

# Farmington Observer

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## Health expert blasts schools for physical education plans

Catering to a minority skilled enough to compete on a team, school physical education programs often overlook the average child. But the majority of children grow up to become average Americans in their attitudes toward health and exercise.

Those attitudes are unhealthy, according to Dr. Joseph Arends, associate professor at Oakland University and clinical instructor at Wayne State University Medical School.

Speaking before the Farmington Chamber of Commerce, Arends listed alternatives to the American way of exercise.

Attitudes toward eating, exercise and health are aberrations of the proper way of dealing with staying fit, according to Arends. To cope with the changes in blood pressure and cholesterol levels caused by an inadequate attitude toward health, doctors have altered their conception of normal body readings, according to Arends.

"What is average in this country is not normal. What is average in this country is sick," he said.

AVERAGE cholesterol levels for Americans range from 200-250, according to Arends. Normally, the body's cholesterol level should register under 180.

Poor eating habits and a mistaken notion that all sports produce healthy bodies keeps the average American from attaining a normal cholesterol level, according to Arends.

Part of the problem Americans face in obtaining health stems from childhood programming which dictates that competitive sports is the key to fitness.

Gym class coaches rule out the less coordinated children from enjoying exercise through an emphasis on being good enough to make the team.

"Physical education is basically athletics," he said.

With an emphasis on team excellence, less skilled individuals are overlooked.

"We are programmed for failure in physical activity. At some time, each of us has tried a sport and failed. Your athletic ability didn't allow you to go on," he said.

When a child turns 13 years old, chances are his involvement in sports has reached its peak. Less than three per cent of the nation's 13-year-olds follow a program of physical activity, according to Arends.

"NO ONE is telling the child to do something for himself," Arends said. "Sports does not mean fitness."

"Baseball is a skilled sport but any kid no matter how uncoordinated can walk, jog and cycle," he said.

Women are equally left out of the exercise scene. Less than three per cent of American women are physically fit.

"It's a cultural, social thing that says that females don't do that. They can do just as well as boys until they're eight or 10 years old. After that there's nothing for them to do," he said.

"Females aren't supposed to sweat. They are not supposed to get their hair messed," he said.

Attitudes toward physical activity reflect themselves in the makeup of suburban living, as well.

"We've programmed sidewalks out of the suburbs. Then, we bus our kids to school," he said.

"Twenty-five years ago a car in a senior high school was a big deal. Now, you can't find a parking space in a senior high school lot.

Sunday afternoon walks are a thing of the past, too.

"Can you imagine anyone from Farmington doing that? That's unusual. It's against social convention. The neighbors will think their car broke down," he said.

WITH the built-in sedentary life of

American suburban society has come an increased incidence of heart attacks and strokes.

In men, the leading causes of death until age 30 is suicide and homicide. After they're 40, men are most prone to die of a heart attack, according to Arends.

Women who are 30 years old and older are more prone to die of breast cancer or a heart attack. When they hit the 40-year-old bracket, the leading cause of death becomes heart attack and breast cancer takes second place.

"There are more heart attacks in women today because more are going into business and eating the junk food that men have been eating," Arends said.

Heart disease can be prevented, according to Arends. Low cholesterol diets can be an effective way of dealing with the threat of a heart attack. Bacon, eggs, marbled beef and whole milk dairy products are culprits when it comes to raising the body's cholesterol level.

Fresh vegetables and whole grain breads should be included in diets, according to Arends.

In addition, jogging, cycling and racketball serve as good sources of exercise which can be used by almost everyone, he said.



### Thoughts of spring

Easter parades may be a thing of the past. But some traditions linger. Airy, flowered hats still evoke thoughts of spring's arrival and picturesque Easter Sundays with daffodils in bloom. Pat Hoker of Bloomfield Hills, above, awaits Easter 1978 in her new finery. (Staff photo by Dick Kelley)

## Indigent resident fights bureaucracy

By LYNN ORR

Agnes Miller, 60, lives in a tiny trailer in Farmington Hills. Last August she was injured in an auto accident while driving home from her custodial job at Drake's Apartments. Since that time, she has worn a neck brace. Her doctors consider her totally disabled from the accident.

In December, she underwent two operations to remove tumors from her hips. She also suffers from a heart condition and must take medication daily.

Because she couldn't afford to pay the rent on her apartment in Detroit, she moved in with her son for a few months last year. Then she put her furniture in storage and rented the tiny trailer in Farmington Hills, just blocks away from her physicians.

Last week her total food supply consisted of some oatmeal and peanut butter. Her bank balance totaled \$3.48. She lacked the money to pay \$127, her monthly rent on the trailer.

But despite her financial condition, Mrs. Miller has gone through months of red tape and applications only to discover that she fails to qualify for any kind of assistance.

"The second time they rejected me at Social Services, I couldn't help but cry," says the gray-haired woman. "I didn't know where to turn."

"I'VE RAISED four kids by myself, and I've never asked for anything," she doesn't understand that now, when

she needs help, she can't get it.

The case is complicated. She receives disability insurance benefits from All-State Insurance Co., her carrier at the time of the accident. Those benefits consist of \$60 per week. And apparently that monthly total, about \$340, makes her ineligible for further assistance.

But the insurance benefits do not cover the bills for the operations in December or for other medical services. The benefits are relegated to problems stemming from the accident. And the benefits are always late, Mrs. Miller insists. Last week she received the check covering the Feb. 4-March 4 period on March 16, she said.

According to Valerie Raburn, who handled the case until recently, that's within the law.

"We have up until 60 days to pay," she says; and she insists that Mrs. Miller always receives the checks on time, despite lack of information. Mrs. Raburn says Mrs. Miller's doctors fail to fill out the necessary forms completely, which causes problems for the insurance company.

"We've had to talk to them and waive the written requirement," Mrs. Raburn says. "We have been paying in accordance with the law," she adds.

"People are used to being paid weekly, but an insurance company isn't set up to be a payroll department."

For Mrs. Miller, however, going without the check means going without food. She said that Mrs. Raburn continually harasses her about the checks and questions her about her other ailments.

"She thinks I'm trying to get more from the insurance than the accident covered," she says.

Last week, Mrs. Miller finally received some help. Audra Hubble, a community development worker with the Oakland-Livingston Human Services Agency, paid Mrs. Miller's rent and supplied two bags of groceries.

Mrs. Hubble used the donations of churches to help Mrs. Miller. In addition, she's attempting to iron out the problems with All-State and Social Services.

"I don't understand why no one referred this woman to anyone before this," says Mrs. Hubble, who's worked for the agency for 12 years.

"We're an emergency agency; we try to hook people up with the right services," she says. And that's what she's trying to do now.

It's a big job, however. The first time Mrs. Miller applied for food stamps and a Medicaid card at Social Services, she was rejected.

"I had to get there at 8 a.m., they said, and I did. Then they gave me an application and told me to bring it back the next day. I asked if I could fill it out there, because it's a long drive and I can't drive very well now with my neck like this."

"But they said no. So I returned the next day and stood in line."

Social Services rejected her application because she owed money to Montgomery Ward for three purchases shortly before the accident, her

"One woman told me I shouldn't live in Farmington Hills—that the rents were too high. I told her I couldn't drive very far and this is where my doctors are."

—Agnes Miller

car payments, and her monthly bill for storage of her furniture, she says.

Mrs. Miller then went to Manufacturers Bank, took out a loan and paid off the bills and returned to Social Services with the copies of her loan.

"I was really heartbroken when I was rejected the second time," she says.

Her daughter in North Carolina decided to see what she could do for her mother. After talking to Social Services employees, she was mystified.

"They say the state only allows so much for rent and utilities and they don't allow for other bills. But no one even tried to help my mother. She's not the type of person to not pay her bills. She has too much pride to ignore them," says Mrs. Miller's daughter, Joan Gossett.

Her own financial pressures prevent her from helping her mother in any long-term way, she says.

Mrs. Miller's son faces eviction in his home. His landlord gave notice that he had to buy the home he's renting or move. It's hard to find a place to rent with five kids, Mrs. Miller says.

"I can't go to my children," she adds. "They have their problems. I'm not asking for anything I don't deserve," she insists.

Although she has worked at various jobs for nearly 40 years, she was rejected for Social Security benefits as well. She still doesn't understand why. She worked for a plastics factory for 14 years, from 1955-1969. Then the plant moved to Pennsylvania. She's worked at odd jobs since. Before doing custodial work at Drake's, she worked as a night clerk at the Esquire Motel in Inkster. After being robbed at gunpoint, she quit.

But she always managed to stay above water financially until the accident last August. Now, she believes the insurance company is trying to hassle her about the benefits. When she turns to other agencies, she's told she has too much money to qualify for assistance.

"One woman told me I shouldn't live in Farmington Hills—that the rents were too high," Mrs. Miller says. "I told her I couldn't drive very far and this is where my doctors are."

To get rid of the monthly bill for storage, she's trying to find another place to live so she can have her furniture again. For now, she has her plants in a tiny window of the trailer. She's hoping Mrs. Hubble can help her get the Medicaid and food stamps.



Agnes Miller sits in her tiny trailer in Farmington Hills. She's supposed to drink orange juice with her daily medication, but with less than \$4 in the bank, orange juice is hard to come by. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Farmington Hills, 1 Bonnie Swadling, 0

Farmington Hills won the first round of a sex discrimination battle Friday morning.

U.S. District Court Judge John Feikens denied a motion to stop the testing and hiring of police officers in the city made by attorney Judith Doran on behalf of her client, Bonnie Swadling, a Hills community service officer.

Testing of more than 550 candidates to fill six vacancies in the Hills police force was scheduled to begin yesterday.

Judge Feikens also set April 21 as the date of a pre-trial examination for the case filed by Ms. Swadling, 28, who charges that she was denied an opportunity to become a police officer because she is a woman.

"It was what I expected," said City Manager George Majors, who along with Police Director John Nichols appeared in federal court Friday morning.

Ms. Doran said she was disappointed by the ruling but respects the rationale behind it.

"We felt the judge granted some

relief by assuring us that there would be a position available to Bonnie when and if she wins on the merits of the case."

Ms. Swadling was disappointed but said she was happy to have a date set for a pre-trial examination.

MS. SWADLING is charged with violation of the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) laws, in addition to her charge of sex discrimination filed under Title VII of the federal laws, barring discrimination in employment based on sex, race or religion.

Ms. Swadling is employed with the city under the CETA program. The federal suit is her fourth step in attempting to gain the police officer position she believes is due her. She has filed with CETA, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

After nearly 11 months of waiting, she said she was happy that something might get rolling.

## Berthiaume sentenced

Fr. Gary Berthiaume, assistant pastor at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Farmington, will spend six months in the Oakland County Jail.

The jail term, along with five years probation, was the sentence imposed on the Roman Catholic priest by Oakland County District Court Judge Aline Gilbert last week. In addition, Judge Gilbert ordered Berthiaume to undergo psychiatric treatment and not to associate with youths unless an adult is present.

A standard \$1,000 fee, to be paid over five years, was assessed to cover the costs of probation.

Berthiaume, 35, was sentenced after he pleaded guilty to a charge of gross indecency between males, a felony which carries a maximum five-year jail term upon conviction.

Berthiaume was arrested last September on charges of second degree criminal sexual conduct involving a 14-year-old Farmington male, a felony which carries a maximum 15-year sentence upon conviction. That charge was reduced in exchange for a guilty plea from Berthiaume several weeks ago.

Attorney James Lawson said he was not shocked by the sentence.

"I don't think we'll be appealing," he added. Fr. Berthiaume made no statement in court.

THE SENTENCE came six months after Berthiaume's arrest, which precipitated considerable controversy about the case. Judge Michael Hand of the 47th District Court in Farmington imposed a gag rule on the case at Lawson's request.

### inside

Helping your pet

Many persons are under the impression that pets are able to heal their own wounds without the aid of the master. But to see how you can aid your pet in making a faster recovery, turn to Page 8A.

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Zina Kramer of the Michigan Citizens Lobby will be the new columnist for our Citizens Can Win consumer column, today appearing on Page 6A. She is replacing Doug Ross, who is running for political office. Ms. Kramer appears regularly on the "This Morning Show" on WWJ-TV Channel 4. She has been with the Citizens Lobby for one year and holds a BA in political science from Wayne State University. (Staff photo)