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Fifth Class

Juvenile crime-solving issue splits council hopefuls

By STEVE BARNABY

Farmington Hills council candidates are split on the type of recreational facilities needed to quell delinquency in the city.

The issue was raised at the Farmington Area Democratic Club candidates' night last week when a resident asked how the city government could best deal with vandalism incidents such as occurred at a bus owned by an Explorer Scout group recently.

Speaking at the meeting conducted in the Farmington Community Center were Mayor Earl Oppenheimer, councilmembers Jan Dolan, Keith Deacon and council hopefuls Bernard Christy and Joanne Smith. About six candidates were vying for four seats.

"WE NEED A VISION and a plan," Mrs. Smith told the audience. "There isn't any one answer. Society has progressed so quickly that we haven't caught up."

While leading the city's effort in handling substance abuse, she emphasized a need for recreational facilities

for youth who weren't interested in organized sports.

"Hanging out is something that all young people go through. Perhaps we can provide some sort of facility where kids can occupy their time," she said.

Recreation, she said, means more than play. To provide recreation for all children in the community, more than just a recreation director is needed, she said.

Deacon questioned whether providing a hang-out is the answer. "I don't know whether the kind of kids that get into trouble would take advantage of a center," he said. "Delinquency is a moral question which begins at a young age."

Deacon lauded the efforts of the juvenile officers section in the police department, although he said it was undermanned. He vowed the department would be expanded in the future.

Mrs. Dolan labeled the vandalism incident as a, and commentary on a community. The incident occurred when unknown persons smashed the win-

dows of a bus owned by the Explorer Post 282. The troop used the bus to travel for band concerts. An estimated \$700 damage was done.

"Delinquency should be a concern of the neighbors. People should be more concerned with what's going on. When children get in trouble it should be called to the attention of their parents," she said.

MRS. DOLAN, a member of the Farmington Hills Beautification Commission, is a strong advocate of developing parks in the city. The hills, she says, is lacking in large park facilities or any place for them. "The hills are now vacant will be used up by developers before parks are developed. The city has one park."

"We've got to get some land while it is still available," she said.

Oppenheimer disagreed with Mrs. Dolan, saying that a park system should be built around the schools.

"Larger parks should be built by the county. The city should have small parks scattered throughout the community," said Oppenheimer. "If we have a large park, kids will have

to be driven to them.

"By having small parks scattered about, children will be able to walk to them," he said.

Larger parks, he said, cause parking problems and have questionable benefits in dealing with activities for children who are prone to get in trouble.

"I admit that children are living in a harder world to grow up in, but I don't have the kinds of activities that are offered and I don't consider myself a juvenile delinquent," he said.

CHRISTY, who has served as an auxiliary police officer during township days, says he is satisfied with recreational facilities the way they are. Residents should give the city a chance to develop before expecting parks, he says.

"The kids that get in trouble aren't those who participate in community activities," said Christy. "From my experience as an auxiliary officer, I see that parents usually do something with their children when they get in trouble. But many are teen-resters."



Fifth grade teachers Barbara May (left) and Barbara Bachman try their missile launching skills.

Teachers using summer learning about science

By CORINNE ABATT

For three days this month 170 Farmington district elementary teachers dutifully went to school. No paychecks, no threats. They went because they wanted to.

There will be a new approach to science introduced in all elementary grades this fall, and the teachers are seeing it for the first time. Material is organized and presented with the student on active participation by students.

"The kids will really have a good time with this," said Mel Blackman, Woodcreek principal, one of 17 elementary principals attending.

THE PROGRAM, developed at Michigan State University through a National Science Foundation grant, is called SCIS (Science Curriculum Improvement Study).

Teachers trained at a Michigan State workshop came to work with the local educators who were divided by grade level.

Judith Klein of Queens College told her group of fifth and sixth grade teachers, "This is a doing kind of program."

Larry Freedman, assistant superintendent for elementary education, describes the new program as "a hands-on program," nationally recognized and now being used successfully in several neighboring districts.

The school board approved the cost of the equipment. The company is providing all in-service training materials free.

Freedman says, "We got a real good deal on this one."

"Textbooks, when they are used, will be supplementary material. For a major portion of the time, students will be doing small group experiments. The kits are included in the package."

Along with familiarizing themselves with new materials, teachers are being introduced to a different approach to learning.

Ms. Klein worked with her group on experiments to demonstrate transfer of energy. After the first temperature changes "with which I'm sure you are familiar," she opened up a small launch-pad to which she affixed a clear syringe with a rubber cork—a stopper popper system.

She demonstrated, pulling the plunger and sending the cork popping out a couple of feet.

The teachers envisioned corks popping all over their room.

"The only thing I caution you on," said Ms. Klein, "is aim and direction. And you should caution the kids too."

"Now," she said, "lets estimate how far that went."

THE ESTIMATES ran from three to six meters. She wasn't accepting estimates in feet. "If you're going to get kids working in meters—get them working in metrics now."

She led them through the experiment, asking first that they establish a convention for measurement. Point of launch to ground impact was decided upon. Next she asked for ways of measuring and a dozen people had a dozen solutions.

None was wrong—all were workable ways to do it.

"You can generally expect that adults can come up with about 80 per cent of what the kids will," she commented.

Mel Blackman smiled. "I have a feeling when it comes to missile launching, the kids won't have any trouble."

With a suggestion that they work on the floor in twos to learn how to work the stopper popper and experiment with measuring, Ms. Klein watched the action, just as the teachers will be doing with their students next year.

And like the fifth and sixth graders, the teachers had fun figuring out solutions.

While the stopper-poppers were flying in one section of the room, teachers in another area, under Melvina Walter of Corvallis, Ore., were working on understanding and constructing circuits and seeing the effects on a compass.

Answering a question on explaining the experiment, Ms. Walter cautioned, "You ask questions. You don't tell."

Delighted with the response of the teachers, their enthusiasm for the new approach and their willingness to participate voluntarily in the in-service, Freedman is very optimistic about the future.

"It is much better than what we've had," said Carl Wilson, "the kids should enjoy it. The biggest problem is organizing the materials and making sure all the materials we use from the kit of drawers are replaced."

David Bloom said he liked the new approach, "the same material with a different format," because it gives children a chance to manipulate things and to see what happens.

When the program actually is under way in a few weeks, it will be almost a dream come true for Woodcreek Principal, Frank Delewsky. One of his strongest supporters, Delewsky has volunteered practically all of his summer vacation to getting it under way.



An experiment to demonstrate magnetic captures the interest of Farmington elementary teachers Lucille Miller (left), David

Bloom and Sally Wilson. (Staff photos by Craig Newman)

Managers say

Central business act good for cities' futures

By MICHAEL CHARLES

A bill which would give local governments the legal means to redevelop their central business districts through a change in the tax structure could be a useful tool in the City of Farmington some day, according to City Manager Robert F. Deacon.

But the same law will probably have little practical effect in neighboring Farmington Hills, said City Manager George Majors.

Deacon and Majors were reacting to a bill proposed by state Sen. Harry A. DeLeon (R-Battle Creek) which is being readied for Gov. Milliken's expected approval this fall.

CALLED THE "downtown development authority" act, the bill would permit the establishment of local downtown development districts and an authority to administer their development and preservation.

According to the bill, the authority could not take land in a specific business district for redevelopment. The district would become a part of the local zoning ordinance and couldn't be adopted without the approval of local elected officials.

Under the DeLeon proposal the development authority (composed of five local citizens, including five persons who have "an interest in property located in the downtown district") could levy a tax of up to two mills in connection of less than a million persons to finance the authority's operations.

THE TAX would be limited to a

maximum of one mill in cities with a population of more than one million.

Revenues raised by existing property taxes on land within the downtown district would be restricted to the redevelopment of public and private facilities in the district.

"It's just another tool to aid the cities in revitalizing their downtown areas," Deacon said. "It's a method for local government to help merchants compete with the shopping centers."

DEACON HAS said his bill "will allow the businessmen to do something for himself."

(Deacon explained that Farmington may one day find need for the law to help revitalize the city's downtown area near Grand River and Farmington roads, where many of the buildings date from the 19th century.)

"I don't see how we're going to get

this right away, but I certainly welcome the (legal) tool," he added.

"And it would seem to me that you would need the support of the owners (in the district) before any building program is going to be successful."

MAJORS DOESN'T think the DeLeon proposal will mean much to Farmington Hills businessmen immediately.

"I don't think it's going to have much of an effect on us because we have no downtown and no deterioration," he said. "I can't really see where we'd need that kind of authority."

Majors said most of the city's commercial malling is located in strips along major roads rather than in central business districts. Improvements to these areas would be "primarily cosmetic," he said.

Legal service is a waste of time, Shpiece says

By STEVE BARNABY

Paying a membership into the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) legal trust fund is a waste of taxpayers' money, according to Farmington School District Trustee Michael Shpiece.

Shpiece has publicly announced he will vote against the \$1,000 membership at tonight's (Monday) meeting. Although the board has paid into the fund already, tonight's vote will give payment final approval.

The fund provides legal support to districts in situations such as teachers' strikes and busing cases. The fund provided money during the labor problems in Crestwood, Garden City and Lathrop school districts last year.

"THE BYLAWS for this trust fund are big enough to drive a Mack truck

through them," says Shpiece. "They are so broad they can be interpreted to mean just about anything."

One of Shpiece's main concerns is the fund may be used for an issue in which the Farmington board or community may disagree.

"It is possible that we could be giving money to a cause in which we disagreed completely. Besides, I think we could do without the fund if we wanted to get involved in a court case, and do it for less money."

Under the plan any district can ask for help from the fund, even if it hasn't paid the membership fee, he says.

Particularly upsetting to Shpiece is the chance that the fund may enter local negotiations and influence, rather than resolve, the situation.

"On a philosophical basis, teachers and school boards are working for in-

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VIEWING THE FALLS

Any way you view Niagara Falls is exciting, but one of the most thrilling views is from the deck of the "Island of the Maid". For history and pictures see The Good Life, page 8.