

Farmington Observer-Excentric

Volume 87 Number 92

Monday, September 6, 1978

Farmington, Michigan

10 Pages

Twenty Five Cents

Alternatives pondered

Task force labors over declining enrollment

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Cross-district busing, shift of school boundaries, elementary school closing or formation of middle schools all are possibilities facing Farmington School District students this year.

That's the alternatives faced by the district's Task Force on Declining Enrollment, which must make a recommendation to the school board by November. The force was appointed to deal with the declining enrollment crisis which has haunted the district for the past four years.

Although total elementary enrollment is decreasing, it is on the increase in some sections of the district, which compounds the problem, according to school administration officials.

"We have to deal with an increase in the school population in the west end of the district," said Asst. Supt. Lawrence Freedman at this week's task force session.

"More young families have moved into that part of the district due to its development."

"In the eastern end, we've faced with a decline in the school population. The community there is older and more stabilized," he said.

FREEDMAN ESTIMATES that 8,338 elementary students will attend Farmington schools this year. Last year, there were 8,538 elementary students in the district.

District officials admitted overestimating the student decline for the 1978-79.

To help solidify the figures, the task force has requested that the student head count usually taken on the fourth Friday of the school year, be completed by Sept. 17, the second Friday.

The force will meet on Sept. 20, hopefully to consider those figures.

One alternative, busing, is feasible if the state comes through with funds to finance it. The district could get 60 per cent of the cost of busing through the state, according to Freedman. The payments are based on

THE GROUP ALSO is considering closing one of the lesser populated elementary schools in the east section of the district. Earlier this year the board closed Farmington Junior High School.

dictates a trend of decrease in the eastern section, according to Heckler.

In Wooddale Elementary School in the western end of the district, 60 kindergarten students will be taught by one teacher.

In William Grace School, 63 children are being taught by one full-time and one part-time teacher. The lowest teacher-pupil ratio is in High Meadow school's kindergarten, where 34 students are instructed by one teacher.

Last year, overcrowded Forest Elementary School was relieved by sending some of its students to Fairview and Wooddale elementary schools, Freedman said.

Bus schedules page 3A

numbers of students bused more than one mile.

Task force advisor Dr. Stanley Heckler is meeting with local developers to help ascertain how many children might be coming into the district.

School officials have found that elementary school population has sometimes increased when nearby apartments decide to change their adult-only policy and admit children.

Heckler, a Michigan State University professor, advises against implementation of the middle school concept.

"Middle schools place sixth, seventh and eighth grades in the same building. You don't go to middle schools just to house kids," he said.

"You have to redevelop the programs. You just can't make it another high school."

"Junior high has typically evolved to a departmentalized miniature high school. With four years in high school, you can develop programs more."

Farmington High School Principal Gerald Potter concurred, saying that such classes as music, sports and languages can be better developed with a four-year high school.

Part of the criteria used in considering closing is a listing of available class space in elementary schools, according to officials.

Compiled by Heckler, the list contrasts the number of rooms available within a school with the number of rooms being used.

The student-teacher ratio of each of the elementary schools has also been listed. Kindergarten class sizes are listed separately and used as indicators of future student enrollment.

"With declining enrollments, we're going to have to decide if we're going to close schools," said Leon Egrin of West Bloomfield, a member of the task force.

"You can't close down a school just because it doesn't have a music room," he said.

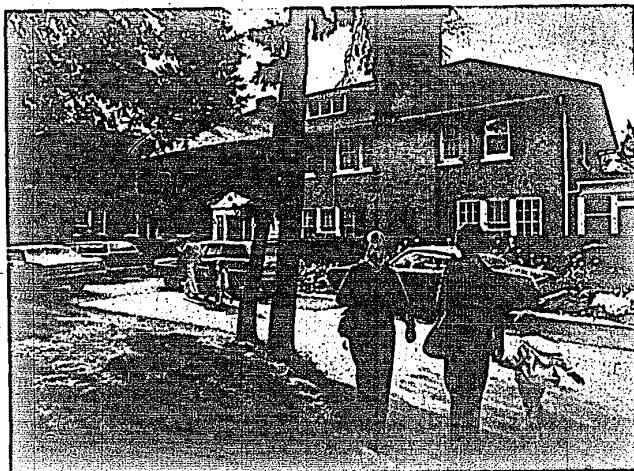
"Are you willing to do a positive and progressive thing?" Heckler asked. "and move some kids into an underutilized school."

Asst. Supt. Lynn Nutter reminded the group that its purpose is to gather facts, make a recommendation that will match the school's financial situation and suggest other considerations for future changes.

One section in the east, with a student population of 329 elementary children in 1974-75, has 300 in 1975-76, according to Heckler's statistics.

In the west, one section went from 85 children in 1974 to 98 in 1975.

Although the rate isn't dramatic, it in-



Come one, come all

Farmington area residents can have a good old time this fall if they come and register for the classes at the Farmington Community

Center. To see what's in store that could be of interest to you, turn to the Farmington Suburban Life section. (Staff photo by Harry Mautho)

SLABAM

Racquet ball comes to Farmington

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

The rat-infested, soot-covered warehouse that stood vacant on Nine Mile Road near the 1406 expressway in Farmington has disappeared.

Art Swanson, a Livonia contractor, has transformed that dismal building into the orange and yellow Racquetball Club of Farmington.

"I hadn't even heard of racquetball until January," he said. "I was approached to invest in a racquetball club then and I decided that rather than invest in someone else's, I would have my own."

"Racquetball is such a fast growing sport. And in any business that's growing fast, if you can get in on the ground floor, it's a profitable venture," said Swanson.

who also owns a mobile home court in Farmville.

"It's the fastest growing sport in America," he said.

Four months after he purchased the warehouse in April, Swanson had rebuilt the interior and sandblasted the exterior.

"It was as black as sin," he said of the building's brick walls.

THE BRICK EMERGED with an orange tint, after sandblasting.

Sacks of rotting potatoes and a colony of rats had to be removed from the interior.

In order to build the 30 foot high, 25 foot wide and 40 foot long courts, Swanson had to remove one floor of the warehouse and dig down an additional two feet for a new first floor.

"I won't say how much I paid for the building or how much it cost me to renovate. That's between me and Uncle Sam," he said.

Although some of the courts are ready for play, the club is still under construction. Swanson, 43, wants to finish a second floor gallery for spectators and to install child care center.

The 22-court facility will have a sauna and an exercise room.

A new roof also has been added to the structure.

"Really, all I bought was the four walls and the land," Swanson said.

He isn't quite sure what the venture will cost. "I've been so busy with the planning and building, I haven't really thought about the operating expenses," Swanson said.

The club, which opened Sept. 1, is in competition with three other facilities in Southfield and Livonia.

The Farmington courts offer six-week lessons for novices and intermediate players.

Racquetball is essentially handball played with a shortened version of a tennis racket and a tennis ball.

The ball can hit all four walls or the ceiling. Players must hit the ball before it bounces twice on the court's wooden floor.

Patricia Kries, of Redford Township, is the teaching pro at the club.

"It's a fun game," said Ms. Kries.

THE NATIONAL PADDLEBALL champion for 1974, Ms. Kries was introduced to racquetball two years ago. She wasn't an instant convert. Although the two games are similar paddleball is much faster because of the solid paddle used.

"I thought it was silly stuff," she remembered. She changed her mind after losing a racquetball tournament in Lansing.

After practicing all summer, she placed second in her next racquetball tournament.

"Racquetball isn't a difficult game," she said, comparing it to tennis. "There's no



ART SWANSON



PATRICIA KRIS

net and you don't have to worry about putting the ball in someone else's court."

"Men remember when you heat them," she said, with a pleased grin. "They can tell you the exact date, time, and place."

She earned a bachelor's degree in parks and recreation at Eastern Michigan University and is working toward her master's.

The club won't force competition on its players but it will offer teams and tournaments.

"Some women are scared of competition," she said. "They think they're not good enough. When I give a lesson, we don't keep score. Who cares if you win or lose?"

"About 30 per cent of racquetball players are women," Swanson said. "At night, we expect to get men between 18 and 32

years old coming in to play."

Players can rent hour testis in 12-week blocks. A daytime block is \$9. Night-time blocks cost \$17.

Courts can be rented by the hour for \$7 between 6 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and after 11 p.m. weekdays.

Hourly rates rise to \$9 between 4 and 10:30 p.m. weekdays.

Weekend players pay \$9 per hour to play between 6 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. from 4 p.m. to midnight. The fee is \$8 per hour.

Students under 18, with identification, can play for \$3.

Racquet rental is \$1.

The courts close at midnight. Reservations can be made 48 hours in advance.

Lessons are given in coed classes. Six weeks of day classes cost \$27. Night classes cost \$32. The price includes court rental and \$1 for the instructor.

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WINNING COMBINATION

The Farmington High School varsity cheerleading squad has come home with some trophies. To see how the girls did, turn to page 4A.

Media buffs' fun offered at OCC

Media buffs can get in the swing of things by taking advantage of a number of classes being offered at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus this fall.

Registration begins today and runs through Sept. 8. Registration details can be obtained by calling CR-8400.

The communication arts and technology department will offer courses in the fundamentals of speech, public speaking and forensic activities.

"Forensic activities is an exciting service course," says Forensic Coach Joan Leininger. "Students who participate in forensic contests or debates around the state with the Orchard Ridge team may elect this course."

In addition, students may study acting, introduction to film, and play production for school and community.

The department also offers courses in graphics and commercial art, photography, library technical assisting, audio-visual technology, and broadcasting.

FUNDAMENTALS OF CINEMATOGRAPHY will meet on Wednesdays, from 14 p.m. on Thursday, from 7:10 p.m. Dr. Dan Greenberg, of the new communication arts and technology department will teach the day session. Vic Hunka, a producer at WKTV-TV, will conduct the evening session.

"Fundamentals of cinematography will give students an opportunity to script, shoot, and edit motion picture film, utilizing the extensive range of equipment available at the campus."

Although the class is worth four credit hours, it may be audited. Auds is available to students only at registration and may not change once regular registration is completed.

Broadcasting courses include Journalism 155-broadcasting news, communications 156-broadcast production laboratory, and speech 153-introduction to broadcasting.

Broadcasting news will be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. It is a reporting and writing course in which students will prepare and script news programs for radio and TV productions.

Broadcast production lab will be offered at the same time on Wednesdays from 5:30 p.m. Students will produce radio and television news programs.

Introduction to broadcasting will be offered on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, from 2:40 p.m. Students will study history, development and operations of American broadcasting, culminating the semester by producing radio and television tapes.

Introduction to film, a three-credit course, will be on Mondays from 14 p.m. Tuesdays from 14 p.m. or 7:10 p.m. Wednesdays from 7:10 p.m. and Thursdays from 12:30-3 p.m.

THE COURSE IN THE HISTORY and appreciation of the motion picture film

will involve students in discussion of feature length films viewed in class.

Among the 24 films, 15 shorts, and nine features to be screened in the class are the original, uncut version of "King Kong," the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers musical "Top Hat," and the Humphrey Bogart classic "Casablanca."

The course is dually designated as Theater 150 or Humanities 150.

A course in communications for career students, will be taught on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, at 9 p.m.

The course is designed to meet the student's needs for practical training in solving communication problems in work situations. Students learn effective techniques to verbal and non-verbal behavior applicable in interviewing, briefing, telephone and handling complaints as well as the methods utilized in explaining equipment and processes.

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Racquetball buffs will be able to watch others perfect their games from the second floor gallery of the Racquetball Club of Farmington. These two boys spent most of the club's opening day introducing themselves to the game. (Staff photo by Harry Mautho)