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Parents question lunch menu choices

By MARY GNIEWEK

The new hot lunch program in Farmington's elementary schools has been criticized by parents who say the prepackaged frozen food is nutritionally unsound.

The Farmington Nutrition Committee, formed three years ago at Longacre Elementary School by Carol Smith, is opposed to what it says is the high sugar content of the meals.

A typical menu includes hot dogs, potatoes, fruit, and milk. Mrs. Smith said that if the milk was excluded, the menu would not pass federal nutrition requirements.

Along with co-chairwoman Barbara Brumer, Mrs. Smith and the committee are proposing that the Farmington School Board choose another alternative to the current hot lunch program.

"We understand the Morton plan is temporary," Mrs. Smith said. "We feel the food is nutritionally unsound. It is high in carbohydrates and calories."

The board approved the prepackaged lunch offered by Morton Foods of Charlottesville, Va. during the summer. The frozen food is stored at U.S. Cold Storage in Taylor. A central freezer is expected to be installed at Lakeshire School next week. From it,

14 other elementary schools in the district will be served.

Students pay 60 cents for lunch. The state reimburses the school district for the \$90,000 program.

"Only four parents in the district were chosen to test the food," said Beth Schaldenbrand, a nutrition committee member from Gill school. "I want my children to have good food. I don't like the enriched bread or artificial food coloring."

Mrs. Schaldenbrand, who has spoken about nutrition to groups of students in many schools, says teachers are becoming more aware of the importance of natural foods.

"All the students and teachers I've spoken have been very receptive," she said. "They want to know more about nutrition."

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brumer joined board trustee Janice Rolnick and Farmington Assistant Finance Supt. William Prisk on a trip to Morton food headquarters in Virginia in the summer. They were opposed to the use of artificial red food coloring in popovers, enriched bread and the processed nature of the foods they saw.

Mrs. Rolnick, who teaches a course in nutrition at Oakland Community College, also believes the meals served to students lack nutrition.

"One alternative would be to pre-

pare the food from scratch within the district—not frozen for a year," said Mrs. Brumer. "I'm opposed to all the chemical preservatives. Our children aren't guinea pigs."

The committee members said they do not criticize the school board.

"The board has been working with us—not against us," Mrs. Smith said. "It is our job as mothers to be concerned about the welfare of our children."

"We're gaining popularity by working with parents, room mothers, teachers and the school board," added Mrs. Schaldenbrand. "We'd like to work with the lunch committee. It is important not only to meet the budget, but to be wholesome."

The nutrition committee meets once a month at the Farmington Hills Library on Twelve Mile Road. Local chapters work in conjunction with school PTA's.

"Our purpose is to make people aware that there are good alternatives to sugar-type diets," said Mrs. Smith.

Although Prisk said it was too early to rate the hot lunch program, he said federal nutrition standards are being met.

"We only counted on 2,500 participants a week," he said. "But we're serving 3,000 or more. I've heard some complaints about the food, but I've also heard some good comments."

Youth watches crews

TV teaches film maker

By ELEANOR S. WRIGHT

For Brian Belanger of Farmington Hills, the filming of Colorado scenes for the television movie, "Centennial" was a learning experience.

It was an opportunity he made for himself, thanks to striking up a friendship at Estes Park's Stanley-Sheridan Hotel with doorman Bob Helms.

Helms recognized Belanger's goal to "some day become a film director." He tipped him off during the family's early summer camping vacation to the forthcoming on-site "Centennial" plans for early August.

Belanger flew back to the Rockies, "lucked out," with Helms' help in get-

ting a letter through to production manager Ralph Alderman at the Holiday Inn, where the 300-person company was quartered, and obtained permission to watch. Still, it was a chance comment by the police chief's wife that pinpointed the actual location for him.

Forewarned to not "get in anyone's way," he was perhaps the only outsider to witness first-hand the two days of sunrise to sunset shooting at a ranch outside Estes on a Colorado highway.

"The site was forested on one side, faced a lake and had jutting rocks on another," he said, "and was a beautiful location from which camera cranes

could reach out over bluffs, look across the meadow and have great flexibility.

"The crew shot in 1,000 foot loads, 4,000 feet a day for the three to four minutes of edited film that appeared on the TV screen," he explained. "But, it represented a lot of different pages of script."

WHAT HE SAW and photographed himself as stills included Major Mercy's journey to warn the Indian brothers, Jake and Mike Pasquinel, that Col. Skimmerhorn was breaching the treaty; Jake's subsequent burning at the stake; Lucinda's rescue of Levi from the cabin to which he had retreated on the sudden death of his bride and Levi and Lucinda's moments together on the meadow at sunset.

He saw actors Gregory Harrison (Levi), Christina Raines (Lucinda), Chad Everett, whom his grandmother knew when he was growing up in Dearborn (Major Mercy), Steven McHattie (Jake), Karlo Salem (Mike), and Richard Crenna (Col. Skimmerhorn), plus numerous extras.

What he added to his self-education in filming included "master shot" and "pick up" techniques and tricks to

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Victory is ours

In jubilation, North Farmington marching band member Vince Paul throws his instrument in the air after the Raiders pulled off an upset victory over the reigning state champs Brother Rice last Saturday. For more pictures, turn to Page 3A. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Accreditation team visits schools

Saying they wished they could take the school home with them, a 25-member evaluation team from the North Central Accreditation Association gave two Farmington high schools glowing compliments as part of the group's initial report on their operation.

The group's final written report on North Farmington and Harrison high schools will be delivered in early December.

The North Central Association is a regional accrediting network for educational institutions. Usually, the group evaluates only one school at a time in a district. The two-school visit was an unusual move on the part of the evaluation team.

A team from the association will visit Farmington High School next year.

Each year, the group relies on self-evaluation by the member schools regarding such statistics as student counselor ratios and the number of books in the library as well as teacher credentials to allow the schools to maintain their accreditation.

Every seven years, the organization visits the school to evaluate the more nebulous aspects of its program, such as student spirit and the amount of library use. The subsequent report offers suggestions on improving the school. Acceptance or rejection of the suggestions doesn't influence the school's chances for continued accreditation.

The two Farmington schools garnered praise and a few mild criticisms.

"THE MOST FREQUENT comments during their two-day visit were compliments directed at the students and the staff," said North Farmington High School Principal Clayton Graham.

"They liked the students' positive attitude and enthusiasm about school programs," he said.

While the team complimented the faculty on its work, they also recommended that the school provide a few more programs for the student who doesn't plan to attend college.

Their reaction to the program at Harrison was similar.

"They were impressed by the brightness of the students and the cooperation between the staff and the students," Harrison Principal James Geger said.

Again, the team recommended more courses aimed at the student who wasn't college-bound.

More audio-visual material for the school was also recommended in the initial report, but the equipment hasn't been purchased due to the district's tight budget.

OVERALL, the team was impressed by the two schools.

"They said they wished they could take the school home with them," said Lynn Nutter, assistant superintendent

MASB asks state for funds

By MARY GNIEWEK

Reacting to passage of the Headlee tax limitation amendment, the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) at its November meeting called for immediate legislation by the state to provide full reimbursement to local school districts for state mandated programs.

William Prisk, assistant superintendent of finance and services for the Farmington Public Schools, said the state is expected to reimburse only \$1.6 million of the total \$28 million school budget this year.

"The state doesn't begin to pay for all the programs it mandates," Prisk said.

He cited the hot lunch program and special education as examples of programs mandated by the state legislature.

"This has been a traditional resolution for the past sixteen years, but the state always continues reimbursement on a piecemeal basis," said school board vice-president Michael Spiece.

"Now with Headlee, the state will be required to pay. This may have some positive benefits for Farmington. Hopefully, if the state is required to pay, it won't be mandating so many programs."

Determining the number of state mandated programs in the local school district is difficult. While some mandates are clear, others are indirect.

Two years ago, State Rep. Joseph Forbes (D-Oak Park) introduced a bill that would have created a State Review Board to study state mandated programs. The board would have reviewed complaints of local governments and determined which programs were mandated by the state.

That bill became moot with passage of the Headlee amendment. The voter-approved amendment orders the state to pay for its mandated programs without levying taxes.

"There is a lot of uncertainty now. The big question is which public pot will pay for these programs," said Win Rowe, an administrative assistant for Forbes. "We are studying Headlee and some type of mandate will be forthcoming."

The MASB has also requested that the reimbursement not produce a reduction in other appropriations for schools. In addition, the board called for the establishment of a system of financial impact reporting and disclosure for all future proposed legislation and state rules and regulations impacting local school districts.

"The state allocates some money, but it never seems to be enough," said Emma Makinen, secretary of the school board and liaison for the MASB.

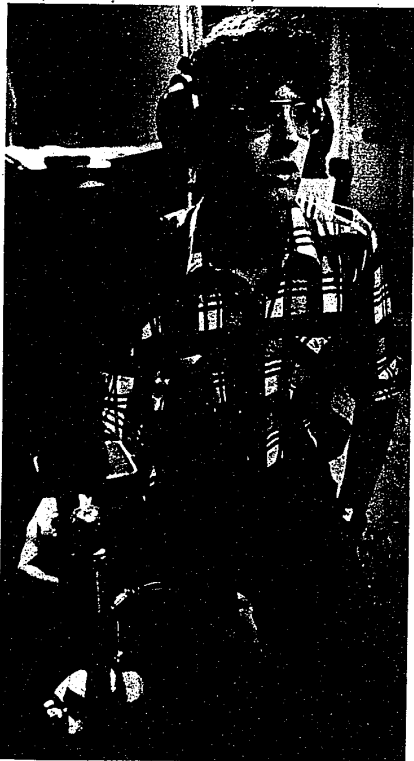
"State mandated programs take away from general education by forcing us to rearrange our priorities," she said.

tant part of the evaluation is contained in a 30-page typewritten report which is submitted to the school, according to Hayden.

The report includes the team members' evaluation and recommendations to the school.

Ideas which the faculty deems as practical and appropriate are put into use, but the entire report is sometimes

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Brian Belanger sets up his camera to film yet another scene in his quest to become a director. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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GIFTING-an important part of your holiday plans and today "Gifting" is a special section of your newspaper. Don't miss this annual gift guide filled with ideas and bargains for the season.