

# Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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## Other schools eyed

# Oldest junior high to shut down

By RON GARBINSKI

Farmington Junior High School will close its doors to students at the end of the 1975-76 school year.

In a 5 1/2 vote Tuesday night, the Farmington School Board accepted an administrative recommendation to close the school. Trustee Mike Spieker expressed his concern about the school closing. The closing of Farmington Junior is necessary due to declining enrollments and lack of funds to keep it operating efficiently, administrators said.

"I can't justify cutting supplies, programs and other things needed in the district in order to keep Farmington Junior open," said Board President William Corliss.

"If the district cannot justify keeping five junior high schools in the district

open, then the only recourse we have is to close one of them," he continued.

"THE BOARD must decide what is in the best interest of the district and not react to emotions. If we feel the district can't efficiently operate the five junior highs, then we must do what is best for all students," he said.

The district has been considering closing Farmington Junior High for at least two years. Because of a steady decline in the number of students attending the school, school officials say students must make the adjustment to new junior highs.

"We have to say that the district has reached a point where it needs to house the students going to Farmington elsewhere," said Lewis Schulman, assistant superintendent of secondary education for the district.

"Closing the school will mean adjusting the students and making them go to new schools. The administration doesn't

like this move any more than the parents do," he said. "But it has come to that point and it should come."

"I hate to put it on a money basis, but that's what the district must do. We are faced with a \$1.3 million deficit and find that we can't operate the school profitably anymore."

"Maybe if the community had more money to give the district, we could keep the school open. But at this time, we aren't operating with a balance budget and must do something to help cope with that fact," he explained.

In 1974, the enrollment at Farmington Junior was 977 students. During the next year, that number dropped to 539 and officials now say that the student population at the school this year is only 474.

"That number will continue to decline over the next several years," Schulman said. "Housing starts are down in the com-

munity and projections for immediate future increases is doubtful."

"Enrollment projections for the next four years show that enrollments will decline 2,000 in our district. In fact, to be completely honest with you, if we move students to other schools from Farmington Junior, in about three or four years the enrollments of those other junior highs will be about the same as they are now because of declining enrollments," he continued.

Students affected by the closing of Farmington Junior will be transferred to the other four junior high schools in the district.

The school board and administration has no definite plans on the transfer of students, but they did say students will be moved to East, Duncei and Power junior high schools.

Students from Farmington Junior High won't be bused to Warner because the school is too far from their neighborhoods, officials said.

The district plans to bus the students in a three-way split among the junior highs, each receiving approximately the same number of students.



Connie Glowacki (center) and Anne Carey (left), both eighth grade students at Farmington Junior High School, lead the students' "Save Our School" movement to the district's school board meeting Tuesday night to have their opinions heard about the closing of Farmington Junior High at the end of the school year. See related pictures on page 3. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Pass-fail system probe launched by district

By STEVE BARNABY Farmington editor

The pass-fail grading system will be expanded in the Farmington School District next year.

The school board voted this week to have the curriculum committee, in conjunction with Assistant Superintendent Lewis Schulman, map out a plan to be considered by the entire board.

The study was prepared by Trustee Gary Lichman.

"I don't see any reason why this couldn't work," he told the board this week. "I've wanted to see this concept expanded for years. I want to get something in motion and off dead center."

Presently the district has a limited pass-fail grading system which is disbursed among the various junior and senior high schools. But Lichman would like to see the concept expanded so students wouldn't be cheated out of a scholarship or membership in an honor society because of a low grade in something like physical education or music.

ALTHOUGH THE board agreed with Lichman that a study should be made, some reservations were expressed.

"I hope it isn't being suggested that students take classes in which they can get 'As.' If it is, I think we're in a lot of trouble," said Trustee Mike Spieker.

He suggested students be allowed to take a pass-fail grade in classes after having completed graduation requirements.

"I'm opposed to the concept, saying students should be required to take courses which give them a 'well-rounded' education."

Trustee Alvin Struble expressed opposition to the concept, saying that students should be required to take courses which give them a "well-rounded" education.

"I think it is unrealistic to avoid courses to get honors. Students must have the courage to take courses in which they might not do well," she said.

"They've got to learn to take chances. That's life," she commented.

Lichman lashed out at Mr. Struble's remarks, saying she was expecting too much from the students.

"You're saying that some student in the seventh or eighth grade is supposed to make a gutsy decision. I don't think a person that age is capable. A lot of people in

their 40s are incapable of making such a decision," Lichman said.

LICHMAN ACCUSED Struble of reverse discrimination against students who are classified as academically talented.

"This has nothing to do with honor or dishonor societies. It has to do with education for all people. I can't let you impugn people who are academically talented," he said.

"I wasn't until this year that we've talked about the academically talented. For years we've been talking about the other young people," he continued.

Lichman was referring to the programs established over the years for students classified as academically disabled. Mrs. Struble is in sympathy with those programs.

Board President William Corliss said he supported the pass-fail notion, but with reservations.

"I only support this on an optional program. Some students may want their grades recorded for vocational courses so they too could receive scholarships in their area of interest," he said.

SOME STUDENTS attending the other junior highs may also be transferred to different schools in order to equalize student enrollments at each building.

Officials anticipate East Junior will receive the most transferred students because it is the largest junior high facility in the district.

"We have tried at least 10 different plans when we considered closing Farmington Junior," Schulman said. "In these plans we tried hard to have students stay together who come from the same neighborhoods."

"Our main objective as administrators is to see that neighborhood groups remain unbroken in the transfers," Schulman added.

Many board members had concerns whether students would be moved to other senior highs, but school administrators said that when students finish sixth grade, they will return to their neighborhood senior high to finish their secondary education.

Considering the future of school enrollments in the district over the next several years, Supr. Martinus Van-Arnede said the future appears rather bleak for the district.

"EVEN WITH increased enrollments in the year 1977-78, enrollment will still be below 1975 levels," he said. "This school

(Continued on page 3A)



Lloyd Pelton of Farmington sits on the hood of his 1957 Chevrolet Nomad. He recently had his life-long collection of poetry published.

## Poet publishes homespun tales

I'm to weed out the dark side and let in the light. Come into my life like a warm blanket. Now first there's me, as the family's head. (Unless my good wife gets the idea instead.)

It wasn't unusual for Lloyd Pelton, 65, of Farmington Hills, to start a poem on his workbench at the Fisher Body plant and alternately add a line to the poem and a stanza to a collection.

"My job is to fight through the cares of the day. And I come up always smiling, depicting the fray. To bring home the victuals and shelter the brood. And see that they don't rust in the noose.

The poems he wrote during the 43 years before his retirement were crowded into an old black folder and forgotten.

College and enlisted the aid of instructor James Fader.

He read the poems, liked them and conferred with Mrs. Pettit about some changes in the punctuation.

Seeing her father's poetry published in a paperback edition is the culmination of an idea that formed when she was 10 years old. She had taken her father's poems to school and read a few to the class.

"I remember my father told me, 'Now, don't you lose one. And I lost one,' she recalls sheepishly.

She remembers that years stood in her eyes as she read to her classmates a poem about a little girl who had died.

"I thought they were fantastic then and I do now," she says.

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He writes for himself, for members of his family or for a special occasion.

Some people really go overboard on them. I have no way of evaluating whether someone will enjoy them or not," he says.

Pelton describes experiences and emotions which his readers have shared with their families.

"The Truth Hurts" describes the time he bought his six-month-old son an electric train for Christmas. He really bought it for himself, he admits.

"I write about real life situations," he explains.

One of his favorite poems, "The World Against Six," describes the members of his family of six, their love for each other and the strength of family ties.

He wrote his first poem in 18 when someone thought it would be nice to affix a poem to a cabinet.

IT WAS ABOUT three years before he wrote another poem. Many of his poems were written when he found himself among the unemployed during the Depression.

"I had a lot of time on my hands," he explains.

Writing isn't a chore for him; he can

By STEVE BARNABY Farmington editor

Shoplifting and theft of auto parts and accessories are on the increase in the City of Farmington.

In a report before city council this week, Public Safety Director Daniel Byrnes said increases in these crimes have caused a 10 per cent increase in Part I crimes.

Part I crimes include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny over \$50 and auto theft.

"DESPITE THE FACT that all Part I offenses show a 10 per cent increase, the figures are encouraging inasmuch as we are showing decreases in all categories, with the exception of the larceny classification, which is a difficult, if not impossible, offense to combat from the law enforcement standpoint," Byrnes told the council in presenting the department's first quarter report.

While three shoplifting cases were reported by last year at this time, 13 have been reported during the first quarter of 1976.

The large increase in shoplifting indicates that store owners are doing a better job of in-store security and are ap-

preventing offenders, said Byrnes.

Concerning theft of auto accessories, Byrnes said: "A large number of these thefts were thefts of citizen hand radios and tape decks, both increasingly popular items among thieves."

During the first quarter of this year, 32 larceny of motor vehicle parts were reported, an increase of 21 over last year's first quarter.

While shoplifting and auto accessory theft are on the increase, aggravated assault has decreased 50 per cent and forcible entry burglaries have decreased by 44 per cent.

Overall burglaries decreased by 33 per cent, as compared to the same period last year.

PART II OFFENSES are down 38 per cent over the same period in 1975, said Byrnes. Part II offenses include vandalism, drug violations, driving under the influence of alcohol, disorderly offenses and liquor law violations.

"Most notable decreases are vandalism—down 50 per cent, drug violations—down 47 per cent, drunk driving violations—down 52 per cent, liquor law violations—down 46 per cent, and disorderly offenses—down 52 per cent," he said.

Part III offenses, which consist of miscellaneous complaints, have increased 15 per cent over the same period in 1975, he said.

"Increases in Part III crimes are normal as the population of the community increases, traffic volumes increase due to area development, and we can expect continued rises in demands for services which normally fall in the Part III category," he said.

Juvenile complaints are down 39 per cent, while animal complaints have decreased by 49 per cent.

"Total increases for Part I, II, and III offenses was five per cent more than the same period in 1975," he said.