested uses; a public survey is being done on those uses, which include:

- Botanical gardens
- Multipurpose meeting place
- Multipurpose youth sports field
- Nature interpretive center
- Picnic area and pavilion
- Trails (hiking, nature, cross country)

- Outdoor ice rink
- Working farm

The idea of the working farm "is to give suburban people, children as well as adults, an opportunity to observe a farm, he said. "This would be for public use."

The nature interpretive center would serve a similar purpose, allowing area residents to see various kinds of wildlife.

"There are some very unique flowers and trees" on the Spicer property, Wurminger said. "You don't have to drive up north to see wild flowers."

DUTCH ELM trees are also found on the property, he said. Such trees are less common today than in the past, due to the incidence of Dutch elm disease.

Botanical gardens would consist of "a groomed area where indigenous species would be highlighted and cared for," Wurminger said.

Some of those who participated in making the recommendations suggested using the property for a multipurpose meeting facility.

"A number of needs came out," he said. "This was almost as if it was a needs assessment."

The Parks and Recreation Commission had decided "that this was an excellent opportunity for community input," Wurminger said. "We really wanted to make sure they had every opportunity to tell us what they wanted."

Officials mum on library audit

By Julie Brown
staff writer

An investigation into the financial operations of the Farmington Community Library system is continuing.

The audit of the library system's financial records is being done by the accounting firm of Plante and Moran.

"I really have no information," said Jim Ebel, attorney for the Library Board of Trustees, when asked about the audit's status.

"I have no information on it at all," Ebel said when asked about the audit's cost and its funding source.

"I DON'T know," Farmington Hills

Mayor Jan Dolan said when asked about the audit's funding source. "I'm assuming it's coming out of library funds."

"We have not had a report back," she said Friday. "We haven't had any report. As of right now, I have not heard a thing, and I have not been in contact with any of their board members."

Library Board members, who are appointed by the city councils in Farmington and Farmington Hills, oversee the operations of the library system. Current library trustees are Ernie Sauter, Jim Wibby, Lois Carey and Jonathan Grant.

"I figure the audit was ordered, so let them do what they have to do," Do-

lan said. "I can't really help you any more."

"I had not heard when the completion date is," Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman said Friday. "I really haven't kept up with it day-to-day. I'm just waiting for the results, just like you are."

Beverly Papal, assistant library director, is continuing to supervise the operations of both the Farmington and Farmington Hills library branches. The assistant director said she could not discuss the situation in further detail but said she was in charge.

Members of the Farmington Community Library Board of Trustees met in a closed session Wednesday, April

10, with Library Director Gordon Lewis. Library trustees refused to reveal what actions, if any, were taken during the closed meeting.

A memo issued to library staff the day after the closed meeting referred to Lewis as being on "vacation."

"During Mr. Lewis' vacation, Mrs. Beverly Papal, assistant director, will be directing the activities of both libraries," the April 11 memo reads. "Any questions on matters regarding library affairs should be directed to Mrs. Papal."

The April 11 memo was signed by Ernie Sauter, president of the Library Board of Trustees.

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