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FEA leadership tactics are blasted

By SUSAN AVERILL

While the bargaining may be done and the contract signed, there is yet unrest among the ranks of the Farmington teachers' union. Many apparently feel that the Farmington Education Association (FEA) constitution was violated during negotiations.

"I know that a lot of teachers are upset about it," said a former FEA negotiator. "I feel it's kind of been a hurry-up, get-it-over-with type of thing, and no one knows quite why our freedom as members was really literally taken away from us."

It was not publicly known until Tuesday, Sept. 30 that representatives from the FEA and the Farmington Board of Education had been negotiating a new contract since the beginning of the month.

According to another former FEA

negotiator, union building representatives were told the same day that they must attend a meeting Thursday, before the membership vote on Friday. It was a special session, announced by word-of-mouth, and was therefore a violation of the FEA constitution.

AS STATED IN the constitution: "Special sessions may be held at the call of the president or upon written request from fifteen (15) members of the Representative Assembly. Business to be conducted at such sessions must be stated in the call, which shall be sent in writing to each representative."

One former negotiator noted other irregularities in FEA procedure.

"Our constitution calls for choosing a negotiating team by election each time we negotiate a new contract. For

some reason—secrecy or something—this wasn't done and Jerry (Kaplan, FEA president) used the old team."

"I don't know who came to whom about this thing (the new 1975-76 teachers' contract). If it was Bob (Goleman, board negotiator), I think Jerry should have said no, it would be unethical. If it was Jerry, I think the board should have said no."

"Somebody should have said 'wait until we get our new team.' To me, the public would have looked at it in just as much favor. When the public reads—" she took a scrap of newspaper from her file and read, "brought about by secret meetings—that is what is in question with me."

Because of constitutional stipulations, the longevity of the negotiating team is questionable, she said.

According to the constitution, "Following ratification of the contract by the membership, the professional ne-

gotiations committee will become a standing committee for the duration of the contract."

BEFORE THE NEW extension of the contract, the negotiating team would be disbanded in August 1976 and a new one chosen. Now, she wants to know, because they negotiated the contract extension, do they remain as negotiators until August 1977?

Above all, these two women are questioning the secrecy behind the new contract.

"I'm standing on principles. We talk about openness and communication, we're talking about in the interest of the people—the CIA says that, too."

"We really feel there were a lot of people who voted yes who were not satisfied with the way it was handled."

"People are pretty wishy-washy

when it comes to standing up about it," said the other former negotiator. "A lot of people voted yes, but 150 voted no. That is the largest no vote we have ever had in this district."

"No one asked us this time if we wanted to go negotiate this new contract. We don't know exactly what happened. I don't see what the rush was about. They told the staff on Tuesday, which means some of them didn't hear about it until Wednesday. We had the meeting Thursday night and on Friday we voted. There were some other people at the meeting who listened it to a Watergate."

One of the women has contacted the Michigan Education Association about it, and said they expressed dismay at the negotiating procedure.

DISSATISFACTION has gone far enough for her to hear some rumors

of recall of Kaplan as FEA president, she said.

"This is just a rumor that they're talking about. I don't mean to be vindictive, but I don't ever want it to happen again. I can see a lot of other districts saying, 'hmmm, this sounds good.' I think the guy (Kaplan) is great, and I like him personally, but I don't think his actions were right."

Said the other, "I have a feeling right now that somebody's a little power mad and they're using the FEA as a stepping stone."

"The way this was done, you get the feeling something had to be a little shady. When you sit down and figure it out, I bet you're going to lose something. Livonia tried to do the same thing, and they (the Livonia Education Association) voted down the same type of money package."



No matter how Chris Randolph cuts it, she's got herself a triple A pumpkin. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

'Bertha' result of big crop

Big Bertha is temporarily in residence at the Twelve Mile office of the Automobile Club of Michigan, AAA.

She happens to be a sort of super pumpkin, the kind the Peanuts characters find in the pumpkin patch around Halloween. Only Bertha grew to her 75 pound size in Chris Randolph's pumpkin patch in Farmington Hills.

Ms. Randolph of AAA's travel department, planted about a quarter-acre in pumpkins from seed supposed to produce fruit up to 250 pounds each.

Well, hers didn't hit that weight, but she did get two 75-pounders on one vine. She sold one for \$6.50. "Too cheap," says her office mate.

Mrs. Randolph carved the other with the AAA symbol in its mouth.

She planted the pumpkins because she wanted an easy-to-care-for money crop. "I didn't want to take on anything I'd have to weed. I just run the rototiller through the patch once in a while and that's it," she said.

Carefully, the novice pumpkin farmer watched the vines, pulling off the extra blossoms so all the strength would go to her favorite, Big Bertha.

And so, that big pumpkin in the AAA office, didn't get there by accident. It was planned and nurtured with that counter-top spot in mind since early last summer.



What's wrong?

Carrie Adams doesn't like trolls even pretend ones. To see why turn to Art Start story on Page 3A. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

...Union chief denies violating constitution

Farmington Education Association (FEA) president Jerry Kaplan agreed with recent teacher allegations that the newly-negotiated teachers' contract was a "hurry-up deal."

It certainly was a hurry-up deal if it was to be negotiated with the news of the school district and the association," he said.

According to Kaplan, the aim was to save the school district money by allowing them to take over the five per cent teachers' retirement contribution and forego the previously agreed upon six per cent pay increase during 1975-76.

A rush was put on negotiations, Kaplan said, because the board wanted to know by Oct. 1 whether they could include the \$100,000 savings in their 1975-76 budget. It was a matter of timing, he said, so the board would know in time for the state's November deadline.

"WE HAD NO pressure to settle. We could have delayed things and started negotiations around March."

Responding to a charge by one former negotiator that "our freedom as members was literally taken away from us," Kaplan said he followed the democratic process.

"This document was presented to the board of directors, who passed it unanimously. They passed it on to the representative assembly where it was presented and explained. They approved it by a 36-4 vote and recommended it be ratified by the membership. The membership had a weekend to consider it and voted 558-180 to approve it. Any claim or charge that it wasn't democratic was groundless," he said.

"As far as I'm concerned, not one person has pointed out to me the violation in the contract," he said, when possible FEA constitution violations were mentioned.

People didn't know what was going on, I think they're using the violations idea because they didn't like the secrecy. Constitutionally speaking, any constitution is a loosely structured document. No one ever envisioned this possibility would come up. Just like Thomas Jefferson never envisioned busing."

As for the selection of the negotiating team, they were already a standing committee. Usually they would negotiate the contract only once because the old contract would expire before an opportunity came to deliberate on a new one, he explained.

"IT'S A STANDING committee and therefore a negotiating team. Technically, they become a standing com-

mittee until that contract terminates. However, we're not sure. Because of the concerns of the minority we may have an election at the end of the year" for a new team, he said.

There were probably some people who like the contract, who didn't like the way it was handled," he said.

Secrecy was necessary, and past precedent was therefore abandoned.

"By past practice we send out questionnaires to the teachers and tell them as to what their priorities are."

Because of the sensitive nature of these negotiations, we didn't do that."

Part of the reason for the secrecy was to avoid embarrassment for the teachers if negotiations fell through, he said.

"One of the benefits to the association would be some real favorable press. Maybe for the first time in Oakland County the teachers took a per cent less." If the contract negotiations disintegrated, the teachers would be blamed, he said.

As for rumors of recall, he's heard them.

"I think it's important that this thing be aired. You know, I've had my character impugned. I think compared with Nixon, Haldeman, and Ehrlichman, I think no one has shown that I've had any personal gain. Until they can, I think any charges of that sort are highly emotional."

Hills declares war on Dutch Elm disease

The city of Farmington Hills has declared diseased elm trees a public nuisance.

The city council adopted an emergency ordinance on Oct. 13 designed to inspect and remove trees with Dutch Elm disease.

Residents notified by mail that they have diseased elms on their property will be responsible for removing them within 10 days.

If the diseased trees are not removed and disposed of within the time period, the Department of Public Services will remove the tree and assess the cost to the property owner.

According to City Manager George L. Mayhew, "It is the homeowner's responsibility to remove the trees on private property." However, residents can request that the city cut down dying elms and bill property owners.

According to the ordinance it is unlawful to possess a diseased elm after the 10 day period following notification. Violating the ordinance is a misdemeanor, punishable by a \$100 fine or 90 days in jail, or both. Property owners may appeal the city's decision within 10 days of notification.

Public Services intends to inspect trees strictly on the basis of complaints this fall. Although this ordinance is automatically rescinded on Nov. 15, the city's legal department is currently working on a permanent ordinance to fight Dutch Elm disease.

Except for a few remaining elm trees still vulnerable to infection, the city of Farmington has no significant Dutch Elm disease problem. According to Robert Deadman, city manager of Farmington, "Farmington removed practically all diseased elms from the community years ago."

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REFORM NEEDED

U.S. Rep. William Brodehead dropped into town recently to tell the chamber of commerce how things were going in Washington D.C. To see what has to say on Congressional reform turn to Page 4A.

Low Coy resigns commission seat

Low L. Coy, last year re-elected 24th District Oakland County Commissioner, is resigning from his post Oct. 21. He will become a court officer for 52nd District Court Judge Martin L. Boyle in Walled Lake.

The 24th county commission district includes a portion of Farmington Hills, Lyon Township, South Lyon, Wixom, Novi and Walled Lake.

While in office, the 56-year-old Wixom resident helped to establish a county emergency medical service (EMS), a health and legal services satellite for southwest em Oakland County and a savings in laboratory work.

"I had a pretty successful term," he said. "I wanted to see the EMS program get off the ground, that was one of my priorities. Action has been taken in this direction," he said.

The county used so many laboratories, there was bound to be a duplication in services, he said. Some of

this duplication has been eliminated with a savings of \$78,000, he said.

Before merging the Oakland County Sheriff's Department laboratory with the County Medical Examiner's laboratory, there were seven labs. Now there are five, including the Health Department, the county hospital, the Department of Public Works, the drain office and the drug abuse program laboratory.

Beginning next Monday, the court-house welfare clients of southwest Oakland County will be served from a Walled Lake office. The new office, a project favored by Coy, will be at 1000 Maple Road near Pontiac Trail.

In a letter to Fred Houghton, chairman of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, Coy said, "Personal and family considerations force me to resign my position. I do this with much regret, but feel I must leave employment with more stability and closer to my home at this time."