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The way to go

It's winter, and with it comes lots of kids and lots of snow. Since school is out for Farmington area youth, they have attacked the hill on Farmington and Shiawassee roads and turned it

into a sledders paradise. For more photographs, turn to page 3A. (Photographed by Craig Newman)

Gymnastic club coach says gym rental justified

"I feel that our position is very tenacious," said Dennis Fitzgerald. "We're trying to be as careful as we can, and that means being as positive in outlook and in decisions as possible."

As a coach for the new Twisters Gymnastics Club, Fitzgerald is fighting for the club's survival, made questionable by a close vote by the Farmington Board of Education.

The 43 vote permitting rental was taken to determine whether the then-unformed club would be able to use

the facilities and equipment at Harrison and North Farmington, high schools.

The controversy revolved around cuts made in the B-1 schedule, one of which had effectively erased boys' gymnastics from the district's curricula. Several board members joined the Farmington Education Association's official position that the rental would be in violation of the negotiated contract.

HOWEVER, the majority believed that the request was not sufficiently

different from similar requests by the Slingray Swim Club, or Little League baseball or basketball, to warrant different consideration.

Twisters, formed after the board's decision, currently numbers 25 members, most of them youngsters between seventh and 12th grades, and one 40-year-old.

More than 40 per cent of the students who would have pursued varsity gymnastics in school belong to the club. The other 40 percent have turned to jobs, other sports or have just plain lost interest, Fitzgerald said.

Although he basically agreed with the gymnastics cut, he insists that the formation of the club is not a "negative thing."

"I don't think they were being unreasonable in making the cut," Fitzgerald said. "Under similar circumstances, I would have done it too, and have to support the decision."

"BUT WE'RE not out after anybody. We've got an interest in the welfare of kids—what can we do? Why not have a club?"

Twisters is not limited exclusively

to seniors from Harrison or North Farmington. The club is open to all from seventh grade on up. And the lack of students from Farmington High School may be due to transportation problems, Fitzgerald said.

"Members don't practice at Farmington High, mainly because there isn't a coach for them there. Also, the gym is of such a construction that you can't schedule several activities at once."

"So if the girls' coach wants to use the facilities at the time we usually practice, we're out of luck," Fitzgerald said.

Due to the high cost of gymnastics equipment, the club was forced to approach the schools in hopes of rental.

"THERE is a real scarcity of coaches and equipment, not to mention the expense involved," Fitzgerald said. "When sports like golf and tennis were cut, the boys had alternatives. They could use the public golf courses, or resort to intramural teams. Some were absorbed into the varsity teams. But for gymnasts, there was no alternative."

The new club, he said, could almost be regarded as an extension of adult education.

The club has already officially participated in the Huron Invitational Meet at Eastern Michigan University, and walked away with first prize in its division.

The meet is held annually, and this year, because of the interest, a second division was opened for clubs," Fitzgerald said.

TWISTERS, as a private club may

complete with high school teams in a triangular meet, one in which two other teams are competing.

They may also compete in invitational, but only where a separate category is provided for clubs.

The separation exists to insure the comparative equality of the rivals, Fitzgerald said.

"The idea is that the club, having no attendance boundary, theoretically has more practice and more training. As a club, they don't want that inequity to exist," he said.

As far as competition goes, the students who have joined the club would not now be allowed to participate in regular competition, even if the board would reinstate gymnastics into the B-1 schedule.

"THERE is a law which says that a high school student who competes in a club can't be on a high school team," he said. "So no matter what the parents or the school board decide, there won't be any high school gymnastics in Farmington this year."

Present club membership is all-male, although girls are not specifically excluded.

"If a girl were to come to me and ask to be in the club, the first thing I'd do would be to ask her what school she goes to," he said.

"If she goes to Harrison or North Farmington, I'd tell her to join their girls' gymnasts, but if she goes to Farmington High, where they don't have a program, there'd be no problem."

He didn't want to be accused of raiding the girls' teams for members, he said.

The club practices five days a week from 3:5 p.m. at Harrison and North Farmington high schools. Yearly membership fee is charged.

Farmington Hills resident edits environmental education books

By SUSAN AVERILL

Like a mathematics teacher, Dorothy Cox gives her students problems to solve. Like an English teacher, she asks them to write essays and reports. And like philosophers of old, she asks her pupils to present logical arguments for their views.

Mrs. Cox, a teacher in the Clarenceville School District and a life-long resident of Farmington Hills, has the special task of being an environmental educator.

And she has taken the task seriously enough to co-edit a six-book series with William B. Stapp, chairman of the environmental education program at the University of Michigan.

The book, entitled "Environmental Education Activities Manual," was begun seven years ago by Stapp, and as one of his students, Mrs. Cox was originally only peripherally interested in it.

Stapp's appointment as director of environmental education for the Parliament branch of UNESCO surprised him, Mrs. Cox said.

"I THINK he knew he wouldn't have the time to complete all the ar-

rangements for publication, so he asked me to help and be his co-editor," she said.

A flurry of effort and coordination marked the month of August, and then he was gone, leaving her to figure out the technical details of publication.

The decision that photocopying would be the cheapest method for mass reproduction did not end her economic worries.

"I also decided to reduce the size of the book from 8 1/2-by-11 to 6-by-9 inches. That cut the cost in half, again," she said.

She also learned how to interpret purchase orders and correct style for manuals.

Mrs. Cox insists that she is an editor, not an author.

"OVER 100 students and U of M teachers helped us on the book. We didn't really write most of it ourselves," she said.

Partially responsible for the programs outlined in the book were teachers participating in a summer program at Higgins Lake Environmental School.

The program is five days of intensive study (8 a.m. to 10 p.m.), offered

by the universities of Western Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Michigan State, Wayne State and U of M in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources.

Teachers attending the program are sponsored by their local garden clubs.

"In this case, the teachers were given the assignment to write a concept-developing activity," Mrs. Cox said. Some of these were chosen for the book.

IN HER OWN classes, Mrs. Cox has challenged her students to agree or disagree with statements like, "There should be a bounty on wolves." "The answers must not only be logically supported, but ecologically supported, according to the environmental information they have been taught."

"I tell the kids, 'No matter what you say, you're wrong—convince me,'" she said.

Reprints can be interesting. "One of the students said that we'd better not put a bounty on wolves unless we are willing to keep having a hunting season. If we kill off their natural prey, we become their predators," she said.

Another suggestion typical of her exams is whether we should shoot

deer at Metro, and give the meat to the poor.

The books have been ordered by state departments and school systems in 18 states. France and Ontario have also received several sets of the books, she said.



MRS. DOROTHY COX

Ecology manual isn't designed to be read from cover-to-cover

By SUSAN AVERILL

By describing her own book as one "not to be read from cover to cover," Dorothy Cox is not disparaging it; she is merely giving an accurate description of her new "Environmental Education Activities Manual."

An environmental educator in the

Clarenceville School District, Mrs. Cox co-edited the manual for teachers with William B. Stapp, former chairman of the environmental education program at the University of Michigan, and now director of the program for the Parliament branch of UNESCO.

The book has been ordered by the Farmington School District, and is

now available at each of the district's schools.

"Environmental education is not just ecology," Mrs. Cox said. "It is understanding the world around you, including people and their behavior. It's knowing the things people do to dis-

(See EDUCATOR, next page)

Search begins for 1st citizen

The annual search is on for the citizen of the year.

This is the fifth year for the competition sponsored by the Farmington Chamber of Commerce to recognize a person for outstanding service to the Farmington community.

There are no qualifications as to age, sex or residency. The applicant must only have given the outstanding service to the Farmington Community in 1974.

Deadlines for applications is Jan. 10 in the chamber office.

Previous winners were Ronald Holland in 1970, Lewis Gibson in 1971, Dr. Robert Douglass in 1972 and Marlowe Belanger in 1973.

Letters seeking applications have been sent to all service organizations and government leaders in the community, said James Wibby, chairman of the search.

Wibby is urging persons knowing of a qualified candidate to make a nomination.

"This award allows us all, the chamber and the community, to thank the

person and give the recognition that he deserves," Wibby said.

Applications may be obtained at the chamber of Commerce offices, 2715 Farmington Road, or the Metro Bank, 2226 Grand River, or they can be mailed from the chamber offices.

The winner will be honored at the Farmington Chamber of Commerce annual meeting on Jan. 21.

New name for library

FARMINGTON — The Farmington Library system has changed its name to the Farmington Community Library.

The facility located at 27277 W. Twelve Mile, will be referred to as the Farmington Hills branch. The new library under construction at the corner of Liberty and State streets will be called the Farmington branch.

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