

Community Corner

This week's question: In general, who has it easier in life, men or women?

We asked this question in the Wash Hut Coin Laundry in Farmington.



"Oh, men have it easier. Women do all the chores. Some men are real chauvinists."
— Zorayda Calderon
Farmington



"Men, of course. They have women to do their work for them."
— Joanna Moody
Farmington Hills



"Men have it easier. I mean, look at most of the people in this laundromat."
— Laverne West
Farmington Hills



"Men have it easier. A woman's day is never done."
— James Mansfield
Farmington



"Men. We usually don't do the housework. That's reason enough right there."
— W.D. McMaster
Farmington Hills



"I don't really know. My husband and I are equal. I do the inside work. He works outside."
— Jill Polyrkyk
Walled Lake

Farmington district awaits repayment of debt

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per year plus interest of 6.5 percent, starting July 1, to reimburse money they have already spent.
But Farmington officials planned to receive a lump sum of at least \$2.8 million, as noted in the financial statement for the year ending June 30, 1990.
Although still confident the debt will be repaid, "we don't know what we're going to get in the long run," said Farmington Superintendent Michael Flanagan. "I've heard everything from \$2 million to \$5 million. It's all speculation."
If the district is forced to lower the receivable amount in its financials, it could be put into a deficit position for the year because of other financial hardships which are eating away at the district's reserves, Flanagan said.
The state has recaptured several million dollars from the district this year, and a Feb. 5 proposal to in-

crease local operating millage was defeated.
FARMINGTON IS the district most heavily affected by five years worth of accounting problems at Oakland Schools, because it contracts to handle the bulk of center special education programs for the county. The intermediate district reimburses local districts for those programs which serve students from throughout the county.
Money left over is then allocated to local special education programs in individual districts, said Oakland ISD superintendent Bill Keane.
Overall, some \$5.3 million was misappropriated at the county level, giving some districts more for their local programs and leaving money due for county center programs. It will have to be collected from districts which received too much, and repaid to districts such as Farmington.
"I feel confident over five years we will get the full amount of money," said Flanagan, who said the district's accountants are considering the issue on a year-by-year basis. "But until you get all that money back (from the districts which must repay it), nothing's cast in stone."
Oakland ISD board president Helon Prutow, who is also a trustee on the Farmington school board, said she is confident the money will be reapportioned. "There wasn't any money missing. It just wasn't being monitored carefully enough," she explained.
PRUTOW SAID the county changed accounting firms and got rid of its controller because of the

problems which came to light last year. The multi-million dollar shortfall was noted as a receivable in the Farmington district's annual financial statement last fall, and Flanagan said at that time he was concerned and watching the problem carefully.
The \$4.6 million represents more than half a year's funding for special education programs reimbursed to Farmington, which has an \$8 million budget for the county programs it handles. Flanagan said local districts normally carry costs of the program until they get paid back. "It's part of the cost of doing business, but we're never this far behind," he said.
The interest provision in the repayment plan should help districts recoup these losses, Flanagan said.

The plan was proposed early this month by Oakland County superintendents, and is expected to be officially approved by the Oakland board this spring, when a 3-year special education plan is considered. The county will also work with local school business officials to keep the future program running smoothly, and will consider cost cutbacks, Prutow and Keane said.
Farmington plans to downsize the percentage of programs it handles for Oakland schools in the near future.
"We're phasing out of the center programs because of space," Prutow, adding that there is a national emphasis on including special education students in regular local programs.
The Farmington district currently has Oakland programs for trainable mentally impaired of all ages.

St. Paul's plans week to celebrate

St. Paul's Lutheran School in Farmington Hills will celebrate National Lutheran Schools Week March 3-10.
Each day will have special events in celebration of the programs offered by the more than 100 Lutheran Schools in Michigan and 1,000 across the nation.
Both President Bush and Governor Engler have signed proclamations designating this week as Lutheran Schools Week. The theme this year is "Sharing the Caring Christ Through Nurture and Education."
St. Paul's activities will be:
• Tuesday, March 5 — A chapel presentation will be led by sixth grade teacher Denise Noffze. Parents of the students are invited to attend during the school day at 29815 Middlebelt Road for an Open House.
• Wednesday, March 6 — Students are encouraged to participate in a "Clash Day" by wearing clashing colors or patterns in clothes.
• Thursday, March 7 — A Community Open House Day will be held. Classes will be open for visits by parents who might be interested in enrolling their child in St. Paul's Lutheran School. Students are encouraged to wear clothing colored red and white, St. Paul's school colors.
• Friday, March 8 — Students and teachers are encouraged to wear a favorite sweatshirt and jeans.
The class which has the best participation for the week in the "Dress of the Day" contest will receive a Spirit Trophy for display in the classroom for a month.
Further information of these events or the full-day kindergarten to grade eight program offered by St. Paul's Lutheran School can be obtained by calling the school at 474-2488.

Schools to change election precincts

By Casey Huns
staff writer
Farmington school officials say they will change the make-up of district election precincts this summer, but there will be no change to a policy requiring residents to request absentee ballot applications.
Director of business support services, Betsy Rothrock, said the district was working to change precincts even before the Feb. 5 special school election, when more than 10,000 voters jammed polling places to defeat two operating tax increase requests.
Twenty-one percent of registered, active voters went to the polls — the highest turnout in the district in years.
Residents complained to whoever would listen about long lines and up to an hour of waiting. The turnout prompted the district to swear in more workers and caused those at all the city of Farmington Hills clerk's office — where the ballots were counted — to spend most of the night waiting for results.
"Obviously, the turnout reinforced what I already knew," Rothrock

said. "There are going to have to be some changes." She said changes would not be made before the annual June election, but would be done for future elections.
THE DISTRICT is considering adding one or more precincts to the four already in place, and restructuring them to better handle crowds and to allow some people on the growing northwest side of the district to be closer to the polls, Rothrock said.
The Farmington Public School District serves residents in the city of Farmington, most of the residents of Farmington Hills, and small portion of southeast West Bloomfield Township. By far, the largest number of voters reside in the Hills, where absentee ballot applications are automatically sent out to about 11,000 residents over the age of 60 for city, state and national elections.
That is not a policy in the Farmington school district, nor is it done in many other cities or school districts, said Hills city clerk Kathy Dornan. She said it is more efficient for her office to do it, and it is a policy of the city council. "It costs a lot of money to do it," Dornan said.

"The city offers it to our residents as a service."
BETWEEN THE initial mailing of ballot applications (which must be signed before a ballot is mailed out), then the mailing of ballots to those who request them, the city spends thousands of dollars per election.
Some seniors, like Farmington Hills resident Charlie Hite whose wife is bedridden at home, believe the district should adopt a policy of sending out absentee applications because it is difficult for many people to leave their homes to vote. "The worst thing is they (the schools) don't automatically send them out," he said. "They're trying to get the ones who are least likely to vote, not to vote."
But Rothrock said the district simply does not have the resources to do such a mailing. "We are not equipped to do that," she said. The city of Farmington Hills does all the district's election-ballot-counting and keeps the district's records, in return for allowing the city to use schools as polling places during their elections.
Since school districts are a separate taxing entity, they are in fully

charge of their own elections and setting such election policy.
Dornan and Rothrock said the issue of absentee balloting, highlighted during the recent school election campaign, was somewhat distorted by advertisements run by Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co., a taxpayer in Farmington Hills. The ads stated that "city officials automatically send absentee ballots to all senior citizens (60 years and older) for general elections."
Farmington Hills sends applications, not ballots. Dornan said it is illegal to send actual ballots unless the city receives a written request.
In the city of Farmington, clerk Josephine Bushey said the city sends out applications only after they receive a request, which can be made by telephone.
In West Bloomfield Township, a spokeswoman in the clerk's office said residents over 65 are sent out a letter advising them of the absentee option. If they so request, they can automatically receive a ballot application for local, state and national elections.
But school elections are separate, she added.

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