



Paying attention: Timmy St. Pierre, wearing a green patrol arm band, watches the Wooddale program.



Doris Rosin, known as the Green Queen, talks to Wooddale Elementary kids about the rain forest.

Green Queen brings Wooddale kids down to earth

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Though she looks like she belongs on a can of peas, the Green Queen is opening children's minds to the wonders of nature.

Doris Rosin dresses up in her Jolly Green Giant outfit, complete with a matching crown, and visits Wooddale Elementary regularly.

There, she dishes out the info on all that grows and lives on earth.

Her presentations coincide with the district's curriculum on ecology. Needless to say, though, Rosin adds a little more color to the proceedings.

"They (the kids) get very enthusiastic about it," said first-grade teacher Denise Thompson.

Added teacher Ellen Garner: "They've been dealing with it since kindergarten. We're talking about it, too. But she (Rosin) contributes a lot to it also."

The first-graders' knowledge on the subject isn't fleeting. In a discussion on the rain forest, Rosin asks what a dung beetle does. A member of Rosin's green patrol flings up his hand with a quick answer.

A howl goes up from the rest of the class on hearing the tumblebug roll balls of dung, which ultimately helps to pollinate such things as ginger flowers.

"Somebody's got to do it boys and girls," Rosin said. "Nature doesn't have flushing toilets."

The lesson isn't lost in the laughter. Rosin tells the children that it goes to show how every-

thing fits together in nature and how everyone has a job.

Her discussion takes a serious tone. She tells children how the rain forest is being cut and burned down for livestock farms.

"They're doing it because some people have lots of money in South America," Rosin said. "These people are making more money faster because they are growing animals there."

"Everybody is good," she added later, "but this is not a good thing that is being done."

Rosin, 48, became a fixture at Wooddale Elementary when her son, Evan, was in the kindergarten last year.

The two were as natural a fit as the green costume she designed with the help of her son. "Green is my son's favorite color,

and it's the color of nature," Rosin said.

She works as a developmental psychologist, and believes kids can enhance their self-esteem through learning about nature.

"What I teach in my program is that kids are connected into their entire environment and then into their biosphere," Rosin said. "We're all part of one planet."

Last year, kids made rain forest snake cakes. This year, they'll be preparing whale bread as a fund-raiser to save the endangered species.

She's impressed with the children's grasp on nature. "They're very good," Rosin said. "That's why I believe it belongs in the schools. They just love nature."



Getting together: Ellen Garner's and Denise Thompson's first-graders combine for special projects like the coming of the Green Queen.

School officials do math on influx of new students

BY LOCONNOR
STAFF WRITER

They won't build it, but the students will still come.

That fact has the Farmington Board of Education considering plans to deal with the unexpected addition of 458 students at the high school level by 1998-99. Building a new high school is out of the question, say school officials.

The next best thing would be to add classroom space within the three existing high schools. A plan under consideration would do just that.

"We know we have to do something at the high schools," Board president Catherine Webb said. "This is a real creative way to do it in a way we thought we could do to do this year."

Initially, three classrooms would be added at each high school by reconfiguring existing space.

Cafeterias would be renovated and enlarged, and additional work done to the media center at North Farmington High. Extensive window and exterior door replacement would also take place at Cloverdale, Fairview, Farmington Training Center, Forest and Ten Mile schools.

Phase one of the plan would be

completed by September 1995.

The cost: \$6,557,860.

Phase two includes the addition of four classrooms at each high school, bringing the total to 21. Window replacement at O.E. Dunkel would also take place. Total cost: \$16.3 million.

A similar plan was presented by McCarthy and Smith Inc. at a special board meeting April 19, which would include renovating one facility at a time. Board members and school officials prefer a phase-in approach.

That way each high school would have work done immediately. Also, it gives the district an escape hatch if the project becomes too costly.

Murky financial waters, despite the passage of Proposal A, have school officials leery about diving into any long-term projects.

Assistant superintendent of finance Bruce Barrett said the building and site fund could handle a pay-as-you-go plan. The fund contains \$3.1 million to \$3.3 million annually for building projects.

"At no time will we have \$16 million in the bank at one time," said Barrett at a special board meeting April 19.

"We know we're OK this year," Webb said. "In the money they've (state) already identified for us,

they are already looking at a \$700,000 shortfall that just isn't there."

"The financing based on sales tax just is not constant. I think we're just scared. We're going to be proceeding very conservatively."

Board member David York wonders, though, if enough classroom space is being created. York pointed out at the April 19 session there is overcrowding at area elementary schools.

Overcrowding at Beechview Elementary led to the kindergarten class being temporarily bused to Fairview this year.

"We have to do something," York said at the April 19 meeting. "Even with these changes, we're going to be stretching our facilities."

Building and Student Services director Don Cowan agrees. He said the plan is the best the district can do with the money available.

With the 458-student increase projected, 21 classrooms probably wouldn't be enough, Cowan said.

"This will improve the situation from what we have now," Cowan said. "If we waited an optimal situation for the high schools, we're talking about a good-sized bond issue."

which runs a bus line along the road. Emergency vehicles will be able to get through, Mergner said.

Oakland Drive is a popular alternative for drivers wishing to avoid busy 12 Mile Road to the north.

"We know it (Oakland Drive) is a private road," Mergner said, but a lot of people think it belongs to the city."

Mergner suggests 12 Mile or 11 Mile roads as alternatives for local east-west traffic.

Renovations to close local OCC road

Students at Oakland Community College, Orchard Ridge campus, and motorists who travel the main road through the Farmington Hills facility should take note:

The highway, a private road known as Oakland Drive, will be closed to through traffic beginning Thursday, April 28, until about Sept. 1. A renovation of two buildings on campus is the reason for the road closure, said George Mergner, director of campus services.

"We're talking some pretty major stuff," Mergner said. "When you start getting Dumpsters and cranes and that kind of equipment in there, it becomes a safety hazard for the people who transit through."

The road, which connects Farmington and Orchard Lake roads, will be open as far as the parking lots on the east and west ends of campus, Mergner said.

The closing has been coordinated with the police and fire departments, as well as with SMART,

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