

Learning, action unite in program for gifted

By LYNN ORR

Eleven students sat in a Warner Junior High classroom last week. They were baffled as to why eighth grade student Amy Alkon had arranged such objects as a tennis ball container, paper bag, pot of lip gloss, and a cassette tape in a particular order.

After about 10 minutes of probing, Ms. Alkon put an end to their puzzlement.

"They're arranged from the most eye-catching to the least," she announced.

"That's her opinion," responded one student.

"Right," said instructor Sharon Higham. "What's another word for a personal opinion?" she quizzed the group.

Ms. Higham was identifying subjective reasoning, as opposed to objective reasoning, where the objects would have been arranged by an easily identifiable characteristic like size, weight, or color.

That's the kind of conversation that takes place in a seminar for intellectually gifted students. The program for the intellectually gifted began last June in Warner and Duncel Junior High.

"THE PURPOSE of these seminars is to emphasize higher levels of thinking," Ms. Higham explains. "They get content all the time in regular classes. I'm emphasizing a way of thinking rather than content."

"These kids also get a chance to interact without feeling like snarlies."

3 face termination

The third pinklip in as many years was delivered to Highmire Elementary School principal Carolyn Plesek—but this time the termination notice is final.

Two other administrators who received termination notices may be relieved before the 1978-79 school year begins.

Ms. Plesek is expected to remain with the Farmington School District as a teacher. She is one of the district's two female principals.

John Summerlee, administrative assistant at East Junior High, may be rehired if funds are available beyond what is projected for next year's budget, according to Supt. Lewis Schulman.



SHARON HIGHAM

This particular seminar was centered on categorizing tools (anything that is man made). Six categories for tools, including recreation, transportation, communication, shelter, maintenance, and contain supports, were named.

The class examined about 30 containers brought in by the students. Group discussion centered on analyzing the containers as to size, shape, communication and marketability. After the discussion, the students broke into small groups to examine one particular package.

Four seventh grade students examined the pot of lip gloss, including size, weight, recyclability, cost, and consumer usefulness. One major change the students would make is putting the label on the top, as opposed to the bottom of the container.

In addition, each student sketched their concept of the best container.

Although it was only the second time the students had met for a seminar, Ms. Higham was pleased with the results and the discussion. The next assignment was to construct a container, out of toothpicks, thread, and glue, to hold an egg. The test of the container was to drop it from six feet up in the air without breaking the egg. If more than one student's egg didn't break, weight would be the criterion for the winner.

It turned out six days later, Trudy Taussman's design proved a winner.

Although the seventh grader's container was the heaviest, it preserved the egg. Sandy Stiem, 14, suspended her egg in a six-sided arrangement of toothpicks, using the triangular mode.

"Triangles are the strongest," she explained. Although the class voted

that Ms. Stiem's egg had the best chance for survival, the egg broke on impact.

The experiment is one example of the heuristic (learning by doing) approach to learning that's emphasized in the gifted program.

WHEN \$87,000 was approved to fund the program last June, Special Education Director Graham Lewis estimated about 250 students would be involved in the K-6 program.

It seems Farmington has more than its share of intellectually gifted students whose IQs fall in the top two percent of the population. The district already has identified 281 students in the elementary schools and junior highs.

That number of students is expected to increase when other students are identified through Stanford Binet IQ tests administered by school psychologists.

Educational Planning and Placement Committees (EPPCs) at each school have the task of preparing an individualized program for each student identified as intellectually gifted.

That program can involve acceleration (working in higher grade level classes), outside activities planned with parents of the students, and seminars such as those conducted by Ms. Higham.

As building coordinator for the two junior highs, her job is similar to that of a counselor for the students.

"Part of my role is to keep them informed of things that are going on, such as 'Junior Highs, Diane Akers, explains. Some of her students went to a creativity workshop held at Oakland University. Encouraging the students to explore new territories is part of her job.

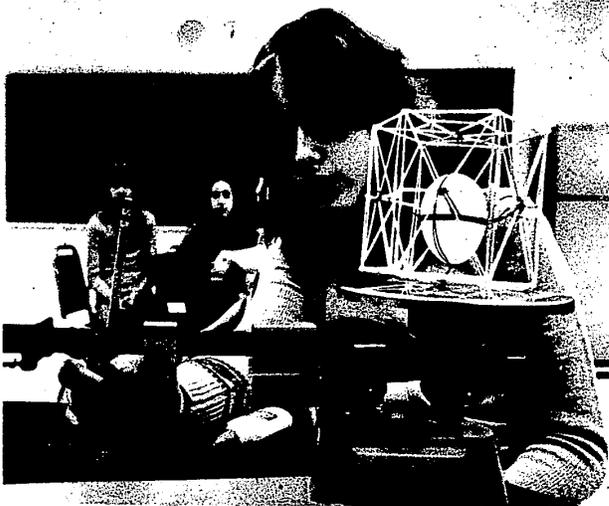
"Here I'm trying to offer an open-ended opportunity where a bright kid can really take off," she explains.

Ms. Higham's counterpart at East and Power Junior Highs, Diane Akers, has 80 students in the Intellectually Gifted program. Thirty-two students have been identified at Warner. Only 10 students have been identified so far at Duncel because the school psychologist in that area left the district.

Many options are being explored for next year's program, including hopes that some snags can be ironed out.

Many of the gifted students lack study skills during the day. They use the time relegated for study hall for music, band or other non-academic activities, Ms. Higham explains.

Thus, getting the students together for seminars can be difficult.



Sandra Stiem, 14, weighs her egg in its six-sided container before the experiment conducted by Warner Junior High students in the intellectually gifted program. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

Annual showing of green captivates night scene

Whether Irish by birth or avocation, St. Patrick's Day revelers will find a glass of green beer and a slip of a song from the old country in Farmington, Friday.

Along Grand River, the Old Village Inn and Dunleavy's Pub and Grub are expecting to see standing room only crowds of patrons who are truly Irish or only wish they were.

St. Patrick's Day is an excellent opportunity to chase away the end-of-winter blues, according to Marty Burke, owner of Dunleavy's Pub and Grub.

"St. Patrick's Day is a better day for bars than New Year's Eve," he said. "Especially in Irish Catholic saloons."

Since it's the first holiday after New Year's Eve and comes toward the end of Lent, Burke said most of his customers are ready for a good time.

This year, there's an added allure to St. Patrick's Day.

"People are depressed with the snow. They want to do something," he said.

At Dunleavy's, green beer, green hats and an Irish quartet, the Four Fifths will add to the atmosphere.

"I'll be mass confusion. If you faint you won't be able to fall," said Burke.

Last year's record seems to bear out Burke's assessment. Traffic into the pub caused a traffic jam along Grand River.

"It's a beautiful saint. It's a lovely crowd—it's a good Irish crowd," Burke said.

Similar expectations were shared by the employees of Old Village Inn, Grand River, owned by John Cowley. The inn offers its customers Irish

music all year round in addition to a friendly game of darts.

For St. Patrick's Day, the Celtic Sound will keep the music pouring through the night as the bar serves up green beer.

Elbow-to-elbow, mug-to-mug crowds are expected by the inn.

"Last year you couldn't move in here," remembered Faye Sandlin.

"Everyone's Irish on that day." For those who prefer a more elaborate meal with their green beer than the corn beef sandwiches the Old Village Inn plans to serve, the Clam-digger's will be celebrating St. Patrick's Day, too.

Green beer, green drinks, decorations and waitresses' uniforms will be the order of the day at the Chuck Muer restaurant on Grand River.

BOTSFORD Inn also plans to serve green beer that day.

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

"A WHOPPER of a party will be conducted this weekend at the Botsford Inn. The CLYDE McCOY family of Farmington Hills, will join seven brothers and sisters plus an additional 150 guests from around the country to celebrate EMILY McCOY's (Clyde's mom) 80th birthday. Word is that agendas will be handed out at the door. Well, you know what they say, you need a program to tell the players. Congratulations, Emily.

"AL SCHLOSSBERG, a Farmington photographer, was curious about llamas until he went to the Detroit Zoo recently and found that llamas are just as curious about him. While he was setting up his camera to take pictures of persons posing with the beast, he found his foot being nibbled by the beast, instead.

"MARLOWE BELANGER came home to Farmington-Hills from an arts conference in Lansing recently with plans to help in the formation of three statewide art projects: a committee of business and labor and the arts; a project to tie the local community governments more firmly to the arts; and a new advocates organization for the arts. Groundwork for the project was prepared at an Advocacy for Arts conference chaired by Farmington residents IRIS SANDERSON JONES and ROLAND SHARETTE. Belanger will join a planning team to develop projects for the First Michigan Congress on the Arts, to be sponsored June 15-17 by the Michigan Council for the Arts.

"FEEL LIKE MEDITATING? The Oakland County Transcendental Meditation program will be presenting a free special introductory lecture at 7:30 p.m., March 29, at the Farmington Community Center.

"IF MICHIGAN'S spring weather isn't good enough for you, try a trip to Aruba, from April 22 to April 29, sponsored by Oakland Community College. Cost of the tour based on double occupancy, is \$409 a person and includes round-trip air transportation via World Airways from Detroit Metropolitan Airport, accommodations at the Holiday Inn and other extras. Under the supervision of CHARLES BRAUN, professor of Spanish, and JOHN DAVENPORT, chairman of humanities, the seminar is available to college students and high school seniors wishing to elect credit as well as to interested members of the community. The seminar will meet in intercultural exchange with peer groups from the University of the West Indies on April 28. For further information, call Braun at 476-9400.

"THE EASTER BUNNY has come to town. All

you kiddies, young and old, who want to tell the old rabbit what you'd like in your Easter basket can trek on over to the Northland Shopping Center through March 25. As an extra treat, none other than LITTLE BO BEEP also will be present. The Easter exhibit is located in Penney's North Court, and hours are 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

"WHATEVER HAPPENED to the class of '68? Graduates of the 1968 Southfield High School graduating class will have their 10-year reunion on May 13. For further information, write to 1968 Reunion Committee, P.O. Box 856, Southfield 48067.

"ART LOVERS will get a chance to see exhibits of American creativity as the Artlink walks in to neighboring Royal Oak. It will be located on the siding on Harrison, south of Lincoln through March 23. Visiting hours will be 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays and noon to 8 p.m. on Saturdays. To get 10 or more persons may make reservations by calling 585-5180.

"U.S. SENATOR Robert Griffin is covering all bases in his controversial re-election bid. The legislator has introduced a bill which, if passed, would ban television blackouts of sold-out professional football, basketball and hockey games. Now that's a heavy issue.

"MEANWHILE, on the state level, legislators are arguing over whether it will be illegal for 18-year-olds to drink alcoholic beverages sometime this year or next. Ironically, State Rep. WILBUR BROTHERTON (R-Farmington) commented on the situation in his "Coffee Break News."

"GARDENERS AWAKE. While you're contemplating what to plant in your garden this year, swallow a few of these facts. The world's largest tomato was grown in 1976 by CLARENCE DAILEY of Wisconsin. The catnip fodder weighed 83 pounds and eight ounces and measured eight inches across. BOB FORD of Pennsylvania did even better with his squash. From a vine yielding 1,016 pounds of fruit, he picked a 451-pound squash that grew, on the average, 7 1/2 pounds a day.

"UNHEALTHY DIET apparently is an age-old problem. Yellow coloring in the left eye of the famous painting "Mona Lisa" has led experts to suggest she may have suffered from high cholesterol.

Now don't you forget. Send your trivia and interesting facts to THE INSIDE ANGLE, P.O. BOX 89, SOUTHFIELD 48037. We're waiting to hear from you Nancy.

ALBERT NIPON

- IMAGINE A
- CHAMPAGNE
- BREAKFAST ON A
- SUN-FILLED
- VERANDA AND
- ALBERT NIPON IS
- THERE. FRESH, IN
- VIOLET-SPRINKLED
- LOUNGEWEAR.

The perfect hostess for afternoon tea and after-dinner guests, too. In a cool, creamy blend of polyester/cotton. From his collection for SWIRL, pin-tucked sundress, hovering by tinsel-thin ties, \$70. Sizes 8 to 12. In Hudson's New Reflections Intimate Apparel, at Northland, Oakland, Lakeside.

HUDSON'S

