

Study under way for new court

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

There are many reasons why 47th District Court Administrator Dave Walsh is among those pushing for a new facility to replace the tiny, inefficient and ready to tumble former school building on 10 Mile Road.

When defendants make their way to a hearing before 47th District judges Maria Parker and Fred Harris, for example, they are forced to walk down public corridors, right past citizens who might be paying a parking ticket. Or they are led past the very witnesses who will testify against them.

Defense attorneys plot their cases with their clients, possibly within earshot of the other side.

And when it rains? Just get the buckets out.

"Our problems go beyond space," lamented Walsh, who is part of a court facility planning committee.

The committee, which last week toured the much-larger

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Dave Walsh
—Court administrator

46th District Court in Southfield, includes representatives from the cities of Farmington, Farmington Hills, and the court. It's goal is to sell city officials on the merits of asking the public for a millage increase or bond issue that would help build a new facility.

Walsh said other facilities in southeastern Michigan will be visited by the committee as it determines needs, options and costs.

"Right now, we're doing a needs assessment," Walsh said. "What do we need to build to come up with a courthouse that will serve this community for generations to come?"

One less-desirable alternative to building a new court-

house is expanding the old one. The current 18,870-square-foot facility is 35-percent smaller than Livonia's 16th District Court, which has 22,500 square feet.

Since 1979, when the 10 Mile Road Elementary School was renovated for court use, new case filings have increased from 18,800 to 38,787 in 1997. And, that double load is being dealt with by the same number of judges—two.

Other shortcomings of the current facility, according to Walsh, include inadequate interior space, not enough parking and a lack of security provisions.

The latter was borne out before the preliminary exami-

nation of three men charged in the Aug. 9 armed robbery of Donny's Restaurant in Farmington Hills.

A court officer used a handheld metal detector to check friends and acquaintances of the defendants for possible weapons as they entered the courtroom. Some were suspected of having links to gang activity, said the officer later, explaining why the procedure was necessary.

Judge Maria Parker, on Friday, Aug. 21, bound the three defendants over to Oakland County Circuit Court for trial.

Vernon Jemal Adams, 20, of Southfield, Darrell Holland Carter, 20, of Lathrup Village and Kedar Abdullur York, 21, of Detroit, will stand trial on three counts each of armed robbery, which carry potential penalties of up to life imprisonment. All remain held on \$500,000 bond each. No arraignment date in circuit court has yet been set.

Hills firm rides Wall Street wave

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Stocks, like a bouncing ball, are a lot more fun to watch going up than down, assured a Farmington Hills company spokesman.

On Monday, Hills-based Complete Business Solutions Inc. took the biggest hit — a 26-percent decline — among companies on the Bloomberg Index of Michigan companies. The information technology service provider's stock fell 5 7/16 points and closed at \$16.13 a share.

By Tuesday afternoon, though, things were already looking up. At 3:30 p.m., Complete Business Solution's stock was on the rebound.

"We're back on track; We're up to \$8," said Gail Lutey, CBSI investor relations director. "So lay off will ya."

The company, which went public in March 1997, held the dubious distinction as the state's worst hit in the Monday market plummet. A Troy-based firm had the second worst.

Stock for another publicly-

held Hills firm, Compuware, rallied to finish with a modest gain Monday.

CBSI's dive and rise was the source of considerable office chatter. Many employees, through stock options and a purchase plan, own shares in the multinational firm.

"We're new to all these market skirmishes," Lutey said. "I went home a little crabby yesterday."

The company's stock freefall is frustrating, she said. CBSI is not invested in Russia, whose economic instability is causing investors to become skittish.

CBSI's shares started at \$12 and have risen to \$60 during the past year and a half.

On Aug. 14, the company switched from being traded as CBSL to CBSI. The market has been unkind to the acronym switch.

Lutey said she's issued two press releases to call attention to the change.

"The problem is that it doesn't get down to the individual investors," she said.

Ocean lover

North Farmington student studies marine biology up close

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

For Katie Schertel, living in a state with coastlines on four Great Lakes just isn't enough to satisfy her love of the water.

The oceans, with their salty water, crashing waves and exotic marine life has always had more of an appeal for the North Farmington High School junior. She spent a month last summer taking marine science courses at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab's Discovery Hall program at Mobile

Island, Ala., and in Panama City, Fla. Schertel was among 30 students studying in that session.

"I've always loved the ocean from when I was little," Schertel said.

Growing up in New Jersey and visiting various ocean coast vacation spots helped nurture her love of sea water, she added. Moving to Michigan, which has absolutely no sea water bodies, was a rude shock to the sea lover.

So when she saw an advertisement in "Southern Living" magazine for the marine science study program, she didn't waste any time responding. She had to collect two teacher recommendations, send transcripts and write an essay about why she wanted to enter the program.

Getting up close and personal with horseshoe crabs, fish and invertebrate sea creatures helped give her a better appreciation for the animals she had only read about in school.

"We actually learned a lot about horseshoe crabs," Schertel said. Many people fear the odd-looking crustaceans, but they are harmless, she added.

The students studied marine specimens aboard the R.V.A.E. Verrill, the 60-foot research

board of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Some of the marine animals studied included sharks and reef fish and other deep-sea creatures.

In Panama City, Fla., the sea lab students learned the basics of snorkeling. In the "beach

walk" portion of the class, students learned about beach ecology and studied marine botany, beach erosion and the human impact on coastal shorelines.

The program also gave Schertel a chance to talk about college study with others who are study-

ing marine science. Duke University in South Carolina has a good marine biology program, she learned.

Going to an east coast college is a goal of the ocean-loving teen. Apart from ocean science, Schertel also enjoys a variety of

extracurricular activities such as marching band — she plays clarinet — softball, multicultural club, student council and more.

Schertel, 16, has a sister, Sarah, 6, and a brother, John, 18. Her parents are Jack and Debbie.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DANKS
Studying: Katie Schertel studied marine biology this summer in Alabama and Florida.

10 candidates vie for school board seat

Ten candidates for the vacancy on the Farmington Board of Education were interviewed Tuesday and Wednesday, with an appointment expected to have been made last night.

Three of the persons who want to fill the slot created by the August resignation of Joseph Skove were challengers in the June school board election: Melody Jaske, Jackie Katz and Awwar Mahmood.

Also in the running were Kathryn Briggs, Gary Sharp, Tiffany Victor, Laura Myers, Mary Willer, Kevin Mitchell and Bill Luse.

Whoever is picked will serve until the June 1999 election, when the final year of Skove's four-year term will be decided by voters.

■ 'I'm struck by the fact there are 10 people interested who have wonderful, diverse backgrounds and ages.'

Bob Maxfield
—Superintendent

"I'm struck by the fact there are 10 people interested who have wonderful, diverse backgrounds and ages," said Superintendent Bob Maxfield. He noted that Briggs is a 79-year resident of the Farmington-Farmington Hills area.

If the board does not agree on an appointment by Sept. 7, the selection will be made by Oakland Schools.

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