

## Taking wing at Heritage Park



Nature Festival: For the third year in a row, pheasants are released during the Nature Festival at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills. City naturalist Joe Derek (left, with arms outstretched) does the honors with a Szechuan pheasant May 4.

SHARON LEWIS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Hills, Farmington praises, entertains its 300 volunteers

BY BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

More than 300 volunteers who give their time, energy and even money to the citizens of Farmington and Farmington Hills in many ways were honored at the Coaticook Center Monday morning.

Farmington Hills Special Services Director Dan Potter thanked the volunteers who were treated to a brunch. It was the 21st annual recognition reception. "Without you, we wouldn't be able to carry out a number of programs," said Hills City Clerk Kathy Dorman, who is interim city manager as well.

Farmington Mayor Jo Anne McShane called the volunteers heroes and called them the "twinkle dust" of the stars.

Volunteers were recognized for their work in many programs. These programs include: bereavement, bingo, blood pressure, bridge, caregiver, commission on aging, community service, computer class, crafts, the gift shop, current events, dance, deaf/hearing services, entertainment, exercise, first step stroke, Focus Hope, the food co-op, golf, greeters, holiday meals, home chore, Kan-doo stroke, library, mailing, Medicare assistance, newsletter, Meals-On-Wheels and Nutrition on site, office, oil painting, organ, outreach, quilting, the Pacific Rim Center, Police and Seniors Together, pinocle, SAGE, Senex, swimming pool, tax assistance, teacher/instructor, telephone reassurance, transportation, volleyball, widow's group, world medical relief and visions.

In addition, some volunteers received special recognition. Attorney Paul Sowerby was recognized for his efforts in giving free legal advice two times a month to seniors and helping

with wills and other legal documents.

The reduced fee charges for those documents goes to the senior equipment fund. Potter said Sowerby has raised \$5,000 for the fund in his five years of volunteering. The money has bought can recorders, a karaoke machine and other equipment for senior programs.

State Rep. Jan Dolan was recognized for her work on behalf of seniors. Dolan, who helped pass out certificates of appreciation and address books to the volunteers, is stepping down as the state representative for Farmington and Farmington Hills.

And for the fourth year, a volunteer was presented with the Diamond Award, recognizing the accomplishments of a person 75 or older. This year's winner, Max Kravitz, 89, has volunteered at Eagle Elementary where he has read to children, checked homework and done other work for five hours a day, five days a week.

"I plan to keep on doing this as long as I possibly can," said Kravitz.

Volunteers were also treated to some music and dancing. Jennifer Neimi, who used to work with seniors, and Lori Lewis, who continues to work in the program, sang for the volunteers.

And Mary Linda Calderone, known by many as the community outreach coordinator for the Southwest Oakland County Cable Commission, reached out to volunteers in another capacity. Calderone, whose columns appear in the Observer, treated volunteers to a belly dance in a white dress using her stage name "Ah Mirage" to the delight of all.

More than 600 volunteers are involved in the two communities.

## Botsford screens for prostate cancer

BY BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Since an estimated one of every eight American men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer at some time in their lives, education and screening for the condition are important ways to check it in time.

Botsford General Hospital is offering a Prostate Health Awareness Program for the sixth year in an effort to teach people about the disease and test them for it.

"Digital rectal exams and PSA (Prostate-specific antigen) blood tests are the most accurate way we have to detect prostate cancer at the present time," said Dr. Steven Roth, the urologist who will give a presentation on the disease beginning May 13. "This is the second leading cause of cancer for

men. Our best hope of treating it is finding it early."

Roth said there have been many cases where the cancer is progressing slowly in older men and the treatment may not be recommended.

"But that's something that needs to be determined (by the PSA test)," he said. "Sometimes it progresses rapidly. That's why it is important to have the screening."

Roth said both the blood test and the rectal exam are important, taken together.

Botsford's presentation will be from 7-9 p.m. Monday, May 13 and from 1-3 p.m. Wednesday, May 15 at the hospital's community room, 28050 Grand River in Farmington Hills.

Attending one of the lectures is

mandatory for men interested in receiving a free screening, which will be given from noon to 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 20, and Wednesday, May 22, at Health Development Network, 39760 Grand River, Novi.

Donna Rice, a registered nurse and wellness program coordinator, said detection is the key to determine how virulent, as well as whether a man has prostate cancer.

"Our goal continues to be to reach as many men as possible," she said.

In Michigan, 12,000 new cases will be discovered this year with 1,600 men expected to die from it.

Cancer experts estimate that as many as 80 percent of prostate cancer deaths are preventable. In the past 35 years, survival rate

from the disease has improved from 50-85 percent.

The risk of the disease increases with age. Symptoms of the cancer include: Weak or interrupted urine flow, inability to urinate or difficulty in starting or stopping urination, need to urinate frequently, especially at night, blood in urine, painful or burning urination, or continuing pain in lower back, pelvis or upper thighs.

The screening takes about 15 minutes. To register or for more information, call Botsford's Health Development Network at 477-6100.

## School board likely to renew all-day kindergarten program

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

Parents such as Lori Ellis aren't happy with prospects of the Walled Lake school board renewing the all-day, every-other-day kindergarten program for another year, which it could do as early as Tuesday, May 16.

Criticism continues that 5-year-olds aren't ready for whole days of instruction and because alternating "on" and "off" days damages the consistency of learning.

But their unhappiness isn't just about a unanimous recommendation by the district's kindergarten advisory committee, led by assistant superintendent Steven Gaynor, to in 1996-97 go exclusively with the program. Currently, parents at Dublin and Meadow Lake elementary can enroll their youngsters into either traditional half-day kindergarten or the full-day option.

As was the case in 1996, when the board OK'd the program for the current school year, a group of parents, including Ellis, has said it wasn't given a chance to be adequately heard about their concerns.

"I just feel the board members didn't give parents of upcoming kindergartners an opportunity to have a forum. . . about the survey

ahead of time," said Ellis, whose 4-year-old son Joshua is scheduled to start kindergarten in the fall. "We have a lot of questions. It's not an appropriate decision to have the kids be there for a full day."

Ellis, who lives in the Farmington Hills section of the district, said she might go so far as to enroll her son Joshua into a private school in 1996-97 rather than see him have to sign up for all-day, every-other-day kindergarten, a first-year program in the Walled Lake district.

The program itself isn't the only thing that bothers parents. They apparently didn't like how district officials conducted a recent survey of kindergarten parents and teachers — or how they presented results to the public on May 2.

Statistical comparisons were made between 1994-95 kindergartners, who attended the traditional half-day program, and this year's kindergartners in areas such as social growth/work habits, fine motor skills, language arts and reading readiness; mathematics.

For example, the percentage of kindergartners who listen and follow directions was 89 percent in 1994-95 and 88.9 percent this year.

But several parents said they

were concerned that comments from parents and teachers were not shared at the meeting.

Several requests made Friday, Monday and Tuesday to Gaynor's office for that part of the survey were not honored.

"It's just a shame if this goes through based on the numbers," said one parent, who asked to not be identified. "It's not being done ethically. Where were all the comments the teachers wrote?"

Written comments were also supplied by parents about the program. But Dublin Elementary kindergarten teacher Linda Anderson, who still teaches traditional half-day sessions, said she has received plenty of mixed verbal feedback. "They said they really want to see the half-day program continue."

All board members weren't enamored by the survey results. Trustee Joseph Miller hinted at the meeting that the expected savings of \$350,000 — the amount needed for mid-day bus runs — might be the only reason to continue it for another year.

During a subsequent interview, Miller said he wants to take a cautious approach to the program and that he would like to keep a close eye on how well the current kindergartners do in first grade next year.

It also was recommended that a statistical comparison be made next spring, between this year's first grade pupils and next year's, the latter having come out of the all-day, every-other-day kindergarten program.

Gaynor said the evaluation of kindergartners included in the board presentation was evidence that — either in half-days or full days — there is little or no difference in how kindergartners learn or adapt socially.

Recommendation of a kindergarten advisory committee to continue the program for a second year, but with one change, this year's choice for parents at Dublin and Meadow Lake, to enroll children into half- or full-day kindergarten, would be eliminated.

"The board has the option on how it wants to do this," Gaynor said. "If they want to continue the element of choice, they can do that. But even if the board decides to go exclusively with this next year. . . we'll continue evaluating it."



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## Kindergarten survey, evaluation no change over last year's results

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

Consternation from some parents aside, Walled Lake schools' all-day, every-other-day kindergarten has been successful enough to warrant continuing it in 1996-97, said assistant superintendent Steven Gaynor.

Results of a survey and a nearly-identical evaluation of 1994-95 and 1995-96 kindergartners were presented to the school board at its May 2 meeting. A decision is likely on Thursday, May 16. Gaynor said it was the recom-

mendation of a kindergarten advisory committee to continue the program for a second year, but with one change, this year's choice for parents at Dublin and Meadow Lake, to enroll children into half- or full-day kindergarten, would be eliminated.

"The board has the option on how it wants to do this," Gaynor said. "If they want to continue the element of choice, they can do that. But even if the board decides to go exclusively with this next year. . . we'll continue evaluating it."

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