

Their business is sound as a (Patee) dollar

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Fifth-grader Jason Collins spends part of his school day wheeling and dealing and handling some big money. Collins, you see, is president of his own bank — The Bank of the Collinswealth (assets about \$20,000). Banking's serious business to Jason. He was almost sued once for charging what a borrower thought was "usurious" interest on a loan.

His bank is located on Business Boulevard right between a credit agency and the stock exchange.

In reality, the bank, the stock exchange and quite a few other going concerns are packed into Susan Patee's fifth-grade classroom at Forest Elementary School in Farmington Hills.

Patee, a 13-year teaching veteran, is probably the only teacher to have a currency named in her honor — Patee dollars.

Seeking to give her 26 students a taste of the real world and an economic lesson as well, Patee has created sort of a mini-society within the walls of her classroom.

She printed — well, mimeographed, anyway — some Patee money. A class contest determined the design on the bills. Forest Principal Walt Jablonski's likeness adorns the \$500 bill. Patee is on the \$100 and various students are on the other denominations.

She issued the money, and the young capitalists got down to business.

"I GAVE THE kids 500 Patee dollars to invest in their business," the teacher said. "They could do anything they wanted . . . provide a service or a product."

"Once that was settled, we talked about how they could figure a profit. They had to pay for their rent on the room. They also had to buy fire insurance. I set three fires, and they had to fill out the forms."

Each Patee dollar was worth one real penny, and the students were limited to spending 10 real dollars on their products.

"Mostly they stayed around \$5 or \$6," Patee said. "Their parents would give them a penny for each Patee dollar and the parents would come in to shop with the Patee dollars."

Patee reminded the students to pay for any natural resources they used. For example, if one used a cup of mom's sugar to make cookies to sell, he or she would have to pay for it with Patee money.

"There was a lot of planning," Patee said. "I gave them a briefcase full of

about 28 job application forms.

"From the applications, I picked a banker. We had a stockbroker and we had a paymaster, who paid them each a salary of \$100 a week to go to school. If they were absent, they didn't get paid, but they could buy disability insurance to cover that."

PATEE ALSO appointed a real estate agent and a city planner. The kids decided where in the room they wanted to locate their businesses.

"The rent varied from \$20 to \$25 in Patee money depending where in the room they were," she said, adding that Rodeo Drive commanded a higher rent because of its location next to the window.

Products included cookies, brownies, pickles. Among the Patee-land service industries were an exercise club, a computer school and a comic book rental agency.

"Most of them went into partner-

"We had an evaluation the other day and I asked them what they'd do differently. They said they didn't want to pay taxes."

—Susan Patee
Forest teacher

ships, which surprised me," Patee said.

"They sold the products to each other. Kids from the other two fifth grades (at Forest) turned in a penny for a Patee dollar so they could buy, too."

Any capitalistic society worthy of the name has a stock exchange, and Patee's is no exception. The teacher's "good-work" passes became stock certificates.

"The stock broker picked a number from two to five every day, and that's how much the stock was worth," Patee said. "Some of the kids made a killing on the market. They would buy at two

and sell at four or five.

"They realize that this isn't how the real stock market is, but they got a taste of it. They're getting the idea."

BUT ALL WAS NOT sweetness and light in this land of junior buyers and sellers.

One boy came in and said he was going to sue the banker," Patee said. "I asked why, and he said, 'He's charging me 10 percent interest a day. I talked to my dad and he said that was usury.'"

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Stacy Lakind leads an exercise class at Forest Elementary. An exercise lesson and fruit drink cost 50 Patee dollars.



Brian Ledger (standing) instructs Oren Golan in computer technique. Cost for a 20-minute lesson: 45 Patee dollars.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

INSIDE ANGLES

ONE OF THE BEST ways to remember the beauty of a dewy summer morning is to capture field flowers and spider webs on film. Photography enthusiasts and nature lovers will be able to learn camera techniques and enjoy the outdoors during the Summer Photo Walk at Independence Oaks County Park, from 8:30-10:30 a.m., Saturday, June 18. Photographers Bill Barnard and Hartley Anglin will share their expertise of nature photography. Meeting place is the boat rental building. Pre-registration is required by calling 858-0903 or 825-0377 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Independence Oaks is on Sashabaw Road, 2 1/4 miles north of I-75 near Clarkston.

ALL WEIGHT WATCHERS meetings are free to visitors the week of July 9-16, as part of the organization's 20th anniversary celebration. Michigan Weight Watchers open the festivities with a balloon cutting ceremony in its headquarters, at 1 Northland Plaza, 20755 Greenfield at Eight Mile. Chapters will program surprise guest speakers, hand-out recipes, contests, cooking and fashion tips throughout the week.

GAYLE LYNN YERGE COLE, a 1973 graduate of Farmington High School and a 1978 graduate of Wayne State University with a bachelor of science degree in foods and nutrition, has completed the Henry Ford School of Nursing. Gayle will be practicing nursing in the new born nursery at Henry Ford Hospital as a registered nurse after completing her state boards.

JUNE OHBA, a sophomore at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, recently won a National Achievement in Art Award for an original ink drawing. June's work was chosen from among thousands of entries submitted from 50 states. She received a certificate of honorable mention. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Masahiro Ohba of Farmington Hills.

DENNIS MIESEL, new vehicle salesperson for Dick Green Chrysler-Plymouth Inc., Farmington, has earned the Gold Award, the highest level of achievement in Chrysler-Plymouth's unique Sales Professionals Club. The program continues throughout the 1983 model sales year. The top 10 Chrysler-Plymouth retail sales personnel will win a trip to a three-day National Sales Conference.

THE FARMINGTON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION has awarded 1450 scholarships to Jennifer Johnston from Farmington High, Steve Peterson from Harrison High and Catherine Zago

from North Farmington High. The scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic achievement and financial need. The association has been awarding scholarships to deserving students since 1965. The money for the scholarships comes from voluntary contributions made by the teachers to the Scholarship Committee. Through this program the teachers demonstrate their concern for the importance of continued education in today's society. The recipients will be introduced to the Association Representatives at their June 13 meeting and honored for their achievements.

IF YOU HAVE been looking for a way to enjoy fresh summer produce year round but were afraid to risk the food-poisoning associated with home canning, a quick phone call may change your mind about preserving food. The Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service has a food preservation and safety hotline service to clear up any questions. A food expert is on hand Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. offering advice concerning safe and easy methods of canning, freezing and drying foods. You can save money and enjoy your favorite summer foods all year by calling the Food Preservation/Food Safety Hotline 558-0904.

CONGRATULATIONS to John Leitch, son of Dr. and Mrs. John M. Leitch of Farmington Hills, who has been named to the dean's list at Albion College for high academic achievement. John, who is beginning his senior year of pre-law, is a 1980 graduate of North Farmington High School.

THE FARMINGTON AREA's gourmet-in-residence, Judy Antishin, is the guest of Jack McCarthy on his Friday Feast program that will be shown at 6:45 p.m. June 17 on Channel 7, July, one of the most popular cooking instruction for Farmington Community Center, is the first instructor McCarthy has invited as a guest cook. All before this have been restaurant chefs.

KURT F. HEISS, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Heiss and a 1973 graduate of Harrison High School, received his Doctor of Medicine Degree from the University of Michigan. Kurt and his wife, Karen, will reside in Ann Arbor with their two children. He will begin a residency in surgery at University Hospital.



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