

Pooches capture breeders' hearts, 1D



North still champ, 1C

Schools put spotlight on young reader, 3A

Farmington Observer

Volume 100 Number 44

Monday, March 6, 1989

Farmington, Michigan

48 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

farmington FOCUS

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Parents with children at Highmeadow Common Campus are so enthused with the school, they are asking that their other children be given preference when filling openings.

They don't oppose the Farmington district's general lottery system for selecting students but want a "sibling preference" rule for the alternative elementary. Such a rule would allow brothers and sisters of those already enrolled in the school to get first chance at openings, keeping families together.

"There's a lot of good things there," Highmeadow parent Mary Sue Wayne told school trustees Feb.

Parents ask first choice for school They want sibling rule at Highmeadow

28. "We took the chance. We did you a favor. Maybe you owe us a favor this time."
"I kind of resent we don't have first priority. We were the risk-takers."

A general lottery process is used to pick students for the school, a two-year pilot program in its first year with nearly 800 children from throughout the district attending. The school was originally designed

to ease overcrowding in several elementary schools. The school offers general and enrichment classes plus advanced courses for students who need them.

APPLICATIONS ARE being taken this week for 50 first-grade openings at Highmeadow, with a lottery planned for later this month. Some 130 parents signed a petition saying they want 20 of those slots to be allo-

cated to incoming children from Highmeadow families.

The petition was presented at the Feb. 28 meeting.

"Historically, children in Farmington schools have been allowed to follow in attendance to their older sibling's school," a portion of the petition said. "Since we took the risk and believed in your educational plan, sight unseen, our reward should be sibling priority at Highmeadow for our younger children."

School board members are expected to address the issue at their next regular meeting March 14. Trustee Janice Holnick has already voiced support for the parents. "I hope in the future we have more common campus schools in this district. I do, being a parent, understand your con-

cerns. This is a real dilemma. I, personally, would not be opposed to a sibling preference."

Holnick said she believed the parents helped to make the school such a big success.

EXPLAINING THEIR position, administrators said they wanted all children in the district to have an equal opportunity to enroll at the school.

"We have to think in terms of the greater community," said Superintendent Graham Lewis. "I know it seems bureaucratic. We try to look at the situation in its equity aspect."

There are some 800 children coming out of Farmington kindergarten

Please turn to Page 3

HAVE it blink. The Oakland County Road Commission will soon install a traffic signal on Farmington Road at Oakland Community College Drive, but Farmington Hills city councilwoman Jean Fox wants it to blink except during peak hours.

She proposes that the light operate full cycle only during the morning and afternoon peak hours during the school year.

She asked city manager William Costick to ask the road commission to have the light blink on weekends, in summer and later at night.

NO posting. The Farmington Board of Education convened a bit early Tuesday.

Although its regular meeting was posted for 7:30 p.m., trustees met at 7 to greet three "teacher of the year" nominees, president Jack Cotton told a standing-room-only audience. State law requires public boards and commissions to publicly post all special meetings at least 18 hours in advance.

Memory lane

50 years ago:

• Taxi service to and from Farmington goes into effect this week.

There is no charge for picking up passengers in Farmington who are going at least as far as Grand River and Seven Mile in Detroit. Otherwise, the charge for pickup is \$1.

Cab service to Old Redford, at Grand River and Lahser, at any time of the day, for 1-5 people, is \$1.50.

— Farmington Enterprise, March 9, 1939

what's inside

- Business briefs . . . 6A
- Classifieds . . . Secs. C, E, F
- Index . . . 8E
- Auto . . . Sec. C, F
- Real estate . . . Sec. E, F
- Employment . . . Sec. E, F
- Creative living . . . Sec. E
- Crossword puzzle . . . 2D
- Entertainment . . . 5E
- Obituaries . . . 7A
- On the agenda . . . 7A
- Police/fire calls . . . 4A
- Sports . . . Sec. C
- Street scene . . . Sec. D
- Taste . . . Sec. B

The CLASSIFIEDS

Classified makes good dollars and sense. Get the most for your money-buy or sell classified.

591-0900
Use Your MasterCard or Visa



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Mike Ciesla, a trainee mechanic at the Mobil station at 12 Mile and Farmington Road, operates the new credit card pump. This system is designed to allow customers to complete a sales transaction at the pump without having to go inside the station.

Self-serve credit card is latest way to charge gas

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Ah, progress. Credit card holders can now charge their gasoline purchases on automatic, self-serve credit card readers, the newest innovation at the corner gas station.

During lunch hour last Thursday at the busy North Farmington Mobil Service at 12 Mile and Farmington Road, the 9-month-old device received mixed reviews.

The wind chill was in double digits below zero and few people used the self-serve credit option on the machine.

"YESTERDAY, 22 PERCENT OF

our sales were express credit or debit," manager Anne Hodgson said. "With this cold weather, people aren't getting their receipts out of it. There's supposed to be heaters in there. If they come in, we can get them a duplicate."

David Shardlow did come in, exasperated by his dealings with the machine. "I've been using it for six months, but the last five times I've come in, it's been out of paper. When it's working properly, you can get in and out," the Farmington Hills resident said.

Linda Smith of Farmington Hills complained that the magnetic strip on her Mobil credit card doesn't go through the machine.

FOUR CHOICES are listed on the payment keys of the control panel of what Mobil calls Customer Activated Pumps. They are Express Pay Credit, Express Pay Debit, Pay Inside Cash and Pay Inside Credit.

In addition to Mobil and Mobil plus credit and debit cards, the machines accept Mastercard, Visa and American Express cards.

To activate the machines at Mobil stations, the customer selects the method of payment by pressing the appropriate button. The display screen instructs the customer what to do next.

Please turn to Page 3

Crime declines

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Serious crime decreased significantly last year in Farmington Hills, for the first time since 1985. But the downward trend is not expected to last.

"I am not optimistic crime will stay on a decline. There's no way for a city growing as fast as Farmington Hills with residents and daytime population, and other communities surrounding us growing, to stop major crimes coming into the city," Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer said.

In 1988, serious crimes decreased 7.4 percent, compared to 1987 when they crept up 1.6 percent. The mid-1980s were a period of slight crime increases, particularly in comparison with the city's population growth and an influx of daytime population to offices and retail services.

Notable decreases in individual types of serious crimes were seen in robbery, burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft. Increases were seen in criminal sexual conduct incidents and aggravated assaults.

In 1988, the city had 26 robberies, four less than in 1987. Burglaries decreased from 745 in 1987 to 713 in 1988. Larcenies decreased from 1,941 in 1987 to 1,755 last year. Motor vehicle thefts continued its downward trend with 410 last year compared to 437 in 1987.

DWYER ATTRIBUTES the decrease in serious crimes to a number of factors, particularly to the fact that in 1987-88 both the Lodge free-

way and I-96 were under construction. "We feel that had a great bearing in armed robberies in '87 and '88," Dwyer said.

Other factors include more visible patrols and using officers where needed by maintaining a daily eye on where incidents in the city occur. Dwyer also refers to the department's investigation abilities plus the fact that in a number of crimes, such as breaking and entering, multiple arrests were made.

"If you're able to arrest some of the people, you're going to significantly decrease crimes," he said.

Larcenies, for example, began a downward trend in 1987 when the popular trend or fad of scaling hood ornaments and radar detectors slowed. Great efforts, both county-wide and locally, made a large dent in reducing the number of autos stolen, Dwyer said.

Though sexual assaults increased to 18 from 15 in 1988 (and from 13 to 19 under the less-serious part II crimes), they were not the so-called street rapes. The majority of assaults were committed by those who knew or were related to the victim. "I don't know how law enforcement can help what happens in the family structure," Dwyer said in November. "Education is probably the best way."

WHILE SERIOUS crimes decreased, the less-serious parts II and III crimes and complaints increased. Much of the reason for the increase in part II complaints were self-initiated by officers, Dwyer said.

Please turn to Page 2

Farmington Hills crime statistics

Crime	1987	1988	%
Homicide	1	0	-
Criminal sexual assault	15	18	+20%
Robbery	28	26	-7.1%
Aggravated assault	94	101	+7.5%
Burglary	745	713	-4.3%
Larceny	1,941	1,755	-9.6%
Motor vehicle theft	437	410	-6.2%
Arson	19	13	-31.6%
Total	3,280	3,036	-7.4%

Source: Farmington Hills Police Department

Firm requests school spending reports

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A Farmington Hills business that raised concerns about spending during recent school bond campaigns is seeking documents from Farmington Public Schools using the state's Freedom of Information Act.

Representatives of Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. of America have asked for copies of school district attorney reports, and other information relating to the opinion that the district cannot use operating funds for capital projects. "I believe they did the research, but in talking with other people, they questioned it," said Alexander-Ham-

ilton economist Patrick Anderson, a Farmington Hills resident. "They've been so defensive about it, my interest is piqued."

An Alexander Hamilton representative requested the information verbally two weeks ago, and was refused when the district claimed it was privileged information. Anderson said the company then decided to file the FOI request, as allowed by state law, to get the information. "They've discussed this (information) in public and suggested this in a (bond) campaign. I think the citizens have a right to know these things," Anderson said.

THE ISSUE was originally raised

"They've been so defensive about it, my interest is piqued."

— Patrick Anderson
Alexander Hamilton economist

last fall when Anderson and Richard Headlee, then-president of Alexander Hamilton, questioned the school board about extra money in the operating budget, and why they weren't using it to build a new west-side school. In January, voters approved a \$7.3 million bond issue for that school.

The board said much of the money was held in reserve as a cushion, some was for unpaid invoices, and a capital fund was being used to upgrade budget. Operating money, they said, could not be used to build a new school. A state Board of Education spokesman told the Observer before

a defeated bond election last fall that voter-approved operating money can't be used to build a new school. But county-allocated millage could be used to pay off a construction loan over a period of years — a method that would allow money now tucked for operations. Assistant superintendent Lynn Nutter said last week he received the FOI request Thursday afternoon, and will consult with school attorneys and board president Jack Collins before responding. Under state law, the district is required to respond within five business days.

Please turn to Page 3