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Kids Get A Taste Of Publishing

By MARTHA MAHAN
FARMINGTON
There's a little known but thriving publishing business in Farmington. Each edition it prints is limited - only three copies per book, as a matter of fact.

But the authors are as pleased as though they'd produced the world's all time best seller. The writers, readers, editors, illustrators, typists, proofreaders, printers and bookbinders are all kids, from five years through sixth grade.

They are students at elementary schools where reading specialists have established publishing centers, some in brand new media centers.

"When children become published authors, they gain the knowledge that they can make language work for them," said Mrs. Jean Ralph, principal of Flanders Elementary School, who sparked the publishing concern.

"They acquire confidence in themselves because their language and ideas are valued by others."

Most importantly, she said, "Every teacher knows that what any child is able to write, he is able to read."

Mrs. Ralph brought the idea of publishing centers to Farmington from Arizona after taking a leave of absence last year to study in one of that state's open schools.

Reading specialists at Flanders, Middlebelt, Kenbrook, Shiwassee, Wooddale and Woodcreek schools grabbed onto the idea as a means of promoting reading interest.

Children were told that those who wanted to could write their own books and have them published: fiction, non-fiction, drama, poetry, essays or whatever form they chose.

Not all the books written are published.

When a child decides he has a manuscript worthy of publication, he checks it to see whether it meets the requirements of (1) a beginning which makes the reader want to read more, (2) a middle where something happens or a problem is given,

(3) an ending in which the problem is solved, and (4) one or more characters and one or more settings.

He then checks the copy for spelling and grammatical errors following a checklist. After rewriting the manuscript, the young author decides again whether it is his best effort and whether it should be published.

Now the author plans the appearance of his book, how large the book should be, what shape and where the type should go on a page.

After typing three copies and placing any illustrations, the writer plans the cover, usually cardboard covered with wallpaper or decorative gummed paper. The next step is to sew the books, either by machine or by hand.

Throughout all these steps, a child may ask assistance from either a parent volunteer or older fifth and sixth graders.

Typing is the biggest stumbling block, Mrs. Ralph said. But the creative thirst stimulates the youngsters to add typing to their skills and some 50 or 60 Flanders students are taking typing this year.

One copy of each book goes to its author. Another is placed in the school library. The third is added to his classroom library.

Schools with publishing centers plan to display the books at the end of the school year in a Young Authors Week.

Publication of a book is a complete language learning process, Mrs. Ralph said, as the child goes through the stages of writing his first draft and rewriting it with an older student's help.

"It is through publishing that the young author gains the feeling that his own ideas are worthy of expression and are valued by others," she said.

"It makes reading come alive."



AN ILLUSTRATED STORY by a grade school youngster is checked by (from left) Mrs. Rosemary Dougekos, a Wooddale School mother, and Mrs. Jean Ralph, Flanders School principal, to determine whether it is worthy of publication. (Ever photo)

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15 Get Degrees

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Fifteen Farmington residents will be among students receiving degrees from the University of Detroit at commencement ceremonies Saturday, April 28 at 3 p.m. in U-D's Memorial Building, McNichols Rd. campus.

Graduating from the graduate school are: Raymond H. Gibson, 23923 Brookplace; Robert E. O'Brien, 35361 Edythe; Mary J. Kohn, 29900 11 Mile; Joseph A. Zott, 30760 Glenmuir; Thomas W. Maher, 22808 Longacre; and Robert J. Reinhard, 32450 Shrewsbury.

Graduating from the College of Arts and Sciences are: Leonard R. Stone Jr., 27801 Independence; Ronald

L. Wallen, 38239 N. Stockton; Gerald A. Mato, 26771 Greythorne; and Debra S. Blaul, 31779 Nottinghamwood.

Graduating from the School of Dentistry is Ellen R. Cohen, 28746 Ramblewood.

Graduating from the School of Law is Tracy C. Thompson, 35998 Quakerstown.

Graduating from the College of Engineering is Russell H. Lieder, 25349 Wessex Rd.

Graduating from the College of Business and Administration is Charles O'Connor, 32299 Red Clover.

Graduating from the School of Architecture is Linda Goldpaugh, 38906 Britany.

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