

Farmington Observer

Volume 88 Number 47

Thursday, March 31, 1977

Farmington, Michigan

100 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

©1977 Scholastic Communications Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

Schools seek fund renewal on Tuesday ballot

By LYNN ORR

More than \$2 million in revenues for Farmington Public Schools hinge on whether school district voters approve a four-mill renewal April 5.

And while school district officials believe voters will retain the millage, along with the record of never turning down a renewal, they hope voters are aware of the price of a renewal defeat.

Reduction of teachers resulting in a higher student-teacher ratio; reduced funds for supplies and texts; the elimination of the planned K-12 academically talented program and all reading services; elimination or reduction of such elementary programs as art, music, physical education and media services; and reduction of class offerings are some of the options facing Supt. Lewis Schulman if the renewal fails.

"These programs are what we would have to consider if the renewal is defeated," he said.

"WHAT WE HAVE for our population is some options, and the decision is up to them."

District officials are especially concerned about the outcome of the vote

in the wake of recent hikes in property assessments in both Farmington and Farmington Hills and the general economy crunch.

"What people don't realize is that school district revenues don't receive all the benefit of the reassessments," said Dick Wallace, resident representative on the millage committee.

"Because of declining enrollment and the complicated state aid formula, even with the renewal, the school district's revenues will only go up three per cent."

"Three per cent is insufficient to carry on good programs," the district has also felt the inflation pinch in terms of rising utility costs, insurance premiums and even paper costs, Wallace added.

"THREE PER CENT isn't overabundant when the average yearly inflation rate is pushing seven per cent," added school board treasurer Gary Lichtman.

Wallace doesn't discount the fact that the renewal may not be enough to cover this year's proposed budget.

"I don't believe the district will be able to avoid asking for an increase in millage at a later date to maintain

our present program, which supports the urgency of the renewal now," he said.

Schulman and Lichtman both contend they will consider additional millage if the need arises later in the year.

Resident representative Bud Pickett added that the last millage increase was passed in 1975, a four-mill increase and the first since 1968.

"We've had reductions in millage also," he added. The board reduced the variable rate by two mills when the amount required to pay its debts went down two mills.

The committee was especially concerned that voters understand the importance of the election.

"The four-mill renewal defeat would cost \$2,142,000 in terms of revenues, but it also means additional unemployment compensation if we have to lay off teachers," Schulman said.

One of the major reasons for supporting the millage, Wallace believes, is that surveys indicate that the educational system of a community tops the list of reasons why people move to a particular community.

"FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS is in the top quarter economically of the county in terms of school districts; however, our tax rate and expense per student is near the bottom of the top third," Wallace said.

"To be in the top third is the only way to have a quality education, and I think our kids deserve more than the bottom of the ladder in terms of effort."

Senior citizens, particularly those in low- or fixed-income brackets, are sometimes hesitant to vote millages,

said Lichtman. However, senior citizens and older residents who qualify can receive a rebate on their property tax from the state.

Schulman emphasized that administrators are willing to help senior citizens apply for the benefits of the Homestead Act, and a pamphlet titled "The Circuit Breaker," containing income tax information, is available at administration offices.

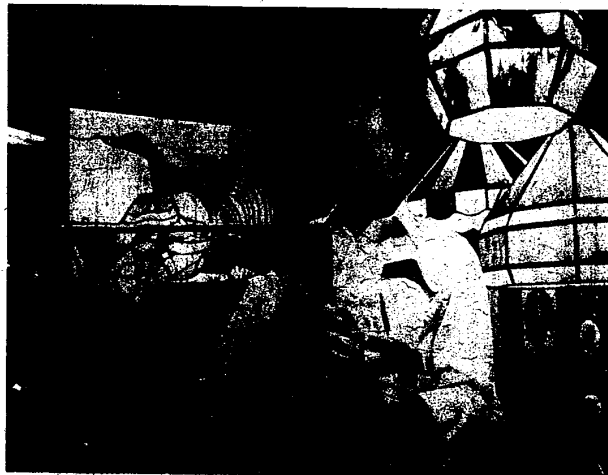
"I believe the community is responsible for the education of the young people in our community," Lichtman said. "It's those young people who

will be supporting social security some day.

"IF THE WHOLE WORLD said, 'I don't have an obligation once my children are out of school,' no one of us would be educated."

People think that administrators and school board members allow things to happen; but they tend to forget that there are many lobbying efforts to get things changed to the advantage of our residents.

"When all else fails and you can't get to the legislature, the responsibility falls back on our shoulders."



James Wofford examines one of his stained glass of glass. The clear portion is faceted English glass, products, a flowered window composed of 205 pieces (Staff photo by Harry Maunthe)

Legislative battle set for classroom safety

By STEVE BARNABY

Farmington editor

Students taking shop classes could receive additional protection if state legislators approve a newly introduced bill.

State Rep. Wilbur "Sandy" Brotherton (R-Farmington) has introduced legislation which would give the Michigan Department of Labor the responsibility for developing standards and training programs, as well as conducting regular inspections.

ducting regular inspections.

A similar bill was introduced by Brotherton last legislative session after a Farmington School District student, Robert Kourjian, was electrocuted in a shop class. The bill was stalled in committee and failed to reach the floor before the legislature ended its session.

"My bill would insure that students are using machines, equipment and

techniques which are safe," says Brotherton.

Presently, the state has inspection control only over equipment being used by school district employees. This bill would extend coverage to tools, machinery, shop equipment and personal protective equipment used by students.

"The department of labor already has a working relationship with school authorities," he says. "There would be few, if any, additional demands placed on the boards of education, school administrators or teachers in order to understand or comply with this legislation."

"The only schools that would have any difficulty with this bill are the ones who are ignoring proper safety regulations."

Although some area school districts have rules and regulations for safety in shop classes, Brotherton believes the steps being taken are inadequate.

"I want to make sure that equipment is double checked to see that rules and regulations are enforced. If an inspector comes around to the shop unannounced and checks out the equipment it will be a little more undesirable to be caught with unsafe equipment because of the risk of a fine."

The problem, says Brotherton, is that if state inspectors now are asked to inspect equipment, only equipment used by the staff is checked.

"The teacher may use only one machine for demonstration purposes and the other 10 or so machines used by students go uninspected."

Another change in the bill would be a call for mandatory inspections. Presently, state personnel come around only when requested by an industry or school district.

"EQUIPMENT USED BY STUDENTS takes a real beating. It tends

Craftsman colors the world with stain glass artistry

A morning rerun blasts from the portable television standing on James Wofford's workbench as he rearranges the tools he uses to create stained glass household objects.

"My wife and I like early American type things," he said. He credits her with helping him through his first year as his own boss.

"She's a great support," he said, smiling. In one corner of the shop, her macramé hangers help display small terrariums in clay pots.

"She tells me that we don't have any great debts, the shop is paid for, we meet the rent. I don't want to be a rich man. I'm happy doing this," he added.

It was his wife, Edna, who inadvertently led to the opening of his shop.

"I loved commercial art when I was in high school, but I couldn't get into it because I was raising a family and they came first," he said.

When their daughter and three sons were grown, Mrs. Wofford decided to take a course in stained glass crafts.

BEFORE LONG, SHE WAS HOOKED on connecting pieces of colored glass into patterns that would become lamps or suncatchers.

Often, a project would keep her awake until three in the morning. Curious about a craft that could inspire so much interest, Wofford enrolled in his wife's class.

"It was so interesting that I'd be up to five in the morning putting those

the turn of the century.

His stained glass, like the sketches, reflect his interest in the outdoors and bygone eras.

"My wife and I like early American type things," he said.

He credits her with helping him through his first year as his own boss.

"She's a great support," he said, smiling. In one corner of the shop, her macramé hangers help display small terrariums in clay pots.

"She tells me that we don't have any great debts, the shop is paid for, we meet the rent. I don't want to be a rich man. I'm happy doing this," he added.

It was his wife, Edna, who inadvertently led to the opening of his shop.

"I loved commercial art when I was in high school, but I couldn't get into it because I was raising a family and they came first," he said.

When their daughter and three sons were grown, Mrs. Wofford decided to take a course in stained glass crafts.

BEFORE LONG, SHE WAS HOOKED on connecting pieces of colored glass into patterns that would become lamps or suncatchers.

Often, a project would keep her awake until three in the morning. Curious about a craft that could inspire so much interest, Wofford enrolled in his wife's class.

"It was so interesting that I'd be up to five in the morning putting those

little colored pieces of glass together," he said.

Sometimes, he'd get up at five to work on a project while still in his pajamas.

"We got so involved in it, we decided to open up our own shop after making the rounds of weekend shows," he said.

Now, his small shop is packed with his designs and the workshop houses neat rows of colored glass waiting to be cut into patterns.

Shutters are decorated with stained glass flowers, catfish and cardinals. A smug, black cat looks down from one of them.

LWV supports renewal

The League of Women Voters of the Farmington-West Bloomfield Area endorsed passage of the four-mill renewal proposal, which will be submitted to voters in the school millage election on April 5.

The league believes passage of this renewal millage is essential to the continuation of a sound educational program for Farmington public school children, says president Paula Tobocman.



GARY LICHTMAN

ington school district.

"He's honest and candid and he

(Continued on page 18A)

SECRETARY of STATE

Richard H. Austin



Last minute lineup

Farmington area automobile owners lined up in front of the Secretary of State's office to buy their 1977 license tabs. Although drivers knew months in advance that Thursday is the deadline to obtain the

tabs, some procrastinators always manage to create a last minute crunch. (Staff photo by Harry Maunthe)

inside

Business 12A
Classified Sections C and D
Club Circuit 7B
Community Calendar 2B
Editorial 16A
Sports Section C
Suburban Life Section B



FASHION IN A WORD...

The very freshest in springtime apparel is waiting for you in our special fashion section. Don't miss it in today's paper.