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Community ideas sought in school study

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Farmington's Board of Education will turn to the community in an attempt to "continue the debate about the quality of American public schools," according to a memorandum from Superintendent Lewis Schulman.

In a response to the well-publicized critique by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, the Farmington District will begin a "study session" to review the quality of the education it provides.

The board is expected to authorize formation of a districtwide committee of the superintendent and all assistant superintendents and directors to study local education in light of the national report. The national report was titled "A Nation at Risk" because it was highly critical of American public education.

Subcommittees will analyze and review segments of the Nation at Risk report. The subcommittees will call upon staff members, residents and students as needed, Schulman said.

Schulman stressed the community involvement aspect of the local study.

"No study or recommendation means much unless the community has a voice in it," said Schulman after the meeting. The community includes those without children in the school system — 70 percent of the Farmington-area adults, Schulman said.

"IT'S IMPORTANT that people, all people, contribute to this," he said. Recommendations made by the subcommittees will be reviewed by the steering committee. The steering committee will make recommendations to the school board, Schulman said.

"We expect this to be an on-going and continuing process. No time limits have been set. Recommendations will be made in light of what the community wants and can afford."

During Tuesday's meeting, some people were concerned students who were not college bound would be neglected in the drive for excellence in education.

"We don't expect this drive for excellence to exclude the kids who aren't college bound. We have a responsibility

to prepare everybody for life."

Some of the major recommendations of "A Nation at Risk" to be studied are:

- Increasing high school graduation requirements to include four years of English, three years of mathematics, science and social studies; a half year of computer science; and two years of a foreign language for the college bound.
- Lengthening the school day (from six to seven hours) and lengthening the school year (from 180 to 200 days).
- Raising standards and expectations for academic performance and student conduct.

- Assigning more homework.
 - Improving textbooks.
 - Raising admission standards to colleges.
 - Raising standards in teacher education programs.
 - Raising teacher salaries, tied to evaluation (including peer review).
 - Receiving comment from taxpayers.
 - Increasing federal involvement in education.
- "I FEEL PRETTY good (about the study)," Schulman said.

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The cat stays, tenant pledges

By Diane Gale
staff writer

Fran Stocker, who has lived in Mulwood apartment complex for five years, was served an eviction notice because of her live-in companion, Mo.

Mo, whose real name is Monique, has lived with Stocker, 33, for four years. But, Stocker's lease agreement says that Mo, and her type, are not allowed to live in the complex.

Stocker has already paid \$500 to fight the eviction notice and pursue the court case. She appeared before Judge Margaret Schaeffer Sept. 21. The case was postponed until Oct. 3 to present "character witnesses" for Mo.

The manager said she could keep the cat when she first brought Mo into the complex, but there has been five managers since then, Stocker said.

James Clarkson, the attorney representing Bestak Co., which owns the complex, said there were "several complaints" by at least one tenant.

"I'VE NEVER known of a case where the tenant won this type of case, because you might as well tear up the lease," Clarkson said. "She was given a notice before to get rid of the cat, and she said she would, but didn't."

Stocker complains that the complex allows geese, ducks, turtles, musk rats and you name it. "The geese make 'messes outside and we can't walk on the front lawn.'"

"Stocker, who pays \$700 per month for a one-bedroom apartment, said she was asked by the management company to replace the carpeting at \$95, because the next tenants may be allergic to cat hair.

"I've paid over \$35,000 (for rent) in the past three years," Stocker said. "If she loses the case she said she would rather move out and find another home."

"I enjoy the solitude here, because I deal with people all day long," she said. "There is no reason to have to give her up, and if there was a reason, I could see giving her up."

She does not understand why a neighbor would complain about Mo, because the cat is let out an hour a day to run around. On some days she stays in all day long.

At least 35 other tenants have pets in the complex, Stocker said. She declined to name them.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Fran Stocker hugs her cat Monique in the Mulwood apartment they share. Stocker was evicted from her home for breaking her lease by having Monique. She plans to fight the issue in court.

'There are a sizable number of people in the fraud being investigated.'
— State Police Lt. Richard Meloche
commanding officer in tampering case

Officials silent in utility probe

By Diane Gale
staff writer

A yearlong investigation into Detroit Edison meter tampering that netted thieves about \$13,000 in reduced electrical charges may be wrapped up in the next few weeks.

Although optimistic about the investigation's outcome, spokesmen for the Michigan State Police, Detroit Edison and Oakland County Prosecutor's office refused to be specific until warrants, if any, are issued.

The electrical tampering by various customers began in January 1982 and was discovered by Edison in May, said Edison group vice president Burkhard Schneider.

The scheme was reported to involve at least 60 commercial and residential customers in metropolitan Detroit including several automobile dealerships.

Some of the businesses involved had bills as low as \$80 a month, Schneider said.

"We are hot to trot in getting this money," he said. "There is an ongoing process of looking into people that attempt to defraud us, and if people do, chances are that we will probably catch them."

Schneider wouldn't say, however, whether the company has recovered any part of the money.

OAKLAND County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson said he isn't sure, but expects to close the case during the next six weeks. The prosecutor said he hasn't seen the investigative reports from the Michigan State Police, so he is unsure whether prosecutions will follow.

Warrant division personnel in the prosecutor's office are working in an advisory capacity with the police department.

"It's a lengthy police investigation, so I certainly hope there will be arrests," said State Police Lt. Richard Meloche, commanding officer on the case.

"There are a sizeable number of people in the fraud being investigated," Meloche said. "We have an idea of who we think is the culprit, but a lot of proofs have to be gathered. Anything that would tend to incriminate or clear the persons, that's what we're looking into."

The "scope and magnitude of the investigation" is so encompassing and "wide ranging because of the number of people involved," Patterson said.

"It's unfortunate that it (the story) was leaked (to the media) and, I don't want to get to a point where I'm speculating on who was a suspect," Patterson said.

"I keep thinking we're getting closer and closer, and we keep having to check other leads," Meloche said. "I don't think it (the end of the investigation) is that far away, but I don't know."

In helping with any fraud investigation, Edison may provide photographs of people tampering and turn over meters and information gathered through computerized checks of unusual deviations that would constitute evidence, Schneider said.

"Be reassured that we're alert on the ball and will do anything to get the money that is fraud," Schneider said. "That won't become a burden to all the rate payers."

"Knowing that this is a complicated case, and knowing that the wheels of justice grind slowly, I don't feel that the 12 months that have gone by is because anyone has lost interest," Schneider said.

Uproar over ditches calmed



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

The stake in front of Mike Keefer's porch marks the area where the ditch will begin.

By Diane Gale
staff writer

A man who fought against the ditches that are being dug on Collingham Street said he's content with the outcome of discussions with city officials Monday.

The Farmington Hills City Council agreed to allow city engineers to work with residents to have the contractor hired by the city install culverts (connecting pipes). Homeowners have the option of hiring a different contractor to do the work.

Residents who dislike the open ditches in front of their homes may install culverts and cover it with dirt. But, the work must meet city code specifications, and each homeowner will pay the total cost for the work. The city, however, will provide seed for the

ditches, or the area covered, to all the homeowners.

"The council is giving us the assurance we needed for our particular problem," said Ronald Atonishak, who circulated petitions to postpone digging ditches until after the residents and city officials talk.

He priced the job at \$150 for a 50 foot wide frontage. But, he is assuming that the contractor will either return the dirt or refrain from hauling it away.

THE CITY will ask the contractor to leave the dirt, and it should be easily agreed upon because it lowers the cost to the contractor, according to Thomas Biasell, director of public services.

"The engineering department will work with you all that we can," said Charles Williams, mayor pro-tem.

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CREATIVE LIVING
REAL ESTATE SECTION

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO
AREA REAL ESTATE
IN TODAY'S EDITION OF THE
OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC
NEWSPAPERS

oral quarrel

How will you cope with new phone bills?

Telephone rates for local calls are expected to rise as a result of the dismantling of American Telephone & Telegraph's monopoly known as the Bell System. The breakup will take place Jan. 1. A spokesman for the Michigan Public Service Commission said recently that 8.5 percent of the said population will give up phone service because of the coming higher rates.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

HOW WILL YOU COPE WITH THE EXPECTED HIGHER RATES FOR LOCAL TELEPHONE CALLS?

To answer this question, call 477-5488. You have until 1 p.m. Friday to respond. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please look for Monday's Farmington Observer.