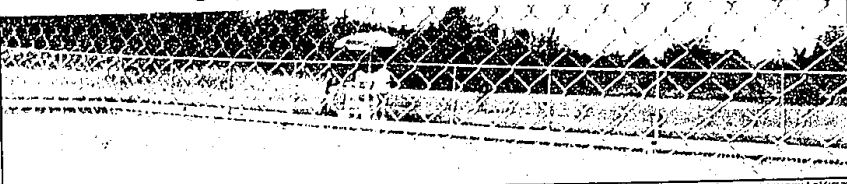




English class: Howard Weathington teaches English to a group of teen-age girls.

BOYS REPUBLIC POOL



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMKIEUX

Add the 'Girls': Girls have been at Boys Republic since April 1994, but some signs have yet to be changed

Teens from page 1A

Boy's Republic recently to reflect the addition of females.

Adding girls is one way the facility has dealt with lean times in recent years.

Two years ago, Boys Republic was down to only two residents and was facing severe budget cuts. Humors of its closing were prominent.

The center diversified. Instead of taking only clients from the Department of Social Services, Boys Republic accepted wards of the court from the county as well as children through the state's mental health system.

To help meet a shortfall of places for troubled girls, Boys Republic started accepting females in April 1994.

The facility has 79 beds and added Development Director Sylvia McNarney, "all of them are usually filled."

Average stay at Boys and Girls Republic is six months to a year. Age range is 13-18. Some return to their families. Others will move on to foster families.

"I'm ready to go back home," said Amanda (not her real name), 17, who has been at

Boys and Girls Republic for a year and two months.

She has attained the top rank of graduate, which is earned through following program guidelines and showing leadership.

Graduates are granted weekend home visits, are allowed to have personal outfits and other privileges. The ascent begins by telling their life stories in intensive peer group sessions.

"We can all help one another," Amanda said. "It's sort of like we're sisters."

When Amanda arrived, she had a problem with authority. She fought with her parents and had problems with alcohol.

Instead of resignation, Amanda recites rules and regulations with conviction on a tour of the girls' dormitory.

Uniformity is revealed in a variety of ways. Residents have to wear blue shirts and white skirts while attending school. At work, they wear orange shirts and blue shorts.

Their rooms have to be clean. If not, a portion of their weekly stipend of \$7 is docked.

Of the allowance, at least \$6.50 goes into a personal account. The rest can be spent on ancillary items.

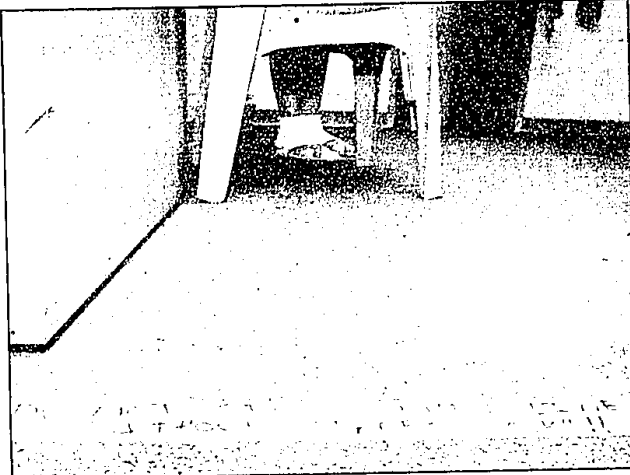
Residents can also earn extra money by working. Amanda has saved nearly \$400, which she'll use to buy school clothes when she returns home.

She plans to get a job, finish high school, and rebuild her life. "It's kind of scary," Amanda said.

In terms of successes, though, she doesn't have to look far. Howard Weathington is a teacher and a former resident. Weathington was sent to Boys Republic by Wayne County Juvenile Court when he was 14 for stealing cars. He spent 10 months there, finished school and went on to college.

Today, Weathington teaches English to residents. "It's almost like me talking to myself," said Weathington, who has taught in the Detroit and Southfield schools. "I see a lot of things I was going through at the time."

"This was the turning point in my life."



Laying down the law: The Boys and Girls Republic canteen area is supervised and used to create incentives.

Attorney in vandalism case calls accused boy 'scapegoat'

By LARRY O'CONNOR STAFF WRITER

The attorney for the 15-year-old Farmington Hills boy charged in the Memorial Day weekend home invasion and vandalizing case words carefully in pleading his client's innocence.

Well-known Detroit attorney Cornelius Pitta taped and typed his comments about the case, and asked they be read back to him.

The Farmington Hills boy, 15, pleaded not guilty Wednesday in charges he vandalized the home of a Farmington Hills couple during Memorial Day weekend.

He was accompanied by Pitta, who contends his client was not involved in extensive destruction at the home of Bruce and Lucretia Jackson.

He is charged with second-degree home invasion and malicious

destruction of property more than \$100. He is in Children's Village on probation violations.

"The fact is this young man did not do anything or participate in the crime or allegations charged," said Pitta in a carefully worded statement. "And that is the basis of the not-guilty plea."

Farmington Hills police believe the trashing of the Jacksons' home was gang-related, stemming from a report Bruce Jackson made to authorities about graffiti.

Initial speculation, though, was the crime was racially motivated after what appeared to be "white power" graffiti painted on the wall of the African American couple's home.

The teen charged is an African American who lives near the Jacksons.

"We will not try our case in the

media," Pitta said. "However, it is our position that this young man is being made a scapegoat for actions engaged in or performed by others — who are, incidentally, all white — in an effort to shift the tenor of the crime from its racial implications."

Hills police are pursuing the case against two other juveniles suspected in the crime and have offered a \$1,000 reward. A warrant has also been issued for a 13-year-old Wolverine Lake youth in connection with gang graffiti painted near the Jacksons' home.

Several people and agencies, including the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council and the Farmington Ministerial Association, lent their support to the Jacksons when the crime occurred.

Woman to seek maximum sentence for attacker

By PAT MURPHY STAFF WRITER

A Southfield woman today was expected to ask the Oakland Circuit Court to impose the maximum sentence for the man who forced her to perform oral sex during an assault in her office complex.

"This gives me no great pleasure," the 45-year-old woman said last week. "But I think the courts should put him away for the rest of his life. Sexual offenders are usually repeat offenders."

The woman didn't want her name used prior to her appearance today before Judge John McDonald, who was scheduled to impose sentence on Rodney Hernandez, 40, of Harrison Township in Macomb County.

Hernandez could be sentenced to life in prison after being convicted of criminal sexual conduct and unarmed robbery in a jury trial that ended July 20.

Evidence against Hernandez included blood samples from the assault of the Southfield woman, a psychologist. During the forced oral sex, she bit her assailant,

drawing blood.

The woman kept the blood in her mouth, rather than spitting it out, and later gave it to police. DNA from that blood sample enabled the prosecution to convince the jury Hernandez was her assailant.

"It was the only thing I could do," she said in an interview. "I was just so mad he would make me do this disgusting thing."

Hernandez is also charged in the Dec. 14, 1992, rape of a Southfield psychiatrist and the June 22, 1993, attempted assault of a Farmington Hills marriage counselor.

Paul T. Walton, Oakland county assistant prosecutor, last week said he would ask Judge McDonald to impose the maximum sentence, life in prison. Hernandez deserves the maximum penalty for several reasons, Walton said, including the premeditated manner in which he carried out the crimes.

"He stalked defenseless women in the workplace," Walton said. "He selected social workers because they worked

alone, carried cash and were easy victims."

The Southfield psychologist, for example, testified that she recognized Hernandez as the man who came to her assistance when her car became disabled in December 1993.

Three weeks later he accosted her from behind about 10 p.m. as she was leaving the office and, after covering her eyes with loose-fitting duct tape, forced her to perform oral sex. When she bit him, Hernandez hit her on the head, the Southfield women testified.

During the assault, she testified that she could see under the duct tape and make out her assailant's features. When Hernandez realized she could see him, he threw a coat in her face and fled, the woman told jurors.

Walton said the evidence against Hernandez was a strong. But the DNA evidence provided by the blood sample was the clincher. With it, he said, the prosecution was able to convince the jury that Hernandez was unquestionably at the scene.

39TH ANNIVERSARY VISITORS WELCOME

OPEN HOUSE

When You Stop In For A FREE Figure/Fitness Analysis & Spa Visit, We'll Give You A...

FREE Hanes® Designer Fitness Shirt & Foster Grant® Sunglasses

39TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

\$3.50 A WEEK, PAY AS YOU GO!

First time visitors over 18 ONLY! Check Free Program Available. Full hours usage in the club you join. \$48 Enrollment Fee Required.

Fitness USA HEALTH SPAS

"Dr. Kenneth Cooper, MD, the father of aerobics and the nation's most prominent exercise specialist, maintains that fitness facilities are the best equipped to help Americans win their battle with obesity."