

Fingerprint program helps keep the kids safe

By Tom Beer
staff writer

Ink has an unusual use in schools these days, and it has nothing to do with writing compositions or figuring sums.

Quantities of the liquid are being expended in schools throughout the nation for another purpose — fingerprinting the students.

One such school was Farmington's Kenbrook Elementary, where about 300 kindergartners-through-fifth-graders had their fingerprints taken by the Farmington Hills Police last Tuesday as part of the nationwide Child Identification Program.

The idea behind the program is to provide a foolproof means of identifying children who have disappeared and are later found dead. Dental X-rays are the usual method of identifying children and adults, but some children have never visited a dentist and thus have no X-rays.

A child's parents — not the police or schools — retain the fingerprint file, emphasized Kenbrook Principal Dave Coffin.

"I'd say participation here is about 90 percent," Coffin said last Tuesday as he helped guide students through the fingerprinting process in the school's lobby.

Tom Swanson, a juvenile officer with the Farmington Hills Police, and three auxiliary officers — Rob Medwed, Linda Mazade and John Molnar — pressed the young fingers into the inked pads and then onto the blank forms.

PARENTAL PERMISSION is required before a child can be fingerprinted, Coffin said.

"Most parents really support it," the principal said. "It's a means of identification if a child should ever — God forbid — disappear.

"And there's a beneficial by-product: It gives the kids a positive exposure to the police. Some of the younger kids were a little scared when they saw the police with their guns. But the police have been real gentle with them."

The fingerprinting, which took five hours, was aided by eight mothers of Kenbrook students, who processed the paperwork and helped the youngsters scrub the ink off their fingers with a heavy-duty cleanser.

Printing Kenbrook's students went "real smooth," according to Swanson, who went through the process at another Farmington elementary school, Beechview.

"Beechview was kind of a test," Swanson said. "We found we could do more in a day than we thought. One problem is that the younger kids' hands are so soft that it's hard to print. We've been doing a whole hand print instead of putting each individual finger into the ink."

A parent, Pat Stanton, helped youngsters wipe the ink off their fingers.

"It's been a long morning," she said. "Our backs are breaking. But I think this is a wonderful program. If anything happened to my son, at least we could identify him."

Kenbrook students were supposed to carry their fingerprint files home to their parents.

"The kids have been pretty good about that," said Barbara Davidson, another Kenbrook parent.

Farmington school officials say they hope to have all their elementary children fingerprinted.



Auxiliary police officer Linda Mazade of Farmington Hills takes Grace Kim's fingerprint at Kenbrook Elementary School.

from our readers

Reader angered at school issue

To the editor:

Your recent article on the case concerning the Lutheran High School and the Farmington Hills residents made me mad. I don't know who made the original mistake — our city officials or the zoning department — but a mistake was made and a serious one at that. Any high school should be on a major thoroughfare legally.

It also do not believe the Lutheran representatives are without fault in this. They are experienced in these matters and certainly know the law — they knew full well they would want a sign there and a larger enrollment to make the school self-supporting.

The truth is, we would never, never have considered buying property near a high school, any high school, when we bought in Holly Hills. It isn't that Lutheran High School students are bad; it

is just that high school games bring certain conditions, undesirable in a residential neighborhood like ours. Crowds, noise, streets full of parked cars, cruising and/or racing cars that will not help our neighborhood and should not be here.

With the terrific taxes we have been paying, in Farmington Township and now the Hills, I certainly feel it is the duty of the City Council to fight this battle for us, and that Lutheran High School should withdraw from the building.

Furthermore, I think the council should stop protecting the person or persons who made this serious "error" and produce the "bribe." Otherwise, they are all suspect in my mind.

Roseville seems to be selling their school, why do we have problems? The Highmeadow school would be an excellent spot for an addition to the Baptist home, or for a senior citizen's set-up. And we need senior housing for those of us above the HUD level.

I'm sure if something threatened your home value, you'd be very anxious for the council to back you up, which is how we all feel here in Holly Hills.

Mrs. Walter Featon Jr.
Farmington Hills

Legislator explains vote

To the editor:

In your article, "Geak: Balanced budget plan won't go," you reported my opposition to discharge Senate Joint Resolution 15 from the House of Representatives.

My vote in no way indicated my opposition to a federal balanced budget, rather my vote represented my conviction that there is a less disruptive mechanism for amending the U.S. Constitution than the convocation of a Constitutional Convention. The existing

Constitution was adopted by a convention called for the purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation.

From this precedent, it seems highly unlikely that delegates at a federal constitutional convention could be limited in their charge. In other words, to convene a delegation of national representatives to adopt a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution would in all likelihood lead to a revision of the entire Constitution.

Having served in Michigan's 1961-63 Constitutional Convention, I have the utmost respect for constitutional government. I voted against the motion to discharge Senate Joint Resolution 15

from Committee because I am satisfied that our Constitution is a remarkable document forged over centuries of political restraint, and I would not endorse an assemblage that could radically overturn this accomplishment in self-governance.

If we must have a constitutional mandate to require a balanced federal budget, then the President should ask Congress to initiate a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution for the states to ratify. This process of amending our Constitution has served the best of us and our need for retaining our inalienable freedoms.

Jack Featon
State Senator

memory lane

Memories, memories... have we got the memories. And we'd like to share them with you. Using local newspaper files, we're dishing up generous slices of life in the Farmington community from 40, 30, 20 and 10 years ago.

NOV. 4, 1943

"MISS SOMETHING?" asked the Around the Block column. "Why sure you do, and it's none other than Norm Barrons. Since Norm is not on the main corner to direct the comings and goings of school youngsters, it seems as though a portion of Farmington's usual every day life has disappeared."

THE FRED L. COOK & Company dry goods store advertised hunting breeches for \$13.50, wool hose for 39 to 79 cents and underwear for \$2.25. The store was owned by Cook and Adolph L. Nacker.

A COLUMN, "Clarencville" written by Mary Rault, announced: "Little Wynemath Barnes of Inlander Road entertained 15 little friends at a Halloween costume party on Saturday evening.

"The Halloween parties were helpful in keeping the younger children off the streets, though some of the children count the success of Halloween by the size of the accumulation in their baskets."

CLASSIFIED AD: "FOR SALE — 1932 Buick, very good tires. Clean, radio, heater. Phone Farmington 132-J." Another classified ad: "FOR SALE — One mare, 25704 Power Road."

NOV. 5, 1953

THE RESULTS OF a new survey of the proposed city parking lot south of Grand River and east of Farmington Road have been filed at the Farmington Municipal Building. City Manager James Tennant announced.

As a result of the survey, Farmington's City Council will be asked to draft a resolution of condemnation so that action may be started to secure the property. When completed, the new parking lot will afford space for 200 cars.

FARMINGTON POLICE Chief Joseph Deviant warned merchants to watch out for possible bad checks. He advised merchants not to accept checks from persons they didn't know. Several bad checks had been cashed by merchants in recent weeks.

AN EDITORIAL: "Continued comments... on the need for additional police protection in Farmington Township may seem a little monotonous but

with each repetition more and more citizens come up with examples to support the need."

AN ADVERTISEMENT: "Jeans for all the ladies — whether they're tiny tots, teens or full grown — are available at Dander's Department Store in Farmington." They cost \$3.95 for sizes 12 to 18.

SHORT ITEM: "Kindergartners of Pierson School were taken for a train ride to Detroit last Tuesday. Several mothers also enjoyed the trip."

NOV. 7, 1963

NORTH FARMINGTON used two touchdowns by Lee Marzella and another by Jim Actelli to whip Farmington, 18-4, in the second-annual meeting between the two local high school football teams. Tom Mitchell scored Farmington's touchdown on a pass from Ron Cleveland. North won the inaugural battle, 7-0, in 1962.

FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP police were searching for clues in a hit-and-run auto accident which seriously injured a 37-year-old Birmingham man, who was crossing 12 Mile Road at Middlebelt. The driver, who was driving a powder blue late model Volkswagen, slowed down after the accident, but then left the scene, according to a witness.

SHORT ITEM: "There are two kinds of secrets: those that are not worth keeping and those that are too good to keep." John W. Moore, Plains, (Texas) Record. Another short item: "The man who wakes up famous has never been asleep." — Lloyd S. Waters, Mountain View (Ida.) News.

FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP'S Board, meeting in special session, approved a beer and wine license for the Franklin Drug Store, 23900 Middlebelt Road.

NOV. 1, 1973

FARMINGTON'S DOWNTOWN area and recreational facilities were the main issues addressed by all candidates, except the incumbents, during a candidates' night sponsored by the West Bloomfield-Farmington League of Women Voters. The Nov. 6 election will fill three seats on the Farmington City Council.

THE FARMINGTON Goodfellow drive, long coordinated as an annual service project by the Exchange Club, will be independent this year. Chairman Richard Tupper announced the formation of a non-profit corporation to handle the annual paper sale and the distribution of goodies to make sure "no child is without a Christmas." Said Tupper: "We hope to make it more open to the whole community."

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