

# Farmington Observer

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## Parents rebel over declining music program

By MARY GNIEWEK

Parents of music students are banding together to protest what they call a weakening of the elementary and junior high music programs in the Farmington Public Schools.

A group called Concerned Parents for Music held its first organizational meeting last night at Warner Junior High School to talk about such things as restructuring the music program.

A flyer distributed by the group last

week stated that fewer students are taking part in music programs which may result in lesser quality bands, orchestras and other music programs in the near future.

"The attrition rate in elementary music is enormous," said Dick Levinson, a spokesman for the group.

Figures compiled last December by R.H. Zimmerman, elementary music consultant for the district, show that 277 fourth grade students are taking string instrument classes but only 41

sixth-graders are enrolled in string instrument classes.

"Something is wrong. We recruit them but we don't retain them," Levinson said.

"We have lost the farm team, now we're going to lose the minor leagues as well. We're in real jeopardy in three years of no longer being able to maintain any kind of quality instrumental music program in our senior high schools."

ANOTHER PARENT, Barbara Munn, said the group hopes to make school administrators recognize weaknesses that have developed over the past several years.

"To weaken and downgrade the value and content of the music program in the schools is also to weaken the entire education system," she said.

One of the main concerns of the parents is the transferring of music teachers from elementary schools to junior highs or out of the music field altogether.

Such moves are necessitated by teacher layoffs and based on teacher seniority.

"It's the old pecking order," said Levinson, who has children in elementary and junior high school music programs.

"We presently have a music director who is a real spark plug. He's loved and adored by the children. They perform well for him. He's a super musician."

"Next year he'll be teaching social studies because he's been bumped.

"It's the system that creates the mediocrity," Levinson continued. "Most of the kids in performance now already said they'll drop out."

In elementary schools, the parents oppose next year's proposed set-up of having four music teachers — two for string instruments and two for wind instruments — commute districtwide among 13 schools.

"They're going to be running to three (Continued on page 5A)

## Inflation is squeezing human service group

By MARY GNIEWEK

The Farmington Area Advisory Council (FAAC) is in a paradoxical position.

As a publicly financed organization whose product is human services, it's faced with a caseload growing with double-digit inflation while it must deal with an ever-growing tax dollar squeeze.

"Programs are flooded with people and unfunded with money," said Jim Patton, clinical supervisor. "Caseloads always go up with unemployment."

FAAC, housed in an old renovated school building at 23450 Middlebelt,

provides ongoing counseling to adolescents and parents, prevention and education programs and referral service to area residents.

Community involvement is the key to its success. It accounts for furniture donations that fill the counseling offices, the lower-than-private-clinic pay scale and more than 40 hours a week schedule for the staff, and the rent-free use of the building owned by the Farmington Public Schools.

The 1980 budget financed by state, county and local government was approved at \$191,000 to handle an annual caseload of 700.

"There's never quite enough to go around," Patton said. "When money is tight human services are not a top priority. It's a continual struggle to do what needs to be done."

STILL THE PROGRAM has evolved from a crisis prevention center staffed by volunteers huddled in a church basement to a full-fledged counseling service that gets referral from dozens of sources.

"There is a great need for the counseling program," said Betty Arnold, administrative director.

"Thirty-five percent of last year's caseload was referred by police and courts. Others are referred from schools, clergy and other agencies."

FAAC has an ongoing caseload of 200 active cases at all times.

"Drug use is up and alcohol is the number one abused drug," Patton said. "It's easy to get and presents less difficulty with parents. There's less social stigma."

"Drug use is a symptom of other problems," Mrs. Arnold added. "In most cases we try to get the family in on counseling. Family response has been good."

Youth unemployment, widespread drug use — even among elementary school children — and lack of self-motivation or direction are major problem areas identified by a committee of representatives who work with youth. They are the types of problems FAAC deals with daily.

"People are more receptive to get help now," said Patton.

FAAC was established in 1970 about the same time other community substance abuse centers were formed.

"They evolved because of a need. But it took a while for people to trust, to realize they won't be turned in to the police."

FAAC SERVICES are divided into two categories: counseling and prevention and education programs under the direction of Jane Williams.

A five-week Personal Effectiveness Project (PEP) developed to make teens more assertive is the main thrust of that program.

PEP teaches skills needed to say "no" to friends and how to handle difficult situations which present themselves during growing up years.

Each week centers on a new topic: communication, positive arguing, decision-making, positive thinking and problem solving.

"The kids are in one group with parents in another," said Ms. Williams. "Basically it's meant to build good personal growth skills."

Like the other programs, pay is made on a sliding scale according to the client fees it is affordable. FAAC staff would like to increase that pay, but they won't refuse to serve anyone for lack of payment.

"Everyone is here because they care about kids," said Mrs. Arnold. "The rewards come from the kids."

## Student planners reshape suburbia for future growth

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

The '80s could spell the end of un-paved, unlit roads which symbolize rural living to Farmington and Farmington Hills residents.

The well-spaced lawns and split level homes far from the city which appealed to child rearing couples of the '50s promised a lifestyle which has seen its time, according to Robert Champlin, associate professor of architecture at Lawrence Institute of Technology, Southfield.

As fewer children are born, fuel prices rise and housing costs soar, the suburbs are in danger of becoming impractical as a living option.

Students in Champlin's architecture class are studying the needs of Farmington and Farmington Hills in order to discover ways to keep the area vital and tie the "two cities to a major center of recreation, culture and commerce."

The students will present their findings as well as a three-dimensional model of their vision of the cities to both city councils when the project is completed.

Results of the research will give ideas on dealing with changes which Champlin believes are bound to happen to the suburbs.

This sense of a change in lifestyles is seeping into the suburbs, according to Champlin.

"AND IF I read the average American right, I think the historical interest that people have in a way is their sensing that the '50s are over," he said.

"We have to look at another way of life. We are taking a look at the way our grandparents lived."

Moving away from using large amounts of fossil fuels and a renewed importance of neighborhood shops within walking distance are part of the future attitude, according to Champlin. "Walking traffic will be encouraged. In an economical way of life we'll have to get used to it," he said.

"We'll make a ceremony out of it. We'll make it a neat thing to do."

More walking traffic will lead toward more paved roads and sidewalks in the unpaved suburbs.

That part of the solution to the changing scene puts Champlin up against defenders of the suburbs' right to maintain a rural atmosphere and forego pavement.

Eight years ago, Champlin would have agreed with that attitude. Then, he believes, it was a reasonable stance to take.

But not so now.

"Each age has its time and when that time erodes and a new time comes, planners have a responsibility to accommodate the new time," he said.

RIISING gasoline prices alone leave their mark on the suburban lifestyle, he added.

Small cars built to be gasoline efficient may not withstand the rigors of driving over unpaved roads. The cities will incorporate physical changes to accommodate different ways of transportation.

Although to Champlin this means mass transportation and increased cooperation between Farmington and Farmington Hills, it doesn't sound the death knell for each city's character.

He would retain Farmington Hills' image as an area of single-family homes with larger lots. And Farmington would continue to offer the advantages of an older, historical community.

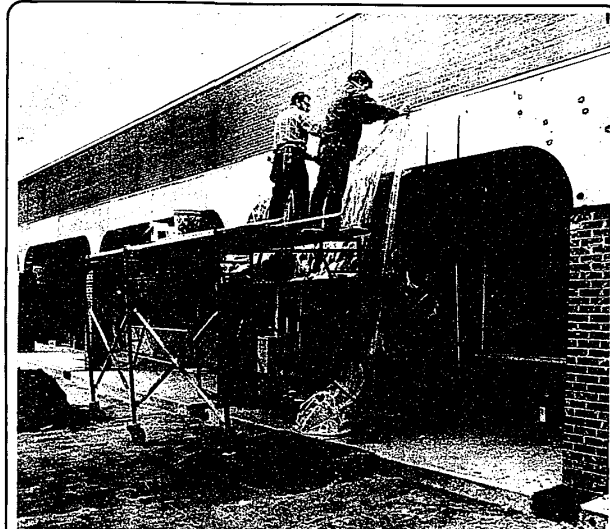
"It's still a choice that's not a city," he said.

The mass transit system that choice would include could carry residents to work and to a loop area where services and offices would be located.

Both Champlin and his LIT class see the natural beginnings of a loop fostered by the expressways in the square formed by Halsted, 12 Mile, Orchard Lake Road and Grand River.

Drake, which is being built up into a service area, wasn't included in the loop because that move would shut out development west of the street, leaving

(Continued on page 4A)



Preparing the way for new stores in the old Federal's building in downtown Farmington, these construction workers ply their trade. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

## Farmington defies trend as construction thrives

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Several new shopping areas and businesses will debut during spring and fall in Farmington and Farmington Hills offering examples of the area's steady construction.

While the area's building boom of two years ago has dissipated, construction is still healthy and steady, according to Dennis Novak of Farmington Hills' engineering department.

Among those involved in construction projects are Exotic Rubber and Plastics and the Benchmark, two Farmington area businesses relocating within the cities.

Exotic Rubber and Plastics has spent the last decade in its Industrial Park location. But the plant which manufactures and distributes precision rubber and plastic parts and tools to the auto industry and others is moving to a larger building on Grand River and Gill by October.

The new three-story office building and plant will cover 85,000 square feet, according to James Marino, the company's vice president.

The firm employs 86 persons and plans to expand its payroll to include 20-25 more workers.

"We're hoping to continue growth,"

Marino said, indicating that the firm may eventually expand even more.

"WE'RE investing the profits from the first 10 and the next 10 years in this place," he said.

While dealing in another aspect of business, selling sporting goods to the public, the Benchmark is going through much the same kind of expansion.

The store will join the series of shops surrounding T.J. Maxx on Grand River near Farmington Road in the beginning of June, according to Emil Hutton, co-owner of the Benchmark.

"We're running out of space here," he said of his present location. "We've been growing out of this one for the last three years."

The Benchmark has been in its location on Middlebelt near 10 Mile for the past six years. The store which carries camping, backpacking and skiing equipment has branches in Rochester and Grand Rapids.

Among the stores new to the area which will open this year is the Terrace Shoppe, a Livonia based store specializing in lawn and garden furniture.

The shop, which has rattan, redwood and wicker furniture, will join the Benchmark in the rear portion of the mall in the old Federal's building.

Another newcomer will debut in October on 14 Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

LOEHMANN'S at Hunters Square will contain 50 fashion-centered stores and 35-45 specialty food shops in its 165,000-square-foot area, according to Jay Eldridge, executive vice president of Uniland Corp., which acts as the construction and management agent for the mall's developer.

Between 350 and 500 persons are expected to be hired to work in the new mall according to Eldridge.

Loehmann's is a New York based company with 44 stores in 18 states. The Farmington Hills site marks its debut in Michigan. The fashion chain offers designer clothes at discounted prices.

In addition to the mall, Loehmann's at Hunters Square will include an office building which is still in the planning stages, according to Eldridge.

Another strip of clothing and fashion accessory stores is planned under the name of Muirwood Center on Grand River and Drake in Farmington Hills.

That complex should include about 40 stores in its 70,000 square feet of space according to Leonard Siegel, an

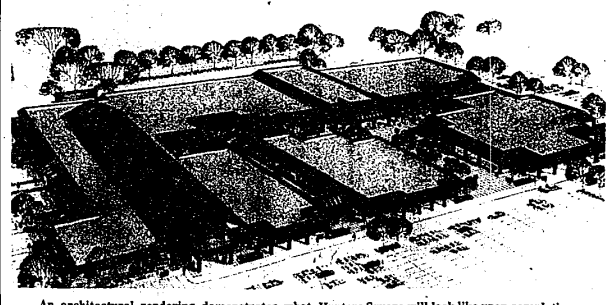
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An architectural rendering demonstrates what Hunters Square will look like upon completion.