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Far-reaching changes eyed for schools

By LYNN ORR

An education task force has recommended that Farmington schools be restructured to house grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 beginning in the 1980-81 school year.

The wide-sweeping change would usher in a middle school system for the sixth, seventh and eighth grade students, while ninth graders would be moved to senior highs.

The middle school philosophy gears the curriculum to the student rather than the student to a preset curriculum, which is the case at junior high schools, says Dr. Fred Ignavovich. Ignavovich is a Michigan State University professor and was consulting chairman to the committee known as the Task Force on School Organizational Structure (SOS), appointed by the Farmington Board of Education one year ago.

"This change, if adopted, will affect the entire Farmington school system," Ignavovich told the school board Tuesday night as his formally submitted report.

Board President William Gravius set May 15 as a target date for a decision on whether to restructure the school system. He appointed four board members to a board committee to study the task force's 100-page report.

TO ACCOMPLISH the change, the task force is recommending 2 1/2 years of planning to include curriculum and philosophy committees; in-service retraining of staff; student and parent orientation; staff reassignment; a possible change in school boundaries; building remodeling; and the appointment of an administrative coordinator.

Doug Cooper, Farmington Education Association representative to the task force, presented a minority report which called for a gradual transition to the new system.

"I'd like the board to consider the advantages of a phased program before we challenge the entire district with a middle school program," Cooper said.

Cooper's report also suggested more in-service teacher training during the

changeover and job protection for teachers now assigned to the junior high schools. He added that his report should be considered supportive of the task force recommendations.

Estimating that all financial estimates are "crude at best," the task force projects a minimum cost of \$120,000 over a three-year period.

The "lion's share," about \$90,000, is devoted to in-service training for staff. About \$10,000 for each junior high would be required for remodeling. Farmington has four junior highs—Power, Warner, East and Dunkel.

CONCERN OVER declining enrollment was the stimulus for the task force's appointment last year. As currently projected, the majority of schools in the district will have significantly fewer students than they can accommodate by 1980, Ignavovich said.

A switch to a middle-school system would increase enrollments at expensive-to-run junior and senior high buildings.

Discussed but discarded by the task force was a K-4, 5-8 and 9-12 grade structure. Ignavovich said that while such an approach would be economically advantageous, an overwhelming

majority of staff, students, and parents surveyed felt that fifth graders were too young to be removed from the more personalized structure of the elementary school.

FEA Executive Director Richard Ringstrom expressed concern that the changeover to middle schools was a foregone conclusion because of the savings that would result. He urged the school board to make a quick decision in consideration of the staff.

The task force studied enrollment projections; usefulness of buildings;

middle school literature; and the results of a survey of staff, students and parents. Visits were made to districts which operate middle schools. Two public hearings were conducted before deliberating the final recommendations.

Task force members included Ignavovich; Earl Baumunk, district chairman; Suzanne von Ende, Parent Teacher Association representative; Cooper, FEA representative; Don Keen and Al Lanigan, administrative representatives; and parent representatives Betty Nicolay and Jack Inch.

Business as usual vowed by WTVS

By JUDITH BERNIE

Merchandise and volunteers for the Channel 56 Auction are down, but the event will go on as scheduled April 7-15.

"It's not doomsday. But there's an impact," says Honey Friedman, the station's auction manager, about the uproar created after two Nazis were included in a panel on a Detroit Black News program in January.

The panel, which also included a law professor, representative of a coalition opposing the Nazi bookstore in Southwest Detroit and program host Ron Scott, discussed the legal rights of Nazis.

"We are finding past donors who don't wish to participate," said Mrs. Friedman, a West Bloomfield resident, who has had a hand in every auction since the event began in 1969.

"We haven't yet approached some of the larger donors," she added, in hopes "a peace agreement" can be worked out at a meeting today (Thursday) between Station Manager James Christianson and area Jewish leaders.

Generally, the station's 2,000 auction volunteers "are not only sticking, but are distressed over the kind of problems we're having," Mrs. Friedman said.

"I'm not saying we didn't lose some volunteers, but the numbers aren't significant. The rest of us just have to work harder."

MRS. FRIEDMAN, a Jew, said she identified with the emotions generated by the appearance of the Nazis on the program.

"There's no question about the fact that when I heard the Nazis speak their venom I went into a cold sweat and recoiled," she says.

"If I felt there was even the remotest possibility that malice was intended (by the station) believe me I wouldn't be here."

"I know that's not the case. I know the general manager (Christianson) is in agony."

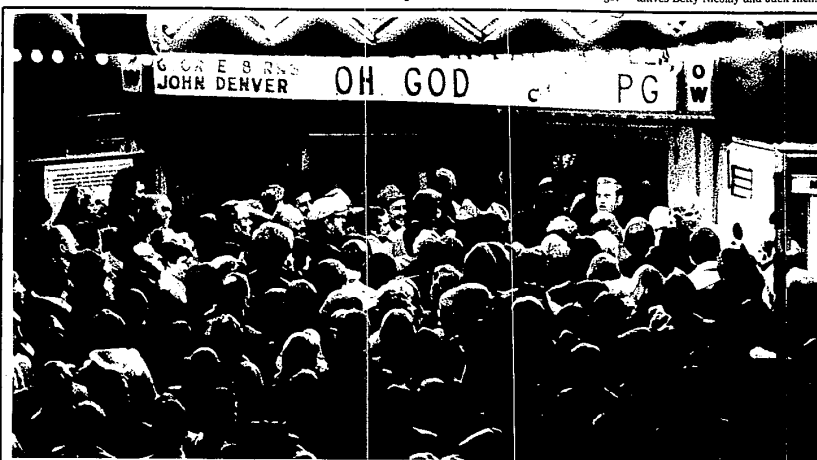
"I share the emotional negative reaction to those people being on the air. But I can't let that determine my actions."

To Mrs. Friedman, it seems "an awful lot of people are taking out their feelings against Nazism on Channel 56."

But damaging a public television station is not going to combat the Nazis, she says.

"Some past donors who feel terribly emotional are using this opportunity to tear into our volunteers," she added.

"It's having a demoralizing effect on the organization we've been building for 10 years."



Standing room only

Some stars just never lose their appeal as was witnessed this week at Farmington's Civic Theatre, where patrons massed to see George Burns in "Oh God." (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

By Farmington Hills

Revamp funds sought for course

San Marino Golf Course, recently purchased by the City of Farmington Hills, will be getting a \$538,000 facelift if a contemplated application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is approved.

The city recently purchased the site at Eleven Mile and Halsted as part of its master park plan development. If the application is approved, the DNR will kick in 50 per cent of the refurbishing cost, according to Hills Parks and Recreation Director Doug Gaynor.

Gaynor's proposal for application was made at this week's council study session. A formal vote will be taken at next week's regularly scheduled meeting.

"The DNR looks at golf courses as one of their priorities. We haven't received funding from this organization before and they are looking to expand funds in cities which haven't previously been funded," said Gaynor.

Among the renovations contemplated for the nine hole golf course are:

- Renovation of the 30,000 square foot clubhouse at a \$70,000 cost
- Expansion of the 10,000 square foot parking lot at \$15,000
- Maintenance building construction at \$115,000
- Construction of a 20,000 square foot maintenance yard at \$22,000
- Removal of the existing maintenance building for \$8,000
- Construction of a 10 acre driving range at a cost of \$73,000
- Acquisition of 25 acres of land at a cost of \$209,400
- A \$10,000 expenditure for the entrance road and parking.

•A total of \$7,400 will be spent on planting and turf for the clubhouse and parking.

A professional service fee will be levied of \$33,000.

Refurbishing plans were outlined by Bills and Childs Associates, the planning consultant firm which also authored the master plan for parks.

The city contemplates financing its 50 per cent through the sale of general obligation bonds and some appropriation from the general fund surplus of the budget.

Officials hope that the golf course will be self-sustaining within five years, according to City Manager George Majors. Based on a review of the past five years' green fees, the city could expect to gross \$140,000 annually from the course, according to Majors.

As a city-owned property, taxable property loss would amount to \$1,500 annually.

Gaynor is enthused over the proposed remodeling, saying the clubhouse was built to be easily restructured to meet the needs of a public golf course.

While the majority of the second floor presently is used as offices and apartment space, it could easily be renovated for storage use and additional office use, according to the Bills and Childs study.

Modifications recommended to improve the clubhouse are to:

- Expand the seating and eating space
- Expand the pro shop and display space
- Improve the toilet facilities
- Improve the food service and storage facilities

•Remodel the entrance to make it more appealing and obvious to those who come to the facility.

The acquisition of 25 acres would have to be obtained from the Farmington School District, which owns the property. That section of property, according to Gaynor, would be used for the driving range.

Parking is another problem which the planning consultants feel needs attention before the property will be useful as a public course. Presently, the lot parks 35 cars. The study recommends a 10,000 foot expansion which would allow the lot to handle 90 cars.

County transit urged

By LYNN ORR

Plans for providing public transportation in the tri-county area are too vague, say state representatives from Oakland County.

That's why they're withholding support of the proposed comprehensive state transportation package involving about \$146.7 million.

County Democrats and Republicans alike united to hammer out a statement urging the Southeast Michigan Transport Authority (SEMTA) for a commitment to Oakland County, says

State Rep. Wilbur Brotherton (Farmington and Southfield).

Through licensing and gasoline tax increases proposed in the multi-bill package, Oakland County would contribute about \$9 million. Matching funds from the state and federal governments mean the county will assist in bringing in close to \$30 million to SEMTA annually, he explained.

"We recognize the needs of the state and the region, but we want to make sure they're recognizing the needs of Oakland County," Brotherton says.

"WE DON'T want to see too many of those dollars going into Detroit to build a subway for Coleman Young," Brotherton says.

The state representatives aren't getting any answers from SEMTA official Larry Salsi, Brotherton says.

"SEMTA officials have appeared before three meetings that I've held in the district," he says. Although they've presented plans, Director Salsi has refused any commitments, he adds.

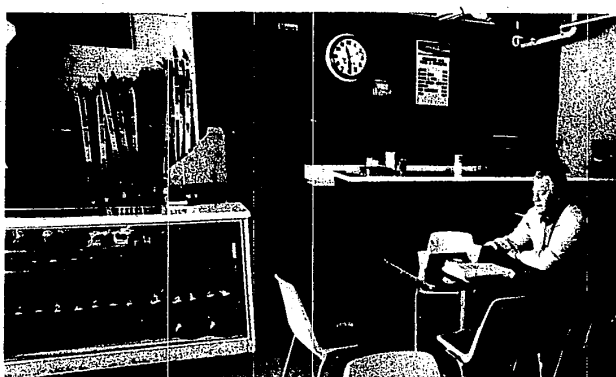
"With Oakland County residents raising more than \$65 million annually of the total dollars coming into the SEMTA region, they are entitled to know what type and level of service will be supplied, when it will be supplied, and who will operate the system," the representatives say.

The roughly 50 per cent tax increases are needed, Brotherton says, and not out-of-line since it has been five or six years since the last increases.

"What does concern me is the way in which the monies will be earmarked," he explains.

THE TRANSPORTATION package consists of about 10 bills and a resolution proposed for a constitutional change on the ballot, Brotherton explains.

Three of the bills have been considered and reported out of committee. They provide for a change of the state highway department to the department of transportation with a director appointed by the governor.



Golf pro Al Marmion, manager of San Marino, sits in the area of the snack bar and pro-shop which is planned for rejuvenation by the City of Farmington Hills. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

inside

TRUCK SOLD ON FIRST CALL

Dave Stanley sold his truck on the first call he received as a result of the want ad he placed in the Observer & Eclectic. Like so many others in the suburban Detroit area, he found out that the road to a successful automotive sale begins with a phone call to your hometown newspaper. Call us today.

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