

# Farmington Observer

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## Business reaching out for the stars

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

The space age, with its gleaming technology and its futuristic aura, would seem to have little to do with Farmington Hills' historic Botsford Inn, which has stately white lines, creaking wood floors and antique artifacts.

But the old and the new were joined about two years ago when Botsford owner John Anhut installed an earth station — a large, dish-like antenna which receives television signals from satellites orbiting almost 24 thousand miles up in space — at one end of the 1830s-era structure.

"You'd be surprised how many people told me I was defacing this beautiful old place," Anhut said, "but business is business."

Guests in Anhut's rooms can watch programming which has been bounced off the SATCOM-2 satellite and scooped up by the dish. The inn pays a

monthly fee to Omega Satellite of Mt. Pleasant and receives three channels — news, sports and movies.

"We don't charge for it," said assistant manager Jim Anhut, the owner's son. "It's just an added amenity. But I don't think it's done anything to increase our room sales."

"We also have a teleconferencing capacity with this. We can show a medical operation from far away, for example, and the doctors from Botsford Hospital next door can come over and watch."

**DRIVE NORTHWEST** on Grand River and you'll see more earth stations or satellite dishes. The Bahama Motel sports one on its roof and the Rainbow Park Motel has one as well.

The Rainbow Park has been receiving signals from space for about a month. "Most of our regulars are thrilled with it," an employee said.

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The earth station at the historic Botsford Inn picks up three channels — news, sports and movies — from an orbiting space satellite.

FANDY GORST/staff photographer

## Summer is finally over for Walled Lake students

After a 1½-week strike, the Walled Lake School District's 474 teachers returned to their classrooms Wednesday under a tentative 3-year pact settled Monday.

The contract agreement — the only

3-year pact in Walled Lake's history — calls for a freeze of teachers' salaries in 1983-84 (with no increments), another freeze in 1984-85 (with increments) and an 8-percent increase in the 1985-86 school year.

The settlement allows the school board to proceed with layoffs to make up the district's \$1.6-million budget deficit.

Tentative contract language permits the board to lay off teachers with 10

school days notice this year. An estimated 60-80 positions will be cut, resulting in increased class sizes and some program reductions.

**THE CONTRACT**, which should be

ratified early next week by both sides, ended the strike which began Monday, Oct. 3 and spilled over into this week when contract language disagreements thwarted weekend settlement attempts.

Provisions describing teacher qualifications stalled the talks for nearly a week, according to board negotiator Rita Thomas and Walled Lake Education Association (WLEA) negotiator Karen Filar.

The point was crucial to both sides because of the impending layoffs. Staff reductions usually require some reassignments among the remaining staff. Occasionally, an instructor who has been teaching in one subject or one grade for many years is reassigned to a new subject or grade.

In an effort to avoid assigning teachers to subjects or grades they aren't qualified to teach, the school board wanted to require that teachers have a major or a minor degree and teaching experience in the new assignment area.

**THE UNION** said that this would preclude movement among some teachers. For example, an elementary teacher with a degree in mathematics could not teach math on the junior high level if he/she had no prior experience teaching junior high students.

The two sides argued the issue last week and into the weekend before compromising on a proposed solution Monday.

According to Filar, reassignments this year will be based on seniority, major or minor, or teaching experience.

In other words, the elementary teacher with a degree in math could

teach junior high math although he/she has no experience in that grade level.

In all cases, the teacher must be certified to teach on the grade level he/she is assigned.

But, in the second and third year of the contract, the requirement will change to reflect the board's wishes. The elementary teacher with a math degree but no experience teaching math may still accept a junior high math position — if he/she agrees to take six credit hours of college math.

**ANTICIPATED REASSIGNMENTS** already are causing a stir in district schools. Parent and Walled Lake Western High School band booster Penny Nelson told the board at its Monday meeting that future teacher contracts should make teaching excellence, rather than seniority, the basis of layoffs.

Although Western band director Al Johnston is low on the seniority list, she said, "the music will stop (at Western) when he walks out the door."

More than 600 parents, teachers and students crowded Western's auditorium Monday, but their comments were cut short when board President Mario Tozzi called a closed session for the board to consider the final contract proposals.

Ninety minutes later, the board returned and board negotiator Thomas announced the tentative settlement.

"We can assure you it has been very difficult. The hard part lies ahead of us, but Wednesday morning the buses will roll."

For at least the second time tonight, I agree with everything Rita says," Filar responded.

## Enrollment continues downward spiral

The numbers aren't official yet, but Farmington school officials say they are pleased with what their annual "fourth-Friday" student count seems to show.

The smaller Clarenceville District on the area's south side is guardedly optimistic.

The state-mandated head count, held Sept. 30, came up with 10,537 students in the public schools of the Farmington District. That's 331 fewer than were enrolled on the fourth Friday of the 1982-83 school year. In Clarenceville, 2,170 students were counted.

Farmington, which has been facing declining enrollment like most Detroit-area school districts, had been losing about 500 students a year over the past several years, according to school officials.

"It (the count) doesn't appear to be down as much as we'd thought it'd be," said R. Scott Bacon, an administrative assistant for the district.

"It (the smaller-than-expected loss) is encouraging. We're still losing students, but it (the declining enrollment) seems to be leveling off, especially in the elementary schools. The high schools still have some declining enrollment to come, though."

The highest enrollment ever in the district, Bacon said, was 16,800 students for the 1971-72 school year.

Bacon stressed that this year's numbers aren't official yet.

"That (the 10,537 students on Sept. 30) has changed a couple already," he said. "We won't have real good numbers until next week. We have to get these numbers verified."

**THE FOURTH-FRIDAY** count is required by the State id Act as one means of determining how much state aid will be doled out to each district.

Officials say they don't know how the Sept. 30 head count will affect the state's contribution to the Farmington system. However, a recent financial audit of the system showed that state aid to the district continued to shrink — \$170 per pupil in 1983 compared to \$359 in 1978.

Also unknown is what bearing the student count will have on the pupil-teacher ratio. Officials have said, however, that the ratio has changed for the better over the past several years.

"We've gradually lowered that ratio every year," said Farmington Superintendent Lewis Schulman, "and that makes for better teaching."

"For the high schools, it's a little under 25 (students) to 1 teacher, for the middle schools it's 22.2-to-1 and for the elementary schools it's 20-to-1."

The Farmington District has an operating budget of \$44,319,000 and lev-

ies 33.7 mills. Voters in the district approved a five-mill renewal for 10 years in a special election held Sept. 20.

The district includes all of Farmington, most of Farmington Hills and part of West Bloomfield Township.

In Clarenceville, a district that takes in portions of Livonia, Redford Township and Farmington Hills, the fourth

Friday count was greeted with some optimism.

"It's a good sign," Clarenceville Superintendent David McDowell said, noting that 18 more students than projected were enrolled at the elementary school level. "I haven't forecasted out the new data, but the decline may be leveling off."

## Candidates to talk issues at forums

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Three candidate debates have been scheduled prior to the Nov. 8 election. And the West Bloomfield-Farmington Branch of the League of Women Voters is sponsoring two "Meet the Candidates" nights.

The first forum featuring Farmington City Council candidates is scheduled for 8 p.m. Oct. 25 at the Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road. Vying for the three available council seats are incumbents Ralph Yoder and William Hartsock,

and newcomers Roger Walker Jr., Gerald Lynch and Ronald Oglesby.

Farmington Hills candidates will be featured at the second debate scheduled for 8 p.m. Nov. 1 at the Farmington Community Library, 32737 W. 12 Mile.

"Every candidate has been invited to participate," said Charlotte Yavarski, president of the local League of Women Voters.

Candidates vying for one of the four seats up for grabs on the Farmington Hills City Council are incumbents Fred

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### oral quarrel

## Would you buckle up if it were the law?

Michigan's House of Representatives is considering a bill to require drivers and front-seat passengers in motor vehicles to use seat belts. The bill is heavily supported by the insurance industry, which has promised rate reductions if it is passed. Michigan would be the first state in the nation to have a seat law.

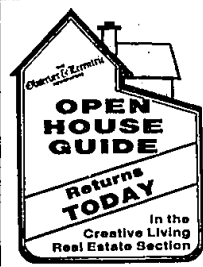
Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

What are your feelings about the proposed seat belt law in Michigan? To answer this question, call 477-5498. You have until 1 p.m. Friday to respond. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please look in Monday's Farmington Observer.

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## Come celebrate Hills' birthday

Farmington Hills will invite back its best and brightest this month and celebrate its first 10 years as a city.

Members of the original charter commission and city council will join other officials and city residents at a dinner and reception on Oct. 23. The reception will be at Vladimir's from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Dinner will be at the Botsford Inn at 7:30 p.m.

City hall also will be open for tours Oct. 17-21.

The public is invited to participate in all functions. Interested persons should call Lee Bilzman at the city's Special Services department, 474-6115, Ext. 231.

At the reception, a presentation will be made of commemorative plaques to the original nine-member charter com-

mission along with a large birthday cake.

**ALL PERSONS ATTENDING** will receive 10-year birthday buttons and a pine tree seedling.

The fee for the reception is \$6 per person, and for the dinner, \$20. Reservations must be made in advance.

The week-long celebration will start with an open house Oct. 17-21 at the administrative offices between 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Public tours of the various departments will be at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. each day.

Presentations will be given regarding the various activities and functions of each department, along with tours of the police department.