

Kids discover writing flair

Four Farmington Hills students are completing a different kind of summer camp this week.

Instead of the usual swimming, horseback riding and hiking, Rachel Button, Rania Awad, Kelsi Lindblad and Nikki Bernstein are among approximately 80 youngsters from 18 Oakland County school districts attending the sixth annual Oakland Schools Summer Camp for Young Writers.

The two-week session, running July 6-17 this year, enables motivated students in grades 3-8 to study the art and craft of writing under the tutelage of county teachers who are themselves writers. Students are selected for the weekday camp on the basis of a portfolio of their writings and a letter stating why they wish to attend. Tuition per student is \$125.

The 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. writing camp is based at the Oakland Schools office in Waterford, but some of the students also went on field trips.

For example, this year the seventh- and eighth-graders, who are using art as the focus of their writing experience, visited the Detroit Institute of Arts with teachers Sandy Ricciardi and Sherry Masson.

In addition, the two teachers utilized the creation of collages and clay sculptures to introduce the children to various art forms, then had the kids write about them.

Among the seventh-graders participating were middle-schoolers Button of O.E. Dunkel and Awad of Power.

The other two Hills students in the writing program are fourth-graders Lindblad of Flanders Elementary School and Bernstein of Meadow Lake.

Writing-camp teachers also underwent a camp-like experience. They are alumni of the Oakland Writing Project, a four-week, intensive summer workshop based on the philosophy that to teach writing, a teacher must become a writer.

Miss Farmington from page B2

also met a lot of interesting people.

Pam Walk, 18, of Novi, extolled the pageant's ability to "teach you skills for work," while Sarah Burkett, 18, liked "meeting a lot of people and helping out in the community."

The pageant is scored using a similar system as in the Olympics, on a scale from 1 to 10. Judges are not allowed to discuss contestants or compare evaluations with each other. This year a panel of seven judges presided and was comprised of those active in community affairs, business and the arts. In the Miss America network the state of Michigan alone holds 26 local pageants.

During the pageant day, the panel of judges meets to interview each participant, and this nine-minute interview score comprises 30 percent of each woman's total score.

The pageant followed the typical format including the swimsuit portion, the talent and interview gown competitions. Participants provided a variety of talents ranging from tap, jazz to en pointe ballet and a cappella voice.

Crowd favorite and 1997 Miss Farmington-Farmington Hills, Jennifer Hoemke, dressed in vintage clothing and sang the musical number she performed recently at the Miss Michigan pageant, a rollicking, humorous tune that delighted and captivated the audience.

In recent years the swimsuit portion of pageants has fallen out of favor in many circles with the advent of feminism and the doctrine of political correctness. Yet when asked about it, Gladys Parker, field director of the pageant, admitted the swimsuit portion is "just to determine physical fitness. It's really a very small part of the pageant. Basically, it demonstrates poise and confidence...to be able to walk around in a swimsuit says a lot about a young woman."

Among the prizes Cogswell receives as Miss Farmington-Miss Oakland County are a \$10,000 scholar-



Steps ahead: The newly crowned Miss Farmington, Erin Whitney Cogswell, performs a jazz-ballet dance for her talent portion of the competition.



Victory sign: Cogswell, center, gives a thumbs up to her family after receiving her crown. With her are first runner-up Audrie Chernauchas, left, and second runner-up Stephanie Watson.



Sinking in: Cogswell reflects the excitement of winning the pageant, which is an annual event that commences the Farmington Founders Festival.

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Hills woman has write touch in contest

Mary Ann Wade of Farmington Hills took third place in the Brickscape Gardens "Rose by Any Other Name" story contest.

She won a pair of three-resistant rose gloves worth \$20 for her story, Mary Ann Schuckel and Dawn Hurd, both of Bel-Aire, Mich., took first and second place, respectively.

Winners were announced by Brickscape Gardens owner Joe DiBenedo and Carol Dipple, features editor of the Northville Record and Novi News, who was contest chief judge.

The Record and News are published by Hometown Communi-

cations, Inc., which also publishes the Farmington Observer.

Contestants selected among a list of 115 registered rose names provided by Brickscape and, capitalizing them, wove them into a short-short story of 100 words or less.

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