

Crime from page A1

were booked the first six months of this year, slightly more than last year's 456. Juvenile arrests were up from 66 to 68.

Some statistics are contradictory. Although less speeding tickets are being issued this year, more accidents have been reported.

During the first six months in 1996, there were 317 accidents, killing 66 people — one fatality. This year, according to the report, there were 321 accidents

injuring 71 people.

But officers are handing out less speeding tickets. During the first two quarters this year, 831 speeding citations were issued, less than the 854 given out the same time period in 1996.

Goss said the year-end report is the one where real trends can be spotted. But he said the six-month report does reinforce the view that the city is safe. "We've got a good low crime rate, one to be proud of," he said.

District still faces space problems

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

As residents decided to approve a bond issue that would address long-term space needs in the Farmington Public School District, officials were trying to iron out some immediate wrinkles.

Friday, fourth-grade parents at Kenbrook Elementary School met with Don Cowan, executive director for K-12 instruction and student services, and school Principal Peggy McKinley to find out if an extra teacher could be hired to alleviate overcrowded classrooms at that level.

Parents at Longacre Elementary School were worried that too many students were riding on a bus.

Kenbrook parents such as Rebecca Pniowski found out at the meeting with Cowan and McKinley that another fourth grade teacher could not be hired.

"Basically, we're not looking at a new teacher" being hired, Pniowski said. "But they might add a parapro, student teacher or intern and keep an eye on it for next year."

The district's decision about whether to bring in someone to assist fourth grade teachers was expected "by the end of the week," said Pniowski, adding that parents had mixed feelings after the meeting.

On Tuesday, Cowan said it was probable the solution would be bringing a part-time paraprofessional to split 10 hours among the three fourth grade classrooms — which currently have enrollment of 30, 29 and 29 students.

... It's important for people to recognize we monitor these things. . . But they fluctuate so quickly.

Don Cowan
—executive director
K-12 education

On Wednesday, McKinley said the parents at the meeting felt "real strong (that) they enjoyed their child's teacher and didn't want to move their child from that class. But they wanted some help for their teachers."

Cowan also told the parents during the meeting that the hiring of another teacher would drop the building's student-teacher ratio well below guidelines established by the district. Currently, enrollment is about 22-23 pupils per class in grades 1-3; about 26 students per class

attend fifth grade.

And because of expected attrition, adding a teacher would be considered more reactionary than prudent, he said.

"Two kids (at Kenbrook) left already and I was told two more might be leaving," Cowan said. "That's why it's important for people to recognize we monitor these things. . . But they fluctuate so quickly."

McKinley said she was working with the district on finding out which parapro might be available to immediately come to Kenbrook. She also discussed with the fourth grade teachers how a parapro might be used in the classroom.

"We're planning on splitting a portion of each day to support literacy efforts," said McKinley, estimating the parapro would have about 45 minutes per day in each classroom.

Space concerns early in the 1997-98 school year also are being felt at Longacre. According to parent Lauren Krawec, her daughter was among 80 or so children riding four to a seat during bus trips to and from their school.

But Cheryl Cannon, the district's assistant superintendent for business, said 72 Longacre students were being transported on a 65-passenger bus. Districts are permitted by the state to carry 10 percent more than bus capacity until Fourth Friday, which is this week.

The youngsters who ride the bus with Krawec's daughter were temporarily switched to a 72-passenger bus. Cannon said a couple stops from that route probably would move to a different bus to balance the loads.

"This has been an ongoing thing in the neighborhood with a lot of parents calling and complaining," Krawec said.

She was told by an employee in the transportation department that the first priority is getting every child transported to school on time.

"I said to her that I'd rather have my child show up 15 minutes late knowing they're there safely," Krawec said.



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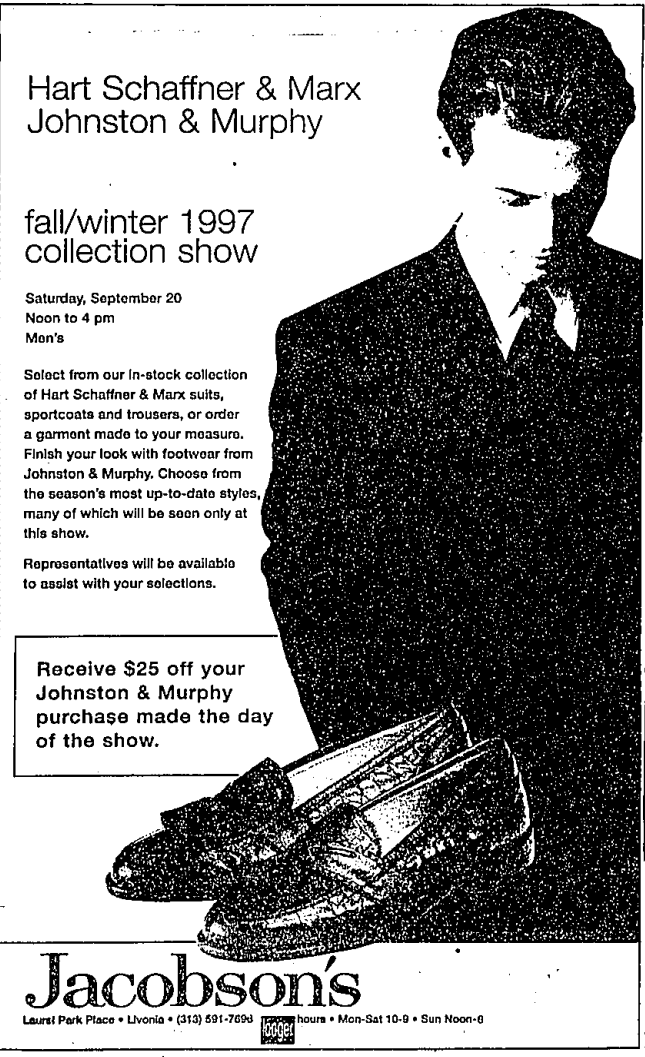
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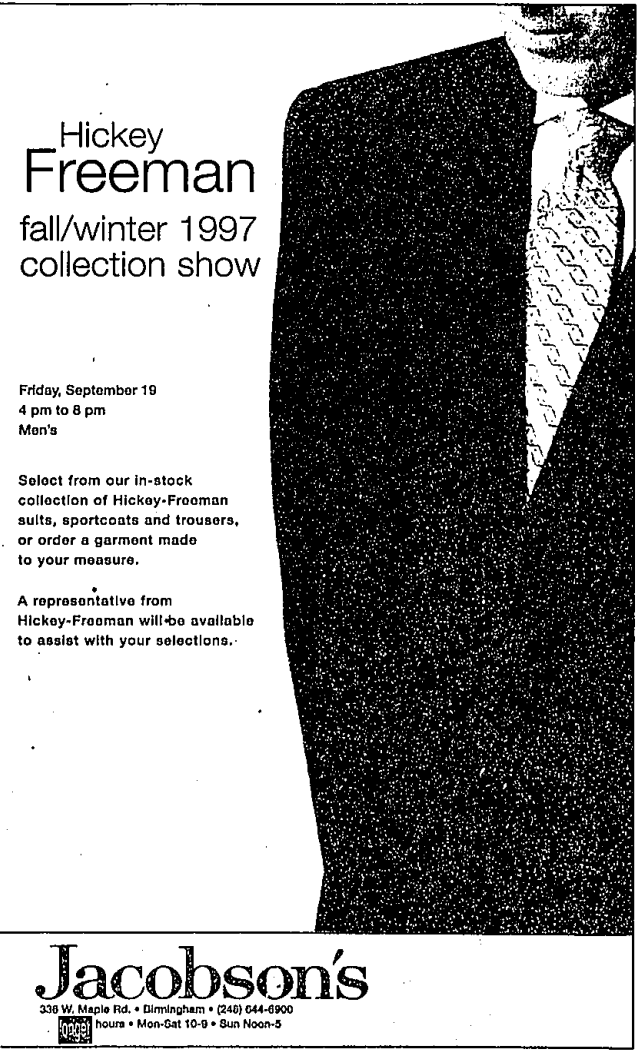
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