

First day back



Ground rules: After allowing the class to suggest rules of behavior, "Mrs. Kwas" writes them on a large sheet of paper and asks the entire class to sign at the bottom.

Teachers, kids share new start

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Suzanne Kwasniewicz spent all summer preparing for a half-day of school.

Understandably, there was the usual mix of emotions: eagerness, nervousness and a pinch of anxiety.

After all, Kwasniewicz was in a new place. There, she'd soon be meeting a group of people who would be with her for the next 104 months.

"I told them, 'This is my first time teaching in the fifth grade and this is your first day in the fifth grade,'" said Kwasniewicz, 25, a Farmington High graduate. "So we have something in common."

Kwasniewicz, who instructed her kids to call her, "Mrs. Kwas," was one of about 50 teachers starting their first day in the Farmington Public Schools Aug. 30. This year, the district had an unprecedented number of instructors leave through retirements, leaves and resignations.

Kwasniewicz taught in the Pinckney schools for three years after graduating from Michigan State University's Multiple Perspectives Program. A chance to return home was too good to pass up.

At 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 30, five hours before students would file in, Kwasniewicz was

getting ready. She made name tags in the shape of license plates for each child's desk.

Later, she had the children make their own plates to tell a little about themselves. One kid produced "IM COOL," another wrote "BLADES" to reflect a love of in-line skating.

The exercise was intended to provide a sense of classroom ownership to the kids. "It's not me and them; it's us," Kwasniewicz said.

Five or six parents stopped in to say hello. A few more sent notes welcoming the new teacher.

No gift apples were found on her desk afterward. "I guess it's not a fifth grade thing," she said.

Overall, there were no major surprises. Some early impressions?

For one, her fifth graders have a lot of enthusiasm and energy, Kwasniewicz said. It's

the type of zeal that will make learning fun.

Any jitters were melted away quickly.

She was wondering what the transition would be like from a rural district like Pinckney to a larger one like Farmington. A colleague helped her through on that one.

"One teacher told me, 'Kids are kids wherever you teach,'" Kwasniewicz said. "That was a neat thing to hear."

First meeting: Mrs. Kwas introduces herself to Laura Hogan (right), as classmate Laura Naughton waits her turn to meet her new teacher.



Area Irish leery of peace in Ireland

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Whenever there's talk of peace in Northern Ireland, elsewhere there is skepticism.

That hasn't changed, even with the Irish Republican Army's recent announcement of a ceasefire. Despite the dearth of optimism, Farmington's area Irish-Americans have a wealth of opinions on the subject.

"I don't think it will come to anything," said Noeleen Lamb, who works in the Korner Barbers in Farmington and is originally from Wexford, Ireland. "There are too many radical people like (Protestant hardliner Rev. Ian) Paisley."

The IRA is seeking to oust the British Army and unite the six-county north with the predominantly Catholic 26-county Republic in the south.

A Protestant majority, backed by such paramilitary groups as the Ulster Defense Association and Ulster Volunteer Force, wants to maintain union with Britain.

More than 3,000 people have been killed since "The Troubles" began in the late 1960s. The conflict stretches over several centuries and generations, though.

Those like Lamb and John Magee of Farmington, who emigrated here more than 30 years ago, still keep an eye on the situation.

Magee is a Protestant who grew up in Armagh, Northern Ireland. He shared Lamb's sentiments of there being little hope for lasting peace.

"I don't think it's going to last," Magee said. "There's too many disruptive people on both sides who want to see it go on."

Pessimism is fueled by the IRA's unfinished goal of a united Ireland and the Unionists feeling increasingly betrayed by England, Magee said. Each side also has several factions from within, adding to the distrust.

"It's really mixed up," Magee said. "Too many people looking for trouble."

Latest developments were the topic of conversation Thursday at places like Dunleavy's in Farmington. A discussion on "The Troubles" can turn heated, sometimes even dividing those between bar stools.

Which is perhaps why a woman at Dunleavy's was reluctant to give her name with an assessment of the conflict.

"I don't think there's a chance for peace if the people want it bad enough," she said. "I don't think they do."

Development from page 1A

Members of Voters' Voice, the citizens group opposed to the project as proposed, said they want it to reflect the current zoning that would include 1.3 acres of commercial use and 4.6 acres for office use - and no more.

Jonna's proposal, which could include cluster housing, but his plan also calls for about 9 acres of commercial property on the corner with a grocery store and drug store.

Sever's compromise would have allowed for 7 acres of shop-

ping center and 2 acres of setbacks, berms and landscaping. But there were no takers, and Mayor Larry Lichtman vetoed the meeting out at about 11:10 p.m. after telling council members that if they thought of any reason to ask for another study session before the Sept. 12 regular council meeting, to call him by Friday.

For more than a year, the council chambers here had been packed with residents opposed to the project and a few who are for it. The project was initially introduced be-

fore the Planning Commission as a project including a Source Club, a giant retail outlet, evolving into the present incarnation.

The council approved the project in June by a 4-3 margin, but agreed to reconsider it after a vocal outcry from residents.

Voters' Voice and its chairwoman, Sharon Stein, have filed a petition to recall Mayor Larry Lichtman, who is a friend of Jonna's and accepted campaign contributions from several members of the Jonna family.

Ohio builders have big plans for Hills arena

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

For a Toledo, Ohio, construction firm, building a multi-purpose ice arena in Farmington Hills will be a combination of something old and something new.

Hills voters approved a bond issue Aug. 2 of up to \$6 million to build the arena in the Founders Sports Park on Eight Mile, Rudolph/Libbe, based in Toledo, was selected over several other firms - including a Farmington Hills company - as the builder.

"This will be an adventure, in a way," said Tom Schneider, Libbe project manager/estimator. "But we won't be handicapped by existing conditions and equipment. We'll be able to design in a lot of economies."

Although the construction giant (92nd largest in the United States) is located in Toledo, it has worked on projects in 20 states and has operating bases in Dayton, Ohio, Miami, Fla. and for the last five years, in Canton Township. That office will coordinate construction of the arena.

The company is not new to the ice arena business, having expanded Sylvania, Ohio's, city-owned rink, the Tam O'Shanter from one to two surfaces, and having built an additional \$3.7 million expansion at the Detroit Sinking Club in Bloomfield Hills. But the Farmington Hills project will be different.

"This will be one of the few rinks built in the area in the past five years," said Libbe marketing representative Bob Napierala, a former Ohio State University hockey player who has swatted the puck in more than 200 ice facilities in the United States.

Several Michigan clients

The Canton operation is complete, in that it can estimate, manage a project, warehouse, has the ability to self-perform concrete, carpentry and earth work, and has 70 employees and an annual construction volume of \$30 million.

"Southeast Michigan has been a strong area for us," said John Libbe, administrative manager for the company's Michigan operations.

With Michigan clients including Waste Management, Catherine McAuley Health Centers, the Detroit Skating Club, Spiratex, Johnson Controls, and Ford Motor Company and Parke-Davis, the company has found it necessary to have a Michigan presence in Canton.

Hills assistant city manager

Dave Call said the city is meeting with representatives from utility companies within the next two weeks in hopes of breaking ground for the project in October. An early fall ground breaking would allow construction of the foundation, sewer and water lines, footings and steel beams and walls before the construction season ends.

"We want to get as much exterior work done by winter so they (Libbe) can do interior work over the winter," he said, adding that that would make it easier to open the arena by the scheduled time of the fall of 1995.

The arena will be a design/build project, with Siegel/Tuomala Associates Architects and Planners, Inc. designing the 72,000 square foot arena and Libbe managing the construction end.

Economic advantages

That concept is a new one that Hills officials believe will help control costs by giving the construction company responsibility to build within a predetermined budget.

Napierala said the new arena will have a lot of economic advantages of the older arenas in the area, most of which were built in the early 1970s.

"They didn't think of the economy of scale of building two-rink facilities," he said. "You have twice the capacity, but you don't have to invest twice as much in terms of maintenance and management, because everything's under one roof."

And there doesn't seem to be any sign of flagging interest in ice hockey, or any other ice sport in the area, he said.

"Not only is there a lot of demand for ice hockey, but there's more interest in figure skating for all age groups and public skating," Napierala said.

Schneider said the new structure will be designed to maximize efficient energy used and won't include other problems older arenas now face, such as old equipment, environmentally unfriendly freon-based ice system, and frost problems.

"It used to be that rinks were only used six or eight or nine months of the year," Schneider said. "The ground underneath had time to thaw. But now with year round use, you can have 30-40 feet of frost building up under the floors. The new arenas use heat pipes underneath so you won't have that problem, which can lead to floors heaving."

The facility will be built with enough locker room capacity to accommodate different skating groups and will include a shell for a restaurant.

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