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Mt. Trashmore?

Recreation mountain studied

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

A mountain could be in Farmington Hills' future.

At least that's what's on the minds of some members of the ad hoc committee to study alternatives for financing senior citizen housing.

Speaking before the committee last week, former Riverview Mayor Jim Jones told of his city's efforts to build a mountain in that downriver community.

An increasingly popular mode of municipal revenue raising, the mountains are built gradually over the years. Contents of the mountain are trash collected from neighboring communities.

Each municipality pays a fee to have their garbage compacted into the mountain. This year Riverview expects to take in \$2 million in revenues from the project started more than 10 years ago.

The ad hoc committee has formed a subcommittee to study the feasibility of carrying out such a project in Farmington Hills.

On the committee is Don Wolf, Neva Carter, Frank Bair and Bob Oswald.

"One of the problems that any community has in promoting this kind of project is that it has the connotation of a dump," said Jones. "But our community accepted it with an overwhelming 87 percent vote."

Riverview floated \$3 million in bonds to finance the project, according to Jones.

Presently, the mountain is 100 feet high. It will eventually be 200 feet high and used as a recreation ski area.

Jones emphasized that the project has been a popular one for the 4.5 square mile city which is populated with \$75,000 to \$140,000 homes.

"A lot of persons picture old couches and refrigerators strewn around at this kind of site. But it's not like that at all," he said.

Each night the area is covered with a six-inch layer of clay and then compacted. Neither odor or trash can be detected at the site, according to Jones. When completed, the mountain

would be covered with a two foot clay cap.

To have such a project in Farmington Hills, more than 100 acres would be needed. Beside each mountain, a lake is dug, the dirt of which is used for covering the trash, according to Jones.

Financing would have to be through bonding which requires a vote of the public under the newly implemented Headlee amendment.

Although only having preliminary discussions, the ad hoc members guessed the city would have to float at least \$6 million bonding project.

Ad Hoc Committee Member Jerry Friedman expressed reservations over the project saying land in Farmington Hills was "too scarce and too expensive."

Land in Farmington Hills ranges anywhere from \$7,000 an acre to \$100,000 depending on whether it is residential or commercial.

The ad hoc subcommittee will study the possibility of a mountain and if the entire committee approves of it, the idea will be taken to the Farmington Hills City Council for its consideration.



Flyboy recalls old days 'over there' in big war

By MARY GNIEWEK

When Glenn Alexander was growing up near Leroy, Ohio, flying meant strapping turkey feathers to both arms and jumping off the barn into a haystack.

"It didn't work," said Alexander, now nearing 85.

But Alexander found out there were other ways to fly. In 1917 while a junior at Ohio State University, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAP) to learn his beloved craft.

"It was before the United States had an air force," said the retired U.S. Air Force colonel who now makes his home in Farmington.

"I always wanted to fly — just for the thrill of it," he explained.

That was the beginning of a career which spanned two world wars.

"I began with an ordinary trainer plane, then went into higher powered. Then was sent to England for advanced fighter training," he said.

In an open-cockpit Sopwith Camel, Alexander was a fighter pilot in World War I. He remembers the double-winged planes that "got some pretty fair breezes."

Training was a frightful experience at times, but never enough to make



Glenn Alexander was photographed in his Canadian Royal Air Force uniform during World War I.

him want to quit. Most of the overseas missions were routine. "But there were times we flew over

enemy lines and dropped bombs — blowing up ammunition dumps," he said. "I suppose we were shot at — but I was never shot down."

ALL TO Alexander's advantage since fighter pilots were not equipped with parachutes.

"They weren't invented yet," the retired colonel said.

Even on the home front, Alexander was fond of heights. He held the "Big Ten" pole vault (12 feet) and high hurdle records before he joined the RCAP.

"His coach was training him for the 1916 Olympics. But they were called off because of the war," said Alexander's wife Mary Gertrude.

With the war behind him, the star athlete returned to OSU and graduated in 1921. During the years before the next world war, he was in the U.S. Air Force reserves. He also taught athletics at his alma mater and organized the college's first gymnastic team.

"When World War II was declared, he was automatically on duty," recalls Mrs. Alexander, a retired schoolteacher and native Detroit.

He retired from the Air Force as a full colonel.

Fighting vandalism

With warm weather, out come the vandals whose actions leave a lot of work for other residents. Some vandalism amounts to pranks, but others cost hundreds of dollars in materials and labor. Bill Corliss (top) works on removing ob-

securities which had been drawn on the walls of North Farmington High School. Marlene Burzynski (right) a custodian at Farmington High School, removes some of the debris left from students celebrating graduation. All three of the public high schools have suffered incidents of vandalism in recent weeks.

(Staff photos by Randy Borst)



Brodhead fights for aid to children in need

Children who go without permanent homes because families are reluctant to adopt them may find it easier in the future to be adopted.

A bill introduced by U.S. Rep. William Brodhead, D-Detroit, calls for federal matching funds to states that provide assistance to persons adopting "special needs" children.

These include children with physical, mental or emotional handicaps. Also included are those whose age, race or membership in a sibling group makes them hard to place in permanent adoptions.

The subsidy would take the form of an Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payment, make the child eligible for Medicaid and would

continue until the child reaches age 18 (or age 21 if physically or mentally handicapped).

There would be no restriction on the income of the adoptive parents.

The bill (HR4434) has been approved by the House Ways and Means Committee and reported to the floor, according to Brodhead. The 17th District congressman's area includes Farmington, Farmington Hills, Redford and Southfield.

In addition to providing the adoption subsidy, the legislation would increase funding for Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (child welfare services) from \$56.5 million to \$266 million annually.

"These funds would be used for a va-

riety of services designed to prevent unnecessary removal of children from their homes and to reunite families," said Brodhead in a letter to Michigan Social Services Director John Dempsey.

Dempsey is supporting the bill and has written to all the other Michigan U.S. Congressmen urging their support.

To receive its full allotment of the additional IV-B funds, a state would have to put in place protections against extended foster care placement for children, said Brodhead.

These include individualized case plans for each child in foster care, crisis service to families, the requirement for a written parental request for a child to be voluntarily placed in foster

care and periodic reviews of the foster care population.

"I believe that HR 3434 will provide more children with the benefits of a permanent home," said Brodhead. "Moreover, because adoption subsidies are considerably less expensive than foster care, the bill should result in better care of children at a lower public cost."

In his letter to other congressmen, Dempsey said the lack of an adequate subsidy program has worked as a disincentive in efforts to secure permanent placement for youth in the foster care system.

"Many foster parents who would have willingly adopted foster children have refrained from doing so primarily because of the void of supportive services available to adoptive families in

contrast to those targeted as foster care children," he said.

"I see this movement toward subsidization as conducive to our desire to reduce the length of time children must spend in non-permanent placements in our foster care system as well as a means to provide better care for children at lower public cost."

The majority of states already have some kind of state or locally supported adoption subsidy program, but only a handful resemble Michigan's which emphasizes the child's needs rather than family income, according to Dempsey. Michigan law excludes family income as a consideration for adoption subsidies.

Michigan adoption subsidies take two forms — a medical subsidy which may pay for up to 100 percent of a child's treatment cost for a pre-adoption condition, or a straight support

subsidy which may pay the adopting parents up to the current foster care rates.

Medical assistance may continue along with the regular support payments which vary according to age from \$4.80 a day for children under six, to \$5.84 a day for children 7-12 and to \$7.74 a day for children ages 13-17.

The support subsidy must be requested at the time of adoption while the medical subsidy may be requested at any time, according to Dempsey.

The subsidies require a local or probate court order to be established and they are often sought only after previous attempts to place a child have failed, or in cases where foster parents are seeking to adopt a child who has been in their care. About \$2 million is now being spent in Michigan each year for adoption subsidies, according to Dempsey.

Board announces tax rate reduction

By MARY GNIEWEK

The Farmington Board of Education last week approved a slight reduction in the tax rate for the 1979-80 school year, but many district taxpayers will pay more this year because of greater, state equalized valuation (SEV) of their homes.

An almost \$90 million increase in the district-wide SEV is the reason for a four-tenth of a mill decrease in tax rate, explained school finance director William Prisk.

"New growth is bringing additional

revenue into the district," Prisk said. "We did not have to levy as much on that account."

Added school superintendent Lewis Schulman: "The Board of Education was particularly pleased in the light of increased costs to be able to present the voters with reduction in their tax rate even though it is a small one."

Last year, the Farmington school district levied 35.88 mills for operation and 3.8 mills for debt repayment for a total of 39.68 mills.

This year, the district will levy a total of 39.28 mills — less 40 cents on

each dollar of valuation over last year; 36.28 mills will be for operation of the schools and 3 for debt repayment.

The district has power to levy as much as \$7.29 mills for operation and an unlimited amount for debt repayment, Prisk said.

Under the new tax rate, a house with a \$40,000 SEV is equal to one half the true market value) would experience a \$16 reduction in taxes over last year, provided the SEV did not increase.

The tax rate is figured by multiplying the SEV by the total mills levied. A

\$40,000 SEV would equal \$1,587.20 in taxes last year and \$1,571.20 this year.

"THEY WOULD GET a reduction only if the SEV stays the same," Prisk stressed. "But there has been reassessment of property. In some cases, the rate decreased but taxes will increase. Homeowners have to face that fact because of higher SEVs."

Half the increased SEV is due to new construction in the district which includes Farmington, most of Farmington Hills, and the southern part of West Bloomfield.

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TAKE A WALK

That's what the Farmington Area Jaycees are asking you to do next weekend. The Walk for Farmington will raise funds for various community activities throughout the year to help other persons. To see how far you'll have to walk, turn to page 4A.