

Highmeadow highlights year's program

Science stars in student show

By LYNN ORR

The Nixon-Frost interview may have received high ratings last week, but some Farmington parents bypassed the show to get the real story in what their children had been doing all year in science.

Highmeadow Elementary School's Science-Metric Fair was the big event, and the SCIS or science curriculum, in its second year in Farmington schools, was the star of the show.

Grades K through 6 were represented in the fair, as each class set up an exhibit of the year's science events in the multi-purpose room.

"We want to give the parents an overview of the whole year's work," says Carolyn Plysek, principal of the Holly Hills subdivision school.

Ms. Plysek explained how the SCIS program differs from the textbook approach to science.

"The program is divided into the physical (organic) and material objects, like energy sources. Each teacher has a kit, with books that coordinate the material with experiments and projects."

"A HANDS-ON approach, rather than textbooks, is the intent of the program," says Ms. Plysek.

Teacher Julie Wilson's fifth grade class, for example, used the SCIS kits to run experiments with crickets and frogs, a life cycle study.

"The kids figured out how many mustard seeds the crickets ate and learned to average. Now we've put the crickets in with the frogs and

they'll figure out how many crickets the frogs average a day," Ms. Wilson explains. "I told them they probably wouldn't hear too much chirping as the days go by."

Some of her students planted terrariums, bringing plants from home to use in containers provided by Ms. Wilson. The project also served as a Mothers' Day gift-making event for some students.

Many of the classes' projects included fish tanks filled with some form of animal life, including turtles, fish and frogs. And the students learned how to write lab reports.

"9:30 a.m.: Mark's fish isn't moving," reads one report. "1 p.m.: Mark has a dead fish."

A third grade class did a wildflower project during Michigan Week, and

Lisa Jean and her mother dug up wildflowers from their yard and brought the potted plants to school so all the children could learn to identify wildflowers and avoid tramping on endangered varieties such as Jack-in-the-Pulpit.

Second-graders displayed their own inventions, like Al Hamer's electronic pencil and Maureen Surman's electric eraser. The students connected the familiar objects to batteries to achieve an electronic effect.

First-graders made their own flowerpots, while another class did a generation study, tracing their ancestry. Paper airplanes, used for flight studies, were in evidence at various exhibits.

SPECIAL EDUCATION students at Highmeadow had their own display—complete with teacher Gale Johnson's rock tumbler used to polish rocks. The special education students planted a sandbox with a variety of seeds, and their produce, including beans on the vine, were already visible.

Kindergarten teacher Rosalie Perry goes it on her own, since the SCIS program doesn't extend to kindergarten classes. Her displays included toast coloring tests, in which students colored test to see if color made a difference in taste; a shake and listen test to match sounds; and the beginnings of graphing with a class quiz on favorite smells.

Volunteer worker is named to panel

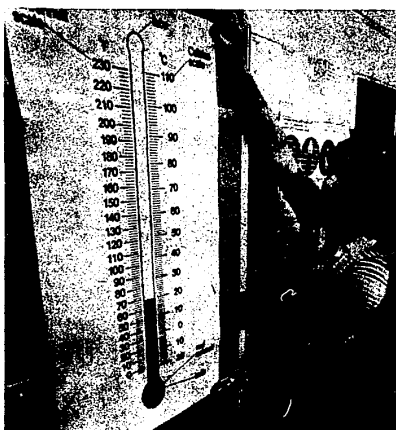
A Farmington homemaker has been appointed to the Michigan State Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities. The council will take a lead role in strengthening services to Michigan's developmentally disabled through advocacy, planning, coordination and evaluation of state human service programs.

Mrs. Torrance Etheridge, 29636 Middle Belt, Farmington, has been named by Gov. William Milliken to the group. She is a homemaker and a volunteer on behalf of retarded children and adults. She is a member of the American Association on Mental Deficiency and the Michigan and National Associations for Retarded Citizens. She is associated with New Horizons Workshop for the Handicapped.

SIU honors student from Farmington

A Farmington Hills student was among 1,500 undergraduates who were cited for outstanding academic achievement at the Southern Illinois University-Carbondale annual honors day.

Scott A. Jensen, 15530 Lyn Castle, Farmington Hills, achieved an overall average of 3.5 or better to win the recognition.



Highmeadow Elementary School teacher Julie Wilson backs her class exhibit with a metric scale her students have used throughout the year. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)



Mark Schwartz (left) and Scoti Clayton check out the progress of their class food chains on exhibit at the school's science-metric fair.

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