

# Farmington Observer

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Twenty-Five Cents

## Graduate blasts educational system

By MARY GNIEWEK

North Farmington High School commencement exercises brought a chorus of raised eyebrows and boos from the audience attending the ceremony last Wednesday for the Class of 1980 at Ford Auditorium in Detroit.

Class President Tom Steuber gave the class speech in place of a valedictorian.

But inserted in the middle of his administration-approved remarks, Steuber spilled his views on the quality of education in Farmington to the class that last week made restitution for a \$3,300 vandalism spree on school property.

While surprised administrators

watched and students and parents boomed, the 18-year-old college-bound senior complained that the system doesn't teach students self-motivation, how to think independently or how to be prepared for the world beyond the hallowed halls.

"I DIDN'T ad lib," Steuber said Friday. "I didn't show the administration the entire speech beforehand because I knew they wouldn't have allowed it. 'I didn't think it would get the kind of reception it got or I wouldn't have given it. I don't see why this would be offensive."

"I talked about the 1960s and 1970s because that's when we grew up. I have admiration for the '60s because people

were thinking about other people then.

"Here we are in 1980 sitting in our suburban houses worrying about ourselves, caught up with material possessions. We still have people starving, people living in the streets."

"We are all to blame if society is in a position where people can't find a job. 'Students who are graduating are disillusioned with society and with ourselves to some extent. People try to change things but they don't change. It's so futile."

Steuber dismissed the negative reaction of his peers and their parents.

"They weren't willing to admit the world is not perfect. They weren't willing to listen to another viewpoint," he said.

**'Here we are in 1980 sitting in our suburban houses worrying about ourselves, caught up with material possessions. We still have people starving, people living in the streets.'**

— Tom Steuber

"These were my experiences with the schools. It was important that I got those points across."

Before coming to North, Steuber attended Warner Junior High and Bond elementary schools in Farmington Hills. In September, he plans to attend Washington University in St. Louis to major in either chemistry or physics.

LYNN NUTTER, assistant superintendent of instruction, called Steuber's remarks politically motivated.

"It certainly seemed anti-America, anti-democracy, anti-freedom of choice and anti-equal opportunity for people to select and choose the route they want to go with their life," Nutter said. Steuber was allowed to continue his

speech without interruption.

"He received no support from his class or from the estimated 2,800 people in attendance," Nutter reported.

"However we have to accept the fact that the young... and the right to free speech and he was allowed to do that. 'It's a sad state of affairs that one individual uses the public arena for that type of speech which could have been delivered to us or his teachers or parents,'" Nutter continued.

Student Council President Kevin Goulet, though not part of the scheduled program, was given time to respond to Steuber's remarks.

North seniors gave Goulet a standing ovation when he said Steuber's speech was not a reflection of their feelings.

## Fathers' Day special time for the kids

Story: LETHA D. WILLIAMS  
Photos: DAVID FRANK

When second-grader Shanan Becker was asked to list three things that made his father special, the answers came quickly.

"He always has time to play," Shanan said first.

"He teaches me things," he added. "He knows a lot."

Shanan is the eldest of David Becker's three sons. Together, Shanan, 8, Seth, 5, and Daniel, 4, made Becker's Fathers' Day a triple treat.

When Becker and his wife, Rita, married 12 years ago, he was uncertain about fatherhood.

"I wasn't too excited about it," the Rochester resident said. "I never imagined it would be so much fun."

But as his sons were born, Becker's dedication to parenting grew. Now, the Oakland Community College professor who holds a doctorate in chemistry puts his family above everything else.

"My family comes before anything," said Becker, 35. "These are great kids and I have fun with them."

Becker emphasizes, however, that raising the boys is a team effort. He credits his wife with most of the effort and even includes her in Father's Day.

"I THINK MOM is a very important part of Father's Day," Becker said. "We're a team."

But on cartoon day, the men take over the Becker household.

Saturday's Daddy flips pancakes as impressively as he possibly can while the boys tune in their favorite animated adventure series. But there's only an hour spent watching the "tube."

"We're very careful about that," Becker said, adding there are plenty of family activities to fill television time.

Becker and Seth used to spend Friday mornings together making hot chocolate and doing errands. That continues when Becker has a Friday morning away from his Farmington Hills office.

There are also backpacking and bicycling trips like the one planned for the West Coast this summer.

"We canoe sometimes, too," Shanan said.

Daddy also makes a fine climbing apparatus, and he's a first-rate arm wrestler.

"Dad doesn't use any power and I get him," Seth said, certain he's stronger than Shanan who always loses in an arm wrestling match.

Although his wife says Becker is easily wrapped around the boys' fingers, he claims it's not true.

"WE DON'T sacrifice ourselves for them," Becker said. "We really just use a common sense approach to raising children."

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Oakland Community College professor David Becker is also a first-rate climbing apparatus for sons Shanan (right) and Seth.

## Dream comes true for adults seeking diploma

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

For the 25 graduates of Ten Mile Community School's adult high school classes, Saturday's modest commencement ceremonies in Farmington's Legion hall spelled the end of a two-year struggle to juggle classes with their families and jobs.

Earlier last week as they prepared for the graduation ceremonies, a few of the students, marveled at their dream come true.

Until recently, most had fallen into believing that a high school diploma was beyond their reach.

They coped with family objections to their return to school as well as learning to budget their time and dealing with pre-exam jitters.

For Larry and Rose Yettaw of Farmington Hills, the graduation ceremonies were a time of doubled happiness. They received their diplomas together.

Mrs. Yettaw was already attending high school classes when Yettaw was injured in an industrial accident. Needing to enter into a less strenuous occupation, he decided to return for his high school diploma.



LARRY YETTAW

Mrs. Yettaw, who could have graduated earlier, decided to stay in school and took a few extra classes so she and her husband could graduate together.

"I THINK IT'S FUN," said Mrs. Yettaw.

"We all leave for school in the morning with our books under our arms. That's a lot more to talk about at home."



NANCY HILLS

"I learned a lot by them going to school," agreed daughter Dawn.

When Mrs. Yettaw said she crammed before every test, her daughter added, "You studied too hard."

Nancy Hill, 31, of Farmington Hills, left high school when she was 15. Like the Yettaws, she didn't want to study to pass a high school equivalency test. She wanted to go through the classes.

"I didn't think about going back to school. It was either live and eat or go to school and die."

"I always wanted to go through school. With the GED you lose a lot. I was working at the (school) bus yard when I came here and applied," said Mrs. Hill.

At first her husband, Charlie, was dubious about her efforts to study for her diploma. Eventually her determination changed his mind and she's now trying to convince him to return for his diploma.

Like the Yettaws, she said she gained more from going to school as an adult, but she added that it wasn't easy to return.

"It's tough, if you're not used to studying, to pick up the books after dinner. The more I progressed in school, the better I liked it."

FOR MRS. YETTAW, 30, and her husband, 33, graduating from high school is the first step in their renewed education. Both plan on attending Oakland Community College in the fall.

"I didn't think I'd ever have it in my hands," said Mrs. Yettaw, clutching at an imaginary high school diploma with both hands.

The first time around, the soft-spoken brunette dropped out of high school during her junior year.

"I didn't enjoy school that much," she said. "I just quit. But I always intended to go back."

"It was a lot more interesting now than then. I put more into it. It was nice around other adults. If they didn't have this, I wouldn't have gone back to classes. I wanted to learn more than I would have to pass the GED."

Yettaw dropped out of high school in his junior year because "I was just having fun. I had no interest in going to school."

In the army, he took a few high school courses but didn't pursue a diploma.

Now he and his wife remember their

first exam in adult classes and can share their school experiences with their daughter, Dawn, who will enter eighth grade in Clarencville Junior High School this fall.

FOR MRS. HILL, juggling her school time with her other commitments wasn't easy. In addition to her job as a sales representative for the William Wrigley Jr. Co., she was active in fund raising for the muscular dystrophy foundation, the cancer society and diabetes research.

"It's not like I'm inactive," she added.

In addition, Mrs. Hill has become an activist of sorts for her high school class. She successfully lobbied for class rings and a party.

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**SUMMER ACTIVITIES**  
School is out, but there is plenty to keep both children and adults busy during the summer months. This edition of the Farmington Observer is full of ideas. Summer activity stories are on Pages 2A, 4A, and 9A.

## Summer school opens June 24

Persons interested in enrolling in summer school should register at Harrison High School, from 8 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m., June 16-20.

Classes begin on June 24 and will end August 6. All classes will be at Harrison, 29995 12 Mile.

Tuition will be \$40 for two-hour classes and \$75 for four hour classes.

Tuition fees are to be paid at the time of registration. Refunds must be requested prior to June 26.

Classes to be offered from 7:45 a.m. to 10:05 a.m. will be general math I; algebra; geometry; reading improve-

ment; grammar; English 7,8,9,12; ecology; government; ancient history; Civil War and reform; science 7 and 8; typing, office skills, physical education and basic computers.

Classes offered from 10:05 a.m. to 12:25 p.m. will be: Math 7; math 8;

algebra; geometry; refresher math; ecology; earth science; social studies 7 and 8; modern European history; U.S. as a world power; government; World War II; English 10 and 11; reading improvement; essay writing; psychology; typing, physical education and basic computers.