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Twenty-Five Cents

Ross blasts use of brand names in school texts

By CRAIG PIECHURA

In his first official day on the job, newly elected State Senator Doug Ross (D-Oak Park) slammed textbooks which teach youngsters to add Hershey bars instead of apples and oranges.

Ross, who represents Oak Park, Southfield, Lathrup Village, Farmington and Farmington Hills, chose Pepper Elementary School of Oak Park to make his presentation. With him were Mrs. Janice Rolnick of the Farmington school board and Mrs. Elaine Miller of West Bloomfield, both co-directors of the Committee Against Textbook Commercialization.

Their ire was directed at an elementary math book called "Mathematics Around Us." The book was published in 1975 by Scott, Foresman & Co. of Glenview, Ill. and is currently used in the Farmington and West Bloomfield school districts.

The book, one of the most popular math textbooks in the nation, shows brand name products such as Hostess Twinkies, Hershey chocolate bars, Snaps licorice, Jujyfruits candies, Babe Ruth candy bars, Coca-Cola and even Frez shampoo to teach youngsters math through illustrated story problems.

Ross, who headed the Michigan Citizens Lobby before his election in November, said he will introduce legislation to ban advertising from textbooks used in the state's public schools.

"If I were going to try to reach youngsters with advertising, I can think of no better media than a school textbook," Ross said. "The ability to differentiate between Coca-Cola as a product is beyond my third grader."

fourth graders are asked how many Mary Janes they can buy for 50 cents and how many 15-cent Hershey bars can be bought for 45 cents.

Aside from the fact that Hershey bars now cost 20 cents, Mrs. Rolnick objects to the number of "high-sugar, low-nutritive foodstuffs" pictured on the pages of the math book.

"My son brought the book home to do his math problems," she said. "I had never seen commercial brands in a textbook before. I was shocked. I do not allow these products in my home. My son said he noticed Coke in the textbook and said 'Why can't we have it at home?'"

Ben Neilsen, vice-president in charge of corporate planning for Scott, Foresman & Co. textbook publishers, said the book in question, "Mathematics Around Us," is the largest selling mathematics book in the United States.

Neilsen said the book was written in response to educators' demands for "making math meaningful to a kid's life."

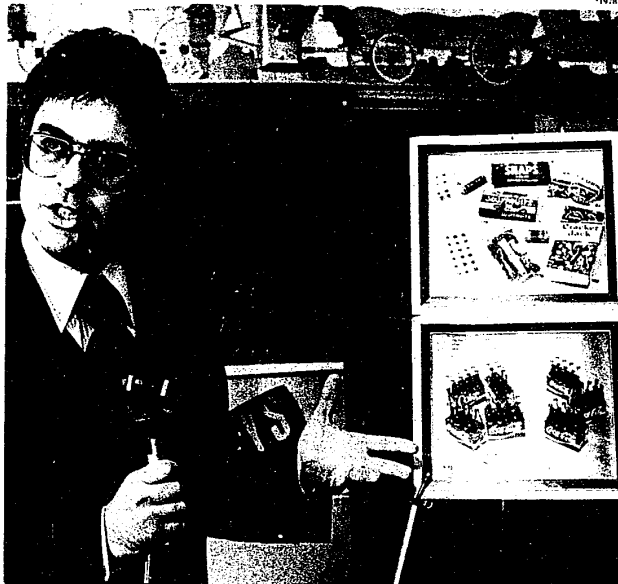
"By using real products, we are showing real life, as opposed to pick-up sticks."

The authors of the math book decided that the most common application of math principles in a child's life is a trip to the corner store, said Mrs. Nancy LaMair, public relations director for the textbook publishing company. And the products are most likely to buy are candy and soda pop.

Neilsen said the book was written in response to educators' demands for "making math meaningful to a kid's life."

"The new series will be out next year."

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State Senator Doug Ross (D-Oak Park) in a press conference this week told of how local school districts are using brand name products loaded with sugar to illustrate math problems. (Photo by Allen Schlossberg)

Resolves unpopular for 1979

Once resolutions poured out on New Year's Day like the champagne opened at midnight.

Now, those promises made to be broken are slowing to a dribble. But among those who kept the tradition are several well-known Farmington area residents.

The promises they made to themselves seem to strike universal themes. Losing weight, becoming more organized and forming a new skill rank high on the lists.

Mary Lou Masters, recently appointed director of the Farmington Community Center, lists losing weight and keeping in shape as her new resolves. Appreciating people more and not taking family and friends for granted also are high on her list.

So are the intentions to become more active in sports and to learn a new craft. Ms. Masters also wants to take a crack at fitting in the time to read more books this year.

But her attitude toward her resolutions is almost whimsical.

"I make them and I keep them for about three or four days. I've got good intentions," she said.

Losing weight is a goal she has in common with Farmington Hills Detective John Hedrick, who wants to lose 25 pounds this year.

Home buyers' bewilderment gets relief from experts

By MARY GNIEWEK

Though the cost of housing will continue to climb upward in 1979, the age of the first-time home buyer is going down, according to two Farmington realtors.

David Cornwell and Jack Vitlar, who specialize in residential sales, want young consumers to know what the housing market is like before they delve into a major purchase. The two believe today's housing market has left consumers bewildered and intimidated by the whole concept of buying or selling homes.

"A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER of buyers seem to spend less time analyzing the purchase of a home than they do purchasing a car," said Cornwell.

Sensing the need for an objective guide to home buying, they will jointly teach a home buyers seminar at the Farmington Community Center beginning Jan. 30. The class will run six weeks and focus on topics like purchase agreements, shopping for the best deal and alternate ways of buying.

"The cost of housing has risen sharply in the past three years," Vitlar said. "The purchaser needs to feel comfortable, to understand what is going on and not to feel taken advantage of."

"We don't intend to usurp the role of the realtor or the attorney, but rather to complement them. This course will be taught from a neutral forum."

The seminar hopes to break down the home buying process into several steps and analyze each one. Consumer services, protection agencies and details the buyer will be responsible for will be covered.

"WHAT PROMPTED US to teach this course is the total apprehension we've encountered from first time buyers. They're fearful, taken aback by the price of property," Vitlar said.

The age of the first-time buyer is dropping because banks must now consider both husband and wife's income in accordance with equal credit laws. And young couples are buying homes sooner because they know prices will continue to escalate.

The course will focus on home quality as well as cost.

"People don't spend enough time considering the home itself," Cornwell said. "Some don't even remember the basic features of the house they intend to buy. They are more concerned with the mailing address, schools, and resale value rather than quality."

"They move in and when the furnace, plumbing or roof causes problems, they feel they've been deceived."

Because many prospective buyers don't know what to look for, the realtors plan to furnish students with a checklist of things to do and look for in home buying.

Both agents are with Century 21, and their sales area includes western



DAVE CORNWELL

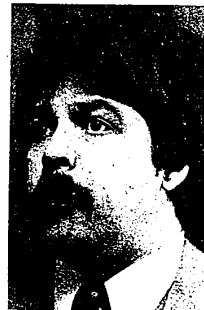
Wayne and Oakland counties. Homes in these areas are most frequently sold through conventional 30 year mortgages financed by savings and loan associations.

The current interest rate is 10 1/2 percent. Vitlar said it will rise to 11 percent before it will drop, but comparison shopping at several savings and loan associations may net the buyer a better deal including cheaper closing costs.

"THE INTEREST RATE will come down, but property and homes will continue to appreciate. So waiting for a lower interest rate doesn't insure a better deal," Vitlar said.

"The number one concern of most home buyers today is the expected return. More than ever, people are thinking of homes as investments first. They don't think of it as a permanent residence. The length of stay is often no more than three to five years," he continued.

The seminar will touch upon land



JACK VITLAR

contracts, assumption of mortgages, Federal Housing Administration (FHA) government approved loans, conventional mortgages and even cash sales.

Vitlar said inflation has led more people to housing alternatives like condominiums which are cheaper than single family dwellings.

"Also, Detroit has seen movement back into the housing market in the last five years because of price," he said. "But for the long range, there will have to be other inputs into the economy to move people back to the city. The school systems is the number one factor that draws people to the suburbs, or even certain sections of a suburb."

The seminar will meet for six consecutive Tuesdays from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Farmington Community Center, Farmington Rd. just north of Ten Mile. For more information, call the center at 474-6873.

Brown family takes turn for the better

Neighbors of Jeff Brown of Livonia will be relieved to hear he is recovering from paralysis of one side of his body.

Three-year-old Jeff was hit by a car last month when he ran into the street, an activity he says he is "not going to do again."

The event was one of a series of difficulties faced recently by Jeff's parents, Robert and Nancy Brown.

One week after Jeff was released from Children's Hospital with a fractured jaw that was wired shut, Mrs. Brown entered Providence Hospital in Southfield. She gave birth to twins who set a hospital record.

Lisa Marie was nine pounds 12 1/2 ounces, while Christopher Robert weighed seven pounds, three ounces. Trouble arose when Christopher had to be transferred to Children's Hospital

for x-rays. It turned out he needed minor and surgery.

"But it's now taken care of," reported his mother, who was quick to add many words of thanks about the help the family received.

"My husband was the greatest support," she said. "I never would have made it without him. All the neighbors called and stopped over. Members of the Farmington Mothers of Twins Club would call and say, 'I've got three hours I can give you tomorrow; do you need me?'"

It is hard to believe that a few weeks ago Jeff was in a coma, she said. "But he walked last week and his brain is fine, thank God."

She added, "Life is certainly looking up. Now we have both babies at home and a son who can walk and talk. He has only a little left side weakness now that can be built up with physical therapy."

Mild storm greets the brand new year

While police and fire departments reported a New Year that came in with a whimper, department of public works employees didn't get a bang out of the weekend's snow and ice.

Farmington and Farmington Hills DPW workers were called out at noon on New Year's Day to scrape snow and salt ice on the area's main roads.

It was hardly the best way to treat someone right after New Year's Eve, conceded spokesmen for both departments.

"Most of the men realize that it's part of the job," said Tom Trice, Farmington Hills DPW maintenance foreman who did get to spend the afternoon indoors.

On New Year's Day, when others were recovering from the annual festivities, four Farmington Hills men scraped 22 yards of salt through the 22 miles of main road way the department services.

They used four salt spreaders to accomplish the task and managed to scrape the 1 1/2 inch snowfall off the main roads.

On Tuesday, the department was out taking care of residential areas.

During the freezing rain of Saturday morning, three Hills men spread 10 yards of salt and 20 yards of sand over gravel roads and concrete roads in the city.

THEY HAD COMPANY, though. Their counterparts in Farmington were going about a similar, if somewhat smaller task, on New Year's Day.

From noon until 7 p.m. two men used two trucks to spread 40 tons of salt throughout the main roads of Farmington.

Grand River and Farmington Road were the first main passageways to receive a salting, according to a department spokesman.

Like Farmington Hills, Farmington salted the main roads exclusively on the holiday.

While the DPW was faced with a busy holiday, the police and fire departments of both towns dealt with the usual weekend hassles.

"It was a rather peaceful weekend."

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inside

THE EASY WAY

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