



Flanders third grader Jason Sinelli (left), second grader Robert Bates and third grader Lyndsi Keves wait to have Rich Clifford answer their questions about space and astronauts.



Rich Clifford answers questions from kids at an assembly at Flanders last week. Kids wanted to know if he could enjoy pork chops, pizza or soda pop in space. Clifford also visited Hillside Elementary in the afternoon.

## Kids soar with man from future

**I**T WAS an envious Michael Flanagan who visited Hillside Elementary last week to see and hear astronaut candidate Rich Clifford.

The mission specialist visited both Flanders and Hillside elementary schools, sharing his training and flying experiences and excitement with his first space mission scheduled for October 1992. His visit was sponsored by the schools' parent groups.

"They thought they were excited — they didn't know the superintendent was as excited as they were," said the Farmington school chief, who had a dream of being an astronaut and had been accepted into the Air Force Academy, but whose dream was shattered by a lack of 20/20 vision. "Today was a highlight."

The 38-year-old Clifford said he was inspired in high school by the 1968 mission to the moon and Neil Armstrong's historical first step. The California native resides in Utah, is married and has two



Astronaut candidate Rich Clifford shows Flanders students what happens to one's face while in space — gravity puffs it up.

sons. He was assigned to NASA's Johnson Space Center in 1987 where he served as a space shuttle engineer and did work in other areas. He was selected as an astronaut candidate in January of 1990, and is training for his first mission.

## School district responds to concerns about traffic

By Casey Hane  
staff writer

School transportation officials in Farmington continue to monitor, review, and sometimes change bus routes, following dozens of safety complaints logged with the district by parents.

"We're not masochists — we don't enjoy the problems we hear every day," said Don Cowan, director of building and student services. "Obviously it's a difficult task and a domino effect. Each change has an effect on other runs."

Cowan offered an update report to the school board Sept. 24 after a Sept. 3 board meeting at which 150 parents showed up, concerned because a number of bus stops were moved from inside subdivisions to main roads. Cowan said last week the runs had been reduced this year

from 600 to about 450 for the 9,000 students transported each day, saving about \$1 million for the district.

The update report detailed 37 complaints raised at the meeting and disposition of the complaints.

Of the 37, it was determined that 19 bus stops not be changed. Most of the others had some sort of change ranging from moving stops into subdivisions to finding ways for buses to make better time.

School employees continue to work on other concerns, Cowan said. It is the district's policy, the report said, to have children on buses no longer than one hour.

Supervisors are following buses with stop watches, monitoring route times and the length of times students are on the buses when looking into the complaints.

Parents are being advised by letter whether their children's stops

will be changed or remain the same. For those where no change was made, Cowan said the district will continue to monitor each situation.

Trustee James Abernethy said he was concerned that administrators view the bus stops with an eye to icy and snowy weather. "I would hope we would look at what it is going to be like in January," he said. "We need to anticipate the worst case in the winter."

Although Superintendent Michael Flanagan has pledged to handle the parent concerns, he keeps an eye on what he says is an ever-shrinking bottom line for the district.

"To the degree we can, we need to target non-instructional areas" for cuts, he said, referring to criticism leveled at the district during an unsuccessful millage attempt last February.

## Judge refuses to let woman plead innocent to beating

AP — A Recorder's Court judge said he's seen no new evidence and refused to let a Detroit teenager withdraw her no-contest plea in the Freedom Festival beating of a suburban woman.

Cassandra Rutherford, 17, had pleaded no contest to assault and robbery in the June 28 beating on a street crowded with people attending the city's Fourth of July fireworks display. While not considered an admission of guilt, no contest is treated as such for sentencing purposes.

Rutherford's attorney, J. Allen Forletta of Warren, asked Detroit Recorder's Court Judge Dominick Carnovale to allow Rutherford to withdraw her plea. Forletta said new witnesses had come forward and indicated Joanne Was, who lived in Farmington Hills at the time of the assault, may have provoked the attack. Was' attorney, Larry Bennett of Detroit, could not be reached for comment.

Carnovale sentenced Rutherford to serve concurrent prison terms of 20 months to 10 years and 20 months to 15 years for assault and unarmed robbery. Forletta said Thursday he was considering whether to appeal. Based on Department of Corrections

guidelines, Rutherford can be expected to serve about 16 months.

**CARNOVALE SAID** Thursday he'd been presented with no new evidence. He said he'd seen no accounts of announcements by Mayor Coleman Young and Police Chief Stanley Knox this week that they were reopening the investigation. Young said earlier in the week that he personally interviewed witnesses who had failed to come forward earlier.

A bystander was videotaping as Was, 43, of Farmington Hills was hit and kicked. Was since has filed a civil suit alleging the city and police failed to provide adequate protection for people at the festival. Rutherford said after her arrest in July that she and the four other defendants were provoked by a group including Was. Rutherford said the members of Was's group, all of whom were white, were yelling racial slurs at the Detroit women.

Wayne County Prosecutor John D. O'Hair said the police investigation was thorough the first time. "I think what they are trying to do is vindicate or justify the behavior" of those charged, O'Hair said Wednesday. "They suggested that there may have been justification or

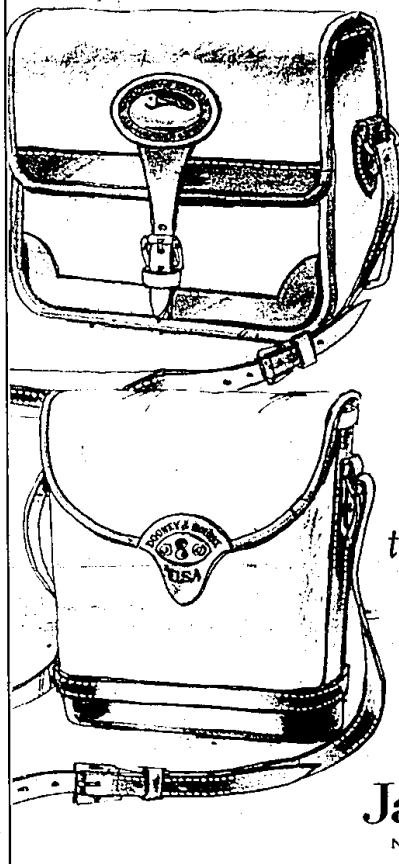
provocation for the physical assault of Joanne Was."

**CARNOVALE ALSO** sentenced Rutherford co-defendant Tangela McEmore, 19, who also had pleaded no contest but made no move to change her plea. She can be expected to serve little more than three years, according to corrections department guidelines.

"I'm sorry for what happened and I'm not a menace to society," McEmore told Carnovale. The judge gave her 4-15 for robbery and 4-10 years for assault.

Authorities charged the five with assault and robbery over several alleged attacks June 28 at the festival. Knox said Tuesday only the case involving Was has been reopened, not any other reports of beatings including that of Elaine Small, 45, another suburban Detroit woman.

Two others who pleaded no contest have been sentenced in the case. Marie Springfield, 21, received up to 15 years for assault and unarmed robbery. Laquita Glover, 17, received up to 10 years on similar charges. Cassandra Rutherford's twin sister, Cassandra, is awaiting trial.



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