

Homeowners buy property from school district

By Joanne Mallizowski
staff writer

The Meadowbrook Hills and Woods Homeowners Association will have a park to call their very own thanks to a deal recently hammered out between homeowners and Farmington school officials.

School board members last week agreed to enter into an agreement with the homeowners association for the

purchase of a residential lot for \$70,000 in the neighborhood off of Eight Mile in Farmington Hills.

NEIGHBORS HAD been using the vacant lot as a park for years and finally asked school officials to sell the property. The lot was one that administrators long ago decided would be a good place for a school should enrollment increase, said William Priks,

finance director.

But now with declining school enrollment, school officials have been more receptive to selling some district property.

At one time, Priks said, the Farmington School District had an enrollment of more than 16,000 students. "With the decline in enrollment as it has occurred, our district is down to 10,000."

The decline in enrollment has slowed down a bit with an expected drop in enrollment in 1985-86 of 240 students only a 2.3 percent reduction compared to the average 5 percent in recent years, said Superintendent Lewis Schulman. Despite the expected overall reduction, kindergarten enrollment is expected to increase next year, he said.

Even with the slower drop in enrollment though, school officials are finding it unnecessary to hold onto the

property once planned for a school.

"WHY SHOULD we keep this land idle when we can keep it use and make it tax producing," Priks said. School districts do not pay municipal taxes on their property.

In addition to the Meadowbrook Hills lot, the school board also has sold the former Bond and Middlebelt schools; property along Northwestern Highway; eight acres in Section 13 in Farmington Hills; two acres on Middlebelt; and five acres next to the San Marino Golf Course at 11 Mile and Halsted roads.

Despite the land sales, the school district doesn't get rich.

State law places restrictions on what a school district can do with the money gained from a land sale. If the district has outstanding bonds on the property a certain amount of the sale money must go toward retiring that debt, Priks said.

The remaining money can be used only for building and site purposes, Priks said.

"We won't use it to pay the light bill. We won't use it to pay salaries," Priks said.

Cable access channel needs a logo

The Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission's (SWOCC) community access channel 12 needs an emblem.

Residents in the tri-city cable franchise area of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi are eligible to enter

SWOCC's contest. The emblem should be designed to a 3-by-4 aspect ratio for television use.

The logo should show the cooperative efforts of the three cities, the Metro-Vi-

sion cable firm and SWOCC in community access programming.

The winner will receive a \$50 prize. Entries must be received by April 15

in the SWOCC office at 23800 Liberty St., Farmington 48024.

For more information, call Mark Williams at 474-1017.

Dog saves man in burning house

In the Crowell household in Farmington Hills a dog is more than man's best friend. The family dog, nine-month-old Sheba, a Labrador-German Shepherd mix, is a lifesaver.

At 11:04 a.m. March 13, while Michael Crowell lay asleep in an upstairs bedroom of his home at 5820 W. Grand River Ave., his 3-year-old child

started a fire with a lighter, according to Richard Marinucci, Farmington Hills fire chief.

While Crowell's mother-in-law managed to get the 3-year-old and another child out of the house, it was too smoky for her to return to awaken Crowell, said Sandy Crowell, Michael's wife.

But Sheba came to the rescue. "The dog kind of dragged him off the bed by his shirt," said Sandy Crowell, who was at work at the time of the fire. "She's a pretty good dog."

Although Michael Crowell tried to put out the fire by himself, he gave up and had someone else staying in the house call the fire department, Sandy Crowell said. Michael Crowell was later taken to Providence Hospital in Novi for smoke inhalation, Marinucci said.

The fire was confined to the upstairs bedroom, Marinucci said, estimating damages at \$3,000.

Tornado sirens to be activated Thursday

When you hear a tornado siren at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, don't worry, it's only a test.

As part of Michigan Tornado Safety Week, March 25-31, local and county officials will be testing tornado warning sirens in Farmington and Farmington Hills as well as the rest of the county this week.

"We ask that the public not call the police or fire departments for information on the test," said Capt. Russell Conway. "Our lines just get overwhelmed."

The sirens are tested to be sure they work and rotate, Conway said.

With tornado season approaching (April, May, June and July), police and fire officials are reminding residents to learn the difference between a tornado watch and warning.

A tornado watch is issued when conditions exist for the development of a tornado. Watches last two to six hours, give residents time to plan and prepare for a tornado.

A tornado warning — a steady three-minute tone — means take cover immediately because a tornado has actually been sighted or is strongly indicated by radar. Warnings cover three or four counties and are usually no longer than an hour and a half.

Expand exports, don't restrict imports

"If you want to sell American goods to Japan," advises Sam Kusumoto, president of Minolta Corp., "get to know the people. U.S. firms that learn all they can about overseas markets prior to entering them, generally are more successful than those that do not."

Minolta, Kusumoto notes, entered the plain-paper copier market in the U.S. in 1978. "Imagine coming to America — the home of Xerox — to sell photocopiers!" Kusumoto says. "But by last year, Minolta had grown to become fourth in the nation in copier placements."

Patience, Kusumoto adds, is an essential ingredient for business success. The answer to America's trade imbalance, he says, does not lie in restricting Japanese imports, but in greatly expanding American exports. U.S. firms that adapt American-made products to foreign markets will see their revenues grow.

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