

Farmington Observer

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Hitting the target

North Farmington's quarterback Mike Miller aims for a victory season as the Raiders kick off their football schedule against Pontiac Northern on Sept. 9 at the Pontiac Silverdome.

NFHS boosters sponsor kick-off

As football fever hits North Farmington High School, the NFHS Boosters Club plans to send the Raiders off in fine style to their opener at the Pontiac Silverdome.

Hoping they'll launch a successful season that will wind up at the Silverdome once more with the championship game, the boosters are sponsoring a kick-off get-together at 4:30 p.m. Sept. 9, at the high school. Guest speakers, box lunches, an impromptu jazz session, door prizes and talks with the fall sport coaches will be on tap at

the afternoon gathering before buses leave to transport football fans to Pontiac.

The Raiders meet Pontiac Northern in the first game at 8 p.m.

Orders for \$5 box lunches, \$1.50 bus tickets, and game tickets will be obtained by writing to the North Farmington Boosters Club, North Farmington High School, 32800 W. Thirteen Mile, Farmington Hills 48018.

Game tickets are \$2.50 for adults and \$1 for children 12 and younger.

FEA joins county group

Teachers consolidate goals

By CRAIG PIECHURA

It's something that strikes fear in the hearts of school administrators everywhere. It's not chewing gum under desks. It's the concept of regional bargaining by local affiliates of the Michigan Education Association (MEA).

And although Farmington Education Association (FEA) officials and the school district won't hit the bargaining table until next spring, FEA officials are involving themselves in regional bargaining efforts.

Karen Filar, chairwoman of the MEA's Region Seven Coordinating Bargaining Committee (R7CBC), said in a Southfield press conference Monday that "we are not a county of 26 districts. We are a county of 16,000 teachers, sharing information, training and experience."

And, if the coordinated bargaining committee has its way, teachers throughout Oakland County also will be sharing common contract goals.

"One of our goals is to set minimum salary standards in 1979," Ms. Filar said. "It's unreasonable to have a \$4,000 difference in master's degree maximum (pay) from one district to another."

Teachers in seven of the 26 Oakland school districts face the possibility of a strike before school starts this week or next because they are far from settling a contract with their respective school boards.

DISTRICTS WITHOUT contracts are Holly, South Lyon, Ferndale, Berkley, Huron Valley, Oxford and Pontiac. Strike votes are scheduled before school starts in all but Berkley, Holly, Oxford, South Lyon and Pontiac teachers are scheduled to report to school this week. The others are scheduled to begin work Sept. 5.

"A strike is likely in any of the seven districts," said Ms. Filar. Strategy does not mean "at this time" that if teachers at one school district go out the rest will follow. Ms. Filar told the crowd at the Holiday Inn press conference. However, the R7CBC chairwoman did not rule out that possibility in future negotiations.

In fact, one of the regional goals of county teachers is to secure 20 contracts that all expire Aug. 31, 1979.

"Right now, if one (union) goes out, the local decision is that only one goes," Ms. Filar said. "That could change as soon as teachers in all the districts feel it's time to change."

Asked if Oakland teachers were heading in that direction, Ms. Filar said "I'd say so, yes."

"WE CERTAINLY have an interest in what's taking place," said Richard Ringstrom, executive director of the FEA, adding that Farmington was a member of the coordinating committee.

'Coordinated bargaining is not a monster. It is not a threat to overthrow the administration of school districts or take away local control.'

-Karen Filar

"We're looking for a common expiration date," he confirmed, adding that the expiration of the Farmington teachers' contract coincides with the target expiration date for contracts in the county.

The FEA is "more interested than ever" in the kinds of settlements achieved in bargaining throughout the county this year, Ringstrom added.

Salary, fringe benefits, class size, and duration of a contract are the four goals of coordinated bargaining strategy this year, Ms. Filar said.

While some school boards are attempting to secure three-year contracts with teachers, the union spokes-person said duration of contracts is not a major issue or stumbling block in current negotiations.

"COORDINATED BARGAINING is not a monster," Ms. Filar maintained.

... as schools activate

Plaid skirts, blue jeans, sneakers or oxford.

New clothes, new friends and new teachers face Farmington students next week as the 1978-79 school year begins.

There will be a few new programs, such as the hot lunch program for elementary students beginning Oct. 1, on tap as well. Farmington will open the Early Childhood Education Center in the former Fairview Elementary School, which was closed last June. That opening is a consolidation of all the preschool activities conducted at various elementary schools over the past few years, says Supt. Lewis Schulman.

School sites had a facelift over the summer, thanks to 13 students hired under a federal Work Opportunity Resource grant. They cleared brush and worked on landscape at almost all the district's buildings for the past three months.

The calculators at central office clicked away this summer as well, keeping track of thinning teacher ranks and enrollment projections. The numbers, however, add up to fewer students and fewer teachers in every school.

School officials expect about 12,700 students next week, a 650 drop from last year. Of the 104 teachers pink-slipped last spring, about 12 remain without jobs, according to Robert Coleman, personnel director.

AT LEAST 42 teachers were recalled before schools closed in June, while an additional 14 were added to the ranks over the summer. Nine of those remaining will serve as reserve or permanent substitute teachers assigned to a particular building, Coleman explained. Others found employment elsewhere or took a leave year. Fewer students and teachers won't alter the pupil-teacher ratio in the schools, however, says Richard Ringstrom, executive director of the Farmington Education Association (FEA).

"We're really maintaining the status quo," he explains. While some elementary schools will push the contract limit of students assigned to a classroom, he's hoping the ratio regarded by teachers as crucial to jobs and good education will stabilize or improve in the months ahead. As the student population continues to decline, he'd like to see a move toward smaller classes, rather than more teachers without jobs.

STUDENTS will see familiar faces at most schools, although some shuffling of personnel has occurred, Coleman says.

Among the principal ranks, the closing of Fairview meant the end of an administrative job for Highmeadow Elementary principal Carolyn Plysek. She has moved back to the teaching ranks at Larkshire Elementary. Fill-

"Everybody pretty much does their own thing," he said of charges that school boards coordinate their bargaining efforts. The financial picture of the local district dictates most of the economic bargaining strategy, he said.

Southfield School Supt. Carl Hassel scoffed at Ms. Filar's suggestion that area administrators belong to a secret task force that decides areawide school district strategy.

"If they're saving they are involved in regional bargaining because school administrators are, that statement is totally untrue," Hassel said. "It's completely untrue because consultation with other school negotiators doesn't mean we're partners who've joined hands and are going into business together."

"Even if there were and are strong collaboration and consultation among school districts that doesn't mean the local board gives up local responsibility."

Hassel said his district is prepared to take the MEA to court if it becomes apparent that tentative agreements reached with the Southfield Education Association (SEA) are rejected by the R7CBC or a higher MEA authority.

ing her spot at Highmeadow will be Nick Abid, formerly at William Grace. Richard Close assumes Abid's former position, while Close's former Kenbrook students will meet Dave Coffin. The closing of Fairview Elementary last year sent principal Don Cowan to Eagle Elementary, which began the principal shuffle when Coffin moved to Kenbrook.

At the secondary level, Jack Lawing, administrative assistant at Harrison High, will fill the job of director of administrative services, vacated when Earl Billings was hired by the City of Farmington as director of the Department of Public Services.

John Summerlee was recalled to the administrative ranks to assume Lawing's former position. Principals Alton Bennett and Gil Henderson switched junior highs, with Bennett going to East and Henderson moving to Warner.

"Parents at the schools were informed of changes," Coleman said.

ALTHOUGH Farmington teachers are working under the second year of a two-year contract, the custodial, maintenance and cafeteria workers are negotiating a contract under an extension of last year's contract, which expired July 1.

Coleman also is negotiating with administrators, who included a re-opener on economics under the second year of their contract.

Neighbors harass black tenant, motel owner claims

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

When Catherine Beene rented a room to her sons' friend four months ago, she regarded it as a routine transaction.

But since Walter Saunders, a black 22-year-old who works with her sons moved into Tops Motel on Grand River

in Farmington Hills, Mrs. Beene and her family face harassment from some of their neighbors.

First came threatening phone calls. Then Saunders was followed by six men armed with a shotgun. Last Saturday morning, Saunders' '69 Nova was destroyed by fire.

Although Farmington Hills police spokesmen say they are investigating the incidents, Mrs. Beene insists nothing is being done to apprehend the persons she believes responsible for harassing her family and Saunders.

Starting from the first harassing phone call on July 4th, Mrs. Beene says the tone of the incidents is racist. But Farmington Hills police tell a different story. They say the incidents stem from a personality clash that Saunders has with some of the neighbors.

"You know, you can't get along with everyone and these clashes will occur," said Sgt. Ernest Miller.

But Mrs. Beene says that racial slurs are part of the campaign against her tenant.

"THREE MONTHS ago they threatened to bomb my place," she says of the group of neighbors she believes responsible.

"I got a phone call saying 'it's the 4th of July and we're going to throw a bomb at your place to get rid of that nigger,'" she recalled.

A group of neighbors who live in a nearby trailer park have showed up at the motel with a shotgun asking that Saunders be evicted.

"Why should I evict him?" she asks. "You can't turn a tenant away just because he's black. Why, I have a

paper pinned up on my wall inside here that says it's against the law to do that."

"This is 1978—not the '50s when black people were told to go to the back of the bus," she said. "They've got their civil rights."

Last Monday, Saunders visited a nearby 7-11 store. After talking to the cashier, he went back to his car parked in the lot. Six neighbors were waiting for him in the lot.

They banged their car against Saunders' vehicle, according to Mrs. Beene. Then they followed him back to the motel, while they brandished a shotgun.

"My boys were on the porch and they got off of it and chased those people off," she said.

Farmington Hills police were called and they confiscated the shot gun, according to Mrs. Beene.

LAST FRIDAY, one of the group approached Saunders and offered his friendship, according to Mrs. Beene.

Ironically, the following morning, Saunders' car went up in flames after the motel's residents went to bed. Police and fire officials were at the scene.

While Mrs. Beene blames the incidents on neighbors who came from the South, police look upon it as a neighborhood squabble.

"The incidents are being investigated. They are being approached from the prospective that there is some conflict between the sub-

ject and a couple of people in the neighborhood."

"It's not an issue of being black or white," said Miller.

The incidents originated after a black man tried to pick up a young boy in the neighborhood park, according to police. Since Saunders is the only black visible in the neighborhood, police say that residents connected him with the incident.

Farmington Hills Police reject the idea that the incidents are racially motivated because "Tops has rented room to blacks for a several years."

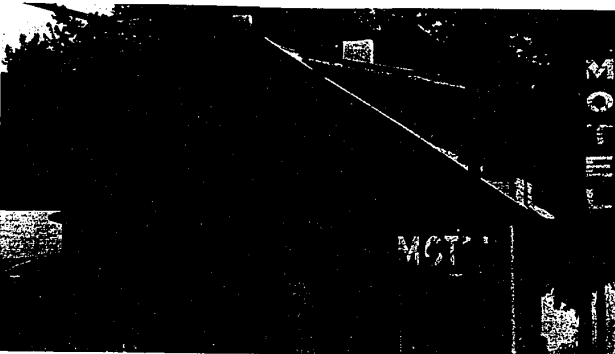
"It's no great revelation that there are blacks at that motel," said Miller.

BECAUSE THE MOTEL has rented to black tenants for such a long time, Mrs. Beene finds it difficult to believe that anyone would bother her customers.

"I've run the motel for almost 15 years and I never had anything like this happen before," she said.

"It's a damn shame. If he was a nasty kid, I'd understand it. But he's not," she said.

"The police don't do anything about it. If they were black and doing it they would have been arrested by now, she said.



The Tops Motel has been the center of a neighborhood dispute since a bi-racial couple moved in to Farmington Hills.

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