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Practice on appeal

Jeff Kinjorski (right) and Pat Vellucci run down the field at Farmington High School as practice for the 1980-1981 Falcon season gets under way. Kinjorski is awaiting a decision on appeal of a circuit court

ruling which prohibits him from playing high school football because he turned 19 before the start of the school year. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

Schools adopt get-tough rules for attendance

By MARY GNIEWEK

The Farmington Public Schools has adopted a new get-tough attendance policy. Administrators hope it will cut class skipping in the high schools.

The policy allows eight absences a semester per class before a student is barred from class and put in a study hall for the remainder of the term.

"The purpose of the policy is to impress on parents and students that attendance is important," said Norman Dixon, assistant principal of North Farmington High School.

Dixon chaired a committee of teachers, parents and administrators who drafted the policy this summer. The Farmington Board of Education accepted the policy 6 to 1.

A random poll conducted last year over three weeks in fall, winter and spring recorded high school absenteeism ranging from 9-17 percent.

"Those were good weeks," Dixon said. "They were in the middle of the term, not connected to vacation weeks."

"Probably year-long, absenteeism runs about 20 percent." The attendance policy further makes parents responsible for verification of all absences by phone. Notification later than a day following an absence won't be accepted.

STUDENTS ARE to make sure their absences are approved the day they return to school. Any absence not cleared immediately will be considered unapproved. Religious holidays and extended absences accompanied by a doctor's note are exempt from accumulated absences.

A student whose schedule has less than three classes may be withdrawn from school for the remainder of the semester.

'Probably year-long, absenteeism runs about 20 percent.'

—North Farmington High Assistant Principal Norman Dixon

A written report will be mailed to parents on the fourth absence — approved or unapproved — and again after the seventh absence.

"I agree attendance is a major problem and 95 percent of this policy is a good one," said Michael Spiece, the only board trustee to vote against the policy.

"Those two items — not notifying parents until after the fourth absence and withdrawing a student from class after the eighth absence — are ludicrous and repugnant."

"The key is to notify parents early. That will be the biggest deterrent," Spiece said.

"The procedure we're adopting is to prohibit students who skip from going to class, which is exactly what they want. It's the first time we've ever dropped a student and literally washed our hands of him."

SHPIECE OFFERED two amendments, which the board defeated. The first was to provide the dropped student with some educational plan in lieu of study hall. That measure failed 4 to 3.

The second amendment would have prohibited withdrawal from class due

to excused absences. The policy says that if a student misses eight classes in one semester, even for legitimate reasons, he or she must appeal to a special review board to stay in class. Spiece's motion to waive excused absences from the review process failed 5 to 2.

"We are no longer accepting excused absences as a parental right," Spiece said. "I don't want to get in the business of superimposing our values over parental values."

Teachers present at board room discussions of the policy sided with the administration.

"What's our alternative?" Dixon asked. "To let students pick and choose? We're talking about a small percentage — one-half of 1 percent. The majority understand the purpose of the policy."

Dixon also cited marked decreases in absenteeism in other school districts with similar policies, like Redford Union, Plymouth, Clarencville, Brighton and Lamphere.

A board of appeals comprised of five teachers and administrators will give parents and students an opportunity for personal review of circumstances around the accumulated absences.

The student will be allowed to stay in class during the appeal process.

From inventor to firm president

Electronics whiz zaps out problems

By LOUISE KRUTSKY

All Hart's childhood was filled with tales of engineers and their incredible feats.

Two of the illusions he carried with him through his Nova Scotia upbringing were an absolute certainty that engineers knew everything and that non-engineers were bums.

The Farmington Hills resident was well into his teens when he lost his steadfast belief in the invincibility of engineers. He asked an engineer a question which couldn't immediately be answered.

In spite of that setback, Hart went on to become an engineer just as his father wanted. It was his father who convinced him that engineers knew everything.

Today, at 48, the president of Signals & Systems Inc. of Troy admits he doesn't always know the answers, although his company is dedicated to finding the solution to electronic problems in manufacturing and the military.

Hart's path toward becoming an electronic engineer wasn't as steadfast as his father planned. From a childhood marked by his father casually re-

ferring to the time when the boy would be an engineer, Hart fell in love with racing cars and abandoned school for the smell of the exhaust and the roar of the engines.

FOR SIX YEARS he awoke at 7 a.m. and worked as late as 1 a.m. the following day improving, repairing and racing his two cars.

He finally quit and returned to school, eventually enjoying a year in law school and picking up the long talked-about engineering degree.

To this day, he refuses to watch races on television, fearing that he would be drawn back into the rush of the business where drivers didn't just keep up with the Joneses, they were expected to keep ahead of the Joneses.

He started out as a salaried inventor for the American Standard Co., which specializes in plumbing fixtures.

"I sat in a room with my feet on a desk," he said. The unassuming description of the job belies the fact that Hart was involved in 35 different patents during his tenure there. He moved to Lear Jet's stereo equipment division at the time eight-track tapes were hitting the

market. From there it was a small jump to handling his own eight-track component business.

The quantum leap came in 1972 when he began Signals & Systems.

"I FELT that the market was ready and I decided to make a try at it," he remembered.

His staff on opening day consisted of himself as president with one full-time employee.

The concern continues to grow at a yearly rate of about 30 percent, according to Hart.

That growth rate is monitored by him to insure that the company doesn't outgrow its capabilities or the economy. A move to a larger facility planned for this summer was postponed until next summer to wait out the economy.

Yet while the economy threatens the auto industry, Hart's company continues to grow.

"We have a virtually unlimited market place. It's still so large compared to our participation that there's plenty of room for us to grow," he said.

"Autos still need to be built. They can't stop building them. They still need equipment."

More equipment is needed by the manufacturers to help them comply with pollution and safety standards as well as calls for greater fuel economy, according to Hart.

"There are opportunities for us as long as automobiles change. It doesn't matter as long as they change cars," he said.

His firm has designed and manufactured computers which run the gamut from testing automobile engines as they come off the assembly line to controlling the products carried on conveyor belts.

ONE SYSTEM they built analyzes the data from test cars and displays it to the operator on a LED device similar in uses used for clock radios and microwave ovens.

After the system analyzes the data, a hook-up to a larger computer transfers the data to a permanent storage area.

The firm has solved electrical problems for the Navy, such as its request concerning control of turbines in ships.

"There are many technical challenges. You never know what a phone call will bring," Hart said.

Special patrol nets more drunk driving arrests

Teams patrolling high alcohol-related traffic accident areas in Oakland County have made more than 260 drunk driving arrests since mid-April, according to the Traffic Improvement Association (TIA) of Oakland County.

"These teams, composed of sheriff's

deputies, local and Michigan State Police, have been patrolling area of Waterford, and White Lake Townships, Pontiac and sections of Woodward and Telegraph," said Jerry Peddersen of the TIA.

TIA data indicates that more than

2,600 alcohol-related accidents have occurred in these areas over the past three years, including 47 deaths and 1,500 injuries.

The increased enforcement effort is part of a \$1.2 million, four-year Alcohol Enforcement/Education Project

paid for by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning to reduce alcohol-related traffic accidents in Oakland County.

"It is interesting to note that the average Blood Alcohol Level (BAL) of persons arrested is 0.16 percent, well above the legal limit of 0.10 percent," Peddersen said.

"The great majority of drivers arrested at a BAL that high show obvious signs of intoxication and have an accident probability 35 times greater than the sober driver."

TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT of the drivers arrested also had prior alcohol-related traffic offenses, frequently indicating a serious alcohol abuse problem.

The majority of the drunk driving arrests resulted from the persons being stopped for erratic driving behavior, such as weaving and crossing the center line, said Captain Jim Curtis of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department.

Beer was the alcoholic beverage most frequently named by those arrested



In the workshop of Signals & Systems, Denise Spade constructs a circuit board. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

ed when asked what they had been drinking.

The project is being administered by TIA and the Oakland County Sheriff's

Department and includes a comprehensive effort in public information and education as well as increased enforcement.

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The Democrats are forcing their candidates to walk the (platform) plank this presidential season and Observer & Eccentric correspondent Tim Richard was there to record the political fortunes and misfortunes during the convention. For Richard's report turn to Page 7A.

Air cadets win first place

Farmington Civil Air Patrol (CAP) cadets have won first place in the Michigan Wing Competition for the second consecutive year.

The cadets are teenage members of Squadron 11-1.

All cadets took a written exam of 100 questions based on the aerospace section of the CAP cadet program. Cadet Tim Crowe was the highest scorer on aerospace knowledge.

In addition to the academic side of the competition, the cadets also were tested on mile runs with members' scores averaged out to a single team score.

place in both the standard and innovative drill classifications. Three drill sergeants from the 70th Infantry Division, sponsors of the event, served as judges for the drill events.

Captain Ken Redington, squadron commander, served as squadron project officer. He was assisted by seniors John Brown, Greg Messer, Larry Sively and Doris Messer.

Winning team cadets were Roth Sively, Tim Crowe, Dave Crowton, John Anderson, Mike Frontczak, Ken Hall, Donna Sanford, Jim Sanford, Mike Sulek, Tim Snyder, Ann Williamson, Brian Graham, John Walsh, Greg Messer and Monica Messer.

Other CAP personnel attending included Major John Reussen, who served as Michigan Wing Project Officer and Captain Glenn Overby, who served as CAP chief judge.

Also representing Michigan Wing were Major Ray Previ and Captain Debbie Stevens.

The Farmington Squadron cadets are now looking forward to the regional competition. This CAP event is planned tentatively for Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

(Continued on Page 2A)