

# Down Under

## Students look at life in Australia

**K**ENBROOK ELEMENTARY is off to Australia. Since the school mascot is the koala bear and March is Reading Month, all students in the Farmington Hills elementary will read their way to the land down under. Each page read will count as one of the 10,800 miles to Australia, so

everyone will record all pages read on an Aussie reading form. These will be collected and tabulated during the month by a parent volunteer. Each day will begin with Aussie Reading Time when everyone in the building will read for a set time. Margaret Tollefson, a native Australian who will serve as the school's resource person throughout the

month, started the school off to Australia at a schoolwide assembly March 1. Throughout the month, students will study various areas of the country including the geography, history, people and animals of Australia. On March 30, Celebration Day, classes will sing songs and share Australian lore.



Margaret Tollefson tells Kenbrook Elementary students about her native Australia, the island continent "down under."

Photos by Douglas Susalla



Margaret Tollefson uses a koala hand puppet to illustrate the native Australian animal to Kenbrook Elementary students. The koala is the mascot of the school as well.



Kenbrook Elementary third graders Rebecca Goldberg (left) and Danielle Cordaro talk about Australia with Margaret Tollefson after her assembly for the school. Here, she holds a sheep skin and a kangaroo pelt. Tollefson will be the school's resource person as students study her native country this year.

## inkwell

*Inkwell provides news about Farmington-area primary and secondary students and education issues. The column appears monthly as part of the Observer's "School Page." Send news items to The School Page, Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024. Include a telephone number where a contact person can be reached during the day. Items will not be taken over the phone.*

● **math standout**

Todd Rope, a senior at Harrison High School in Farmington Hills, placed in the top 50 of 19,300 high school students competing in the 33rd Annual Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition. Rope was honored at an awards program at Eastern Michigan University on Feb. 24, where he received a bronze medal and a \$350 scholarship for his performance.

● **logical response**

Parents have an alternative to nagging, warning or threatening their children, says school social worker Miriam Leventhal in a recent edition of the newsletter at Wood Creek Elementary in Farmington Hills. She said the concept of "logical consequences" can be used, giving the problem back to the child instead of making it the parents' problem. "For instance," she said, "if a youngster continually avoids picking up his toys in the family room, he can be given the choice of putting them away and playing with them the next day, or the choice of you putting them away and the toys not being available for play the next day."

● **petitions available**

Nominating petitions are now available for residents interested in running for the Farmington Board of Education. Two seats will be open this June, as the four-year terms of Janice Rolnick and Jack Inch expire. Those interested in running for the board should file petitions with the signatures of at least 20 registered voters of the district by 4 p.m. April 9. Petitions can be obtained at the Farmington Public Schools business office at 32500 Shawwassee, Farmington.

● **good manners**

Parents are staff have joined forces to encourage good citizenship. The Eagle Elementary PTA has initiated a new program to focus on one positive behavior each month. A "Manner Banner" displays the featured goal for all Eagle students to see as a visible reminder and reinforcement. Also new is the "Thinking Problem of the Month" at Eagle in West Bloomfield, but part of Farmington Public Schools. Each month in the "For Kids Only" newsletter, a thinking problem is presented to stimulate thinking skills of all students. From the correct answers, a drawing is held with two winners — early elementary and older grades — going to lunch with principal Sue Johnson.

● **power winners**

Three students from Power Middle School have been named winners in the 21st Annual America & Me Essay Contest, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance. Andrew Martin Bouchard won first place, Nathan Hoag second and Don Chamberlin, third. All received certificates for their achievement. The theme of this year's contest was "America And Me — How We Will Work Together."

As the school's first-place winner, Bouchard's name will also be engraved on a plaque for permanent display at the school. His essay will advance to the state level competition, from which the top 10 essays in Michigan will be selected. His essay talked about the issue of pollution, discussing the problem and solutions.

● **reading partners**

A fifth grade reading group at GHI Elementary is reading to fellow second graders at the Farmington Hills school. The fifth grade guides choose a story to read to their partners once each week. The story reading session is followed by questions, and a computer printout with the title of the story and some pictures from the story they read.

● **whale adopted**

Lovec Mike's second grade class at Longacre Elementary in Farmington has adopted a humpback whale named Patches, according to information from the school. Students did special jobs to collect money for the adoption.

The class learned that Patches is a usual summer resident of Stellwagen Bank in Cape Cod, Mass. He rounds up his meals by blowing thousands of bubbles beneath a school of fish. As the green fizz rises to the surface, the bubble cloud traps the fish and brings them to the surface too. The cloud hides Patches as he swims below the fish with an open mouth. He sometimes sneaks a quick snack by using clouds made by other whales.

● **self-esteem**

An assembly focusing on self-esteem will be held for Power and East middle school students in Farmington Hills in March.

Laurie Stewart, a nationally known public speaker and consultant, will give a talk March 27 entitled "You Are Someone Special." Her session will address self-esteem, getting along with others and positive peer pressure.

● **Eagle art**

Look for art by Eagle Elementary students at the two branches of the Farmington Community Library during March at the school's annual Elementary Student Art Show. Also, several students have work exhibited at rotating galleries at Botsford General Hospital in March and at the district's central office throughout March and April.

At the school itself, fifth graders pop art food sculptures are displayed; in the media center and in the main hall showcases. In the future, watch for flying fish in handmade papers by first graders in the main hall and media center.

● **like dad**

Paul Steven Levin, a student at Harrison High and a resident of Farmington Hills, was named a National Merit Finalist in the 1990 program. Paul's father, Richard, was a 1980 National Merit Scholarship finalist in Massachusetts.

● **good sports**

Harrison High School was selected a recipient of the "Good Sports are Winners!" sportsmanship award during the Michigan High School Athletic Association fall tournaments in football and soccer, according to information from the Farmington school district.

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