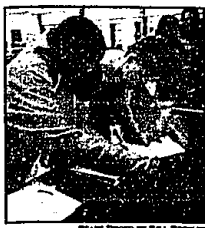


Open from page A1



Consult: Warner teacher Mary Compton helps student Julian Branch with his schedule.

particularly confusing for everybody in the Shawawsee Road building.

"Teachers have to dismiss classes on their watches or clocks," he explained. "So (dismissal) might have been off by a minute or two" from class to class. Usually, class dismissals are sounded over the public address speakers.

And while lockers are finally being installed at FHS, they are gray instead of navy blue. The installation, as of mid-week, was about 50 percent completed, Cowan said.

"They (locker company) just delivered them wrong, but they are very acceptable the way they are," Cowan said, noting that the district will receive a rebate from the company for the error.

Besides Farmington High, major work still needs to be done at many sites. Those include: Duncel and East middle schools; Wooddale Elementary; Harrison and North high schools.

At Wooddale, computers were not up and on-line as of Tuesday. Shortly after classes ended Monday at North, crews were drilling away, installing an entrance archway.

Meanwhile, Cowan said a "demolition derby" was going on at Harrison, with media center specialist Carla Barrett being

forced to do her job without a media center. Until the renovated center is completed, Barrett will visit classrooms.

One reason North was able to open up without a hitch, said Cowan and new North Principal Rick Jones, was the team cleanup effort by the school's parents, staff and students. A group of about 100 gathered on Sunday to do voluntary custodial duty.

"The building was amazingly clean and put together," Jones said. "There is some equipment not in yet, some of the furniture wasn't delivered yet..."

"But we had a tremendous response yesterday from parents, kids and staff."

Jones said the crew "went through (the school) and washed down desks and seats."

Similar efforts enabled district buildings to be clean, safe and ready for the first day.

But, at Warner Middle School, Principal Darlene Russell showed Monday about the new look of the building itself. Five new rooms were added and the central cluster of lockers was removed, opening up the floor space dramatically.

On the minus side, however, the media center was filled with unpacked boxes. And students had to side-step electrical wire and boxes of to-be-installed loudspeakers.

"It's a lot better," said Russell, shortly before heading out to the front of the school, where kids were trying to locate their bus for the ride home.

Outside, Russell directed students by reminding them to "look at the white slip, the white paper. That tells you what bus to get in."

Warner students and teachers said the first day went well.

"It was fun," said Amanda Belkin, starting eighth grade. "I'd like summer to be longer. But it's OK."

Seventh grade teacher Dave Tyler described the opener as a "great day. Kids are excited, even with the construction. And teachers are excited about getting going."



Old and new: The popular Ram's Horn on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills has closed and in its place a Kerby's Koney Island has opened

Gas from page A1

cers who sealed off the area, said they were able to return home around 5 a.m., after Consumers Energy crews fixed the problem.

"It was not a main line" break, Putt said. "A portion of the valve was faulty. You could smell it, but it wasn't overwhelming. The wind was minimal."

Putt said owners of adjacent businesses (such as the Korner Barber, Farmington Shoe Repair and Cowley's) were called in to check their buildings for gas levels.

Farmington Hills police assisted in directing traffic away from the intersection. Portions of both Grand River and Farmington were closed until nearly 6:30 a.m., when the all-clear sign was given.

Debra Dodd, spokeswoman for Consumers Energy, could not be reached for comment.

According to Putt, evacuated residents live between Warner and Liberty streets off of Grand River, and between Shawawsee and State streets off of Farmington.

"It wasn't the result of an accident or ... of improper digging," Putt said. "There was no negligence."

Throughout Tuesday morning, downtown business owners and patrons alike were talking about the leak and evacuation. "There was a lot of excitement but no evidence," said one pedestrian.

Several other workers said they heard about the problem on early morning radio or television reports, and that everything was back to normal by the time they rolled in to their jobs.

"My brother-in-law lives upstairs, he was evacuated," said Mike Nowak, co-owner of Salon Legato, which has apartments directly above it.

Nowak also lives in Farmington, near Grand River-Power, the vicinity where an unrelated gas leak was found about two months ago. Also this year, said downtown businessman Mike Harrison, another Consumers Energy crew was digging in the parking lot behind Page's Food and Spirits and the Pasta Stop, trying to pinpoint a leak.

Just Friday morning, about 50 children were evacuated from the Child Time day care center in Farmington Hills after a contract worker operating a backhoe accidentally ruptured a six-inch plastic gas line.

"You hope it (the area) is safe," said Nowak, referring to the apparently aging infrastructure.

Although Big Apple Bagel wasn't open for business between 4-6 a.m., one employee said there was a noticeable drop in customers because of the roads being shut down.

"When I got up here it was totally blocked off by fire trucks, police cars and gas trucks," said J.J. Johnston, who arrived at the Downtown Farmington Center business about 5:45 a.m. Big Apple Bagel opens at 6 a.m. "I think the traffic started up again about 7 a.m."

Closed from page A1

Bloomfield Township man, couldn't be reached for comment.

"He got tired and he wanted to retire," Keros said.

At least one business is pleased a Coney Island is opening.

Sales staffers at nearby Play It Again Sports are required to bring their meals back to the store. Due to the sit-down nature of Ram's Horn, employees didn't go there much.

Other options are Burger King and 7-Eleven on the east side of Orchard Lake.

There's also a Mister Pita on the west side of Orchard Lake Road.

"If you want to walk across the street," said Play It Again Sport's Chris Huffman, noting the heavy traffic on the street.

"A Coney Island would probably offer a few more options in terms of carry out," Huffman said.

The Ram's Horn on Grand River in Farmington under different ownership and not affected by the change.

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