

User friendly school

Hillsdale Elementary logs on to something good

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

In the 1990s, separating people from their computers is like trying to drive a wedge between adjoining boulders with a rubber spike.

So how do you pry computer types from their machines to head down to their local elementary school? Invite them and their computer hardware.

Which is what Hillsdale Elementary did in presenting the school's first Technology Fair Feb. 22. Parents and staff set up several technology sites, showcasing the latest in all the wares with the exception men's wares.

The program included demonstrations on the Internet, Prodigy's online services as well as Microsoft academic ori-



Going digital: First-grader Cathryn O'Brien takes a photo with a digital camera.

ented software. Rooms of technology related articles were also available on a hallway table.

"One of the reasons we did this is when we sent a survey around, we found many parents were making buying decisions about hardware and software," said Hillsdale parent Priscilla Brouillette.

Hillsdale's Technology Committee made buying into presenting a fair hard to refuse. Parents and children were asked to contribute their computer knowledge along with staff members.

As a result, a "whole different" group of parents got involved at the school, Brouillette said. Sherry Bowman, who helped organize the fair, was pleased with the turnout.

"I figured we'd get a lot of 'Nos' but everyone was happy to come here," said Bowman, whose husband Bob and sons Dan and Mike gave demonstrations on software for children.

Collaboration of parents and kids led to an intriguing mix.

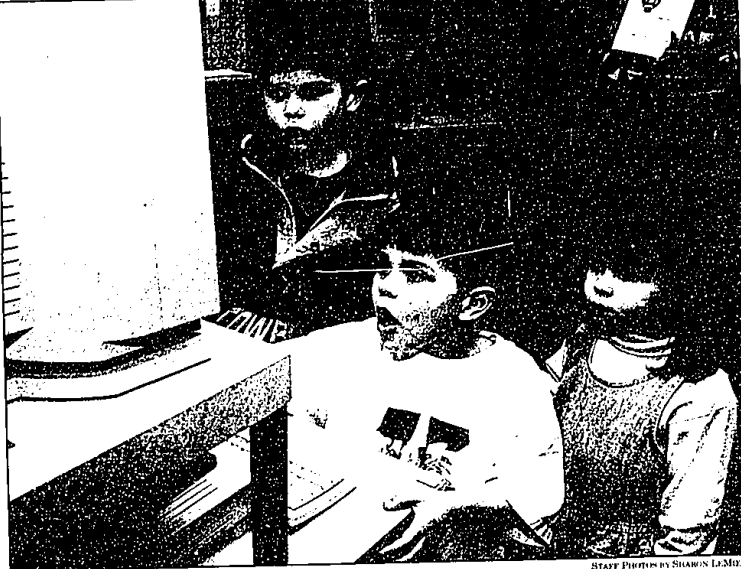
Kids were often at the helm, telling parents a thing or two about programs and software they're familiar with at school.

In the media center, CDs were popping in and out of computers faster than 8-Track tapes in car stereos at a 1970s Grateful Dead concert. Children showed their elders the "Living Book" series.

"Studies show that MEAP scores go up when kids read on computers," said Hillsdale Media Center coordinator Marilyn Herzh.

Under the supervision of teacher Jim Anderson, first grade student Bret Kelly was taking photos of visitors with a digital camera.

Images were quickly downloaded into a computer where



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LE MOUX

they could be viewed and edited on computer. When a speaker visits, children take pictures and later write a few words about the presentation into a computer.

"It's kind of a memory jogger," Anderson said.

Chris Costello was watching his son be tapped on an Apple Macintosh, which was being used to scan artwork. The

Costellos recently upgraded their home computer from an IBM 286 to a Compaq Presario.

"They can get around pretty good," said Costello, whose two sons go to Hillsdale. "I'm surprised at how much they do know. They'll say, 'Go to that dad' and grab the mouse."

They definitely learned that at school.

■ "One of the reasons we did this is when we sent a survey around, we found many parents were making buying decisions about hardware and software."

Priscilla Brouillette,
Hillsdale parent

Screening It: Kevin Lupinacci runs a Living Book Series program. Next fall, Kevin will attend Hillsdale Elementary where his sister Jessica is now a second-grader.



Hills adopts parenting month to boost awareness

The Farmington Hills City Council has proclaimed the Month of March 1996 as Parenting Awareness Month.

Parenting Awareness Month has become an annual event in Oakland County. Its purpose is to highlight how important a job "parenting" is and to increase

awareness in the community of educational opportunities at Oakland Family Services.

The month will begin with Parent and Child Interaction week. Parent Resource Week will be highlighted by a parent resource fair at Summit Place Mall Friday, March 16.

Parent Education Week and Parent Appreciation Week activities are scheduled for the third and fourth weeks of March.

For more information contact: Parenting Awareness Month, P.O. Box 4458, East Lansing 48823.

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Tax guide available

Residents puzzling over their state tax returns may wish to obtain a free tax guide from State Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills.

The Michigan Taxpayer's Guide contains a list of 21 new state tax laws, as well as the latest information on the state income tax, property taxes, homesteaded property tax credits, Single Business Tax and other related subjects. It also includes sample filing forms and a list of phone numbers to call for assistance.

Copies are available at both branches of the Farmington Community Library, at both city halls and at the Chamber of Commerce office on Thomas Street.

For more information, call

Dolan's Lansing office (1-517-373-1793), or write her at the State Capitol, P.O. Box 30014, Lansing 48909.

Off to Washington

Josef Ploski, a Farmington Hills resident and a senior at Farmington High School, attended The National Young Leaders Conference Feb. 13-18 in Washington, D.C.

The leadership development program was for 350 high school students who have shown leadership potential and scholastic merit. The theme of the conference was "The Leaders of Tomorrow Meet the Leaders of Today."

Highlights of the program included welcoming remarks from the floor of the United States

House of Representatives and a panel discussion with prominent journalists at the National Press Club.

Participants also visited foreign embassies and received policy briefings from government officials. In one special activity — "If I Were President" — students role-played the President, members of the Cabinet and representatives from Capitol Hill who had to respond to an international crisis involving North and South Korea.

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