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Task force to target future school closings

By LYNN ORR

Within four months, Farmington parents, students and teachers will know which two elementary schools will close over the next two years.

A report on future school closings is due by the first Farmington School Board meeting in January, according to Larry Freedman. Freedman heads the newly-appointed task force assigned to study school closings, boundary changes and building use in the elementary schools.

The task force expects to recommend the closing of one school next June and another elementary school in the spring of 1980. Although the timing is short, Freedman admits, the district is moving fast on the target school closings to allow as much time as possible to prepare for changes, he says.

Next week the task force will begin meeting on a weekly basis, tackling

enrollment projections in preparation for the chore ahead, Freedman says.

"When we've zeroed in on the schools we're considering, we'll hold the meetings in buildings under consideration so people in the community can have some input," he explains.

"Our intent is not to startle anyone," Freedman, assistant superintendent of elementary education for the Farmington School District, admits that growth in the north and west sections of the area eliminates several schools from closing consideration. Woodle, Forest, Kenbrook, Longacre and Gill Elementary Schools are filled to capacity, he says.

Because the district closed Fairview in the spring of 1980, the timing is short, Freedman admits, the district is moving fast on the target school closings to allow as much time as possible to prepare for changes, he says.

HOWEVER SCHOOLS in the southeast and east sections of the district,

including Larkshire, Middlebelt, Shawasse, William Grace, Beechview and Highmeadow will be considered, he says.

Although population in those areas is high, the student population is declining as the district matures, which adds up to a projected 10 per cent increase in overall enrollment over the next three years, according to Supt. Lewis Schulman.

The change to middle schools, in which ninth grade students move to high school and sixth grade students attend class with seventh and eighth grade students, also forecasts decreases at the elementary level.

Totally, Schulman anticipates losing 1,700 students at the elementary level over the next three years, which is school closings are the number one priority with the task force.

THE TASK FORCE'S second goal is

to recommend new boundaries for the middle school transition, in which feeder patterns are established for the elementary and middle schools, Freedman adds.

Balancing off enrollments to anticipate proportioned use of buildings, the task force will present that report to the Middle School Task Force by the beginning of March, he says.

Reviewing existing properties and recommending which buildings shall

be sold and retained, is the group's third goal in their year-long study.

In addition to Freedman, task force members include resident representatives Betty Nixby, former member of the middle school task force, and Jack Washburn, former member of the declining enrollment task force; Scott Bacon, administrative assistant in the business offices; Mary Jo Tingham, teacher and former member of the declining enrollment task force;

Kenbrook principal Dave Coffin; Warner Junior High principal Gil Henderson; Bob Beckman, administrative assistant at North Farmington High School; Bill Mason, administrative assistant at Power Junior High; and Clarence Shewbridge, administrative assistant at Farmington High School.

Communication with the public is an important element in the task force's deliberations, Freedman added. All meetings will be open to the public.

Laid-back holiday weekend draws summer to a close

Despite a few loud parties and a stolen auto, the end-of-the-summer Labor Day ritual came and went quietly for most Farmington area residents who stayed home for the holiday.

A lack of major fires, automobile accidents and robberies added up to a quiet three-day weekend for Farmington and Farmington Hills police officers and firefighters, according to officials.

"We had quite a few loud parties that we had to break up," says Hills Inspector Mirl Spencer of the operations bureau. But "busy work" consumed most of the weekend for Hills officers, he says.

A report of an abduction and a number of missing person reports all proved to be false alarms.

"Usually they turn out to be kids who leave home after arguments with their parents, and they're home within a few hours or the next day," Spencer explains.

Strange atmospheric conditions which hampered with television reception also may be behind a large number of open alarm runs over the weekend. Despite the sirens, the vast majority of robbers and burglars stayed out of Farmington Hills.

The exceptions were two breaking and entering, one at the Gateways Apartment complex on Twelve Mile

and another at a residence on Oak Pointe Drive. A few tonfires, complaints of loud music, and reports of mini-bike disturbances ("kids having their last fling before school starts") consumed officers' shifts, he said.

Hills police did get a chance to practice their cardio-pulmonary resuscitation techniques when a prisoner passed out in a police car in front of City Hall Friday afternoon.

The man, arrested for drunk driving, started beating his head against a commode in the holding area of the police station. Police officers decided to escort him to Pontiac, but the man passed out in the patrol car and officers couldn't get a pulse or heartbeat.

Resuscitation brought the man back after which he was transported to Botsford Hospital, according to Spencer. The man told Botsford Hospital he had hyperglycemia and reports indicated he was "all right," Spencer said.

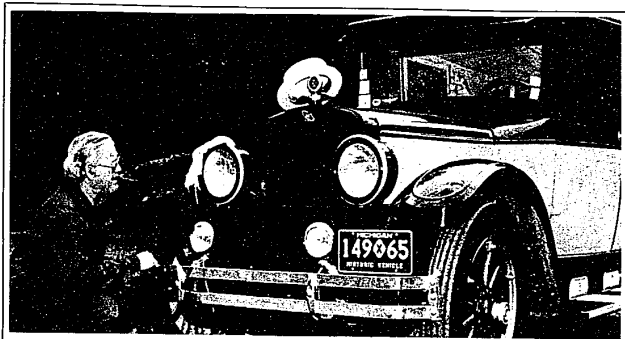
Hills firefighters enjoyed a quiet weekend as well, with the few runs tagged relegated to minor incidents, according to Hills Fire Chief John Van De Voort.

TWO STOLEN autos, one from the downtown Farmington Center, and a pellet-gun sniper relieved a monotonous weekend at the Farmington

Police station, although officers are pleased that crime seemed to take a holiday break.

City public safety officers are searching for a suspect in a series of malicious destruction of property incidents, involving a person driving in an automobile while shooting out windows with a pellet gun.

Three breaking and entering reports, two in the Old Winery building on Grand River, and a suspected arson of a car on Hawthorne rounded out activity in the city, according to Lt. John Santamarra.



Auto aficionado

There will be hundreds of car buffs and collectors at Greenfield Village's Old Car Festival this weekend, but only Chondos Bailey of Farmington Hills and a few others will literally toss their hats into the ring during the two days of antique car judging, parades and contests. His 1925 Rickenbacker bears the com-

pany insignia of a top hat inside a ring, which was the squadron insignia of Eddie Rickenbacker, the World War I ace and a founder of the Rickenbacker auto. The cars were built between 1922 and 1927 in a Detroit factory.

Honor thy grandparents

Ancestral celebration nears

By LYNN ORR

Get set to honor your roots this Sunday. No, it's not Arbor Day, but with a special day set aside to honor trees, is it any wonder that observance of grandparenting wouldn't be far behind?

This Sunday marks the first national observance of "Grandparents Day," as stipulated by Congress and much to the surprise of many Farmington area residents questioned about the new recognition of grandparenting.

But despite the lack of publicity, "Grandparents Day" is a good idea, they concur.

"I like being a grandparent," says Wylie Pruner, a Farmington resident for 21 years who recently attended the wedding of one of his four grandchildren. Great-grandmother Ellen Chalmers of Novi likes the idea also.

Although she says she crochets while "the young folks have their fun," she'd like to accompany some of her four grandchildren or three granddaughters to the circus, as a special day.

Still time to register for fall at SC

There still is time to register for the fall semester at Schoolcraft College. Late registration will be held from 8:30-11 a.m., 1:30-3 p.m. through Sept. 12 in the Waterman Campus Center. There are no evening hours on Friday.

A \$2.50 late fee per class is required to a maximum \$10 charge for students taking 12 or more credit hours.

Walk-in registration for continuing education and community services will be held Thursday, the same hours as late registration.

A one-day late registration and course adjustment day for CE-CS will be from 2:30-7:30 p.m., Sept. 12. A \$1 late fee is required of new registrants. There is no charge for adjustments.

For information about traditional classes, call the college at 591-6400, ext.340. For CE-CS, call ext. 404.

"I've enjoyed that, and I think they would too," she says.

GRANDPARENTS take pride in their roles, says Gordon Moore of Farmington. Moore was informed last week that he'd be a grandparent soon, thanks to his eldest son, a 194 graduate of Farmington High.

Moore likes the idea of some recognition for grandparents, but he hopes "it doesn't become as commercial as Mothers' Day or Sweetest Day."

Farmington resident Jeanette Learned also hopes hype doesn't overwhelm the idea of honoring grandparents.

"Just being remembered in a nice way and not lavishly," is how Mrs. Learned views the observance, although she doesn't qualify for grandparent status.

Bennie and Minnie Gabard of Livonia recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Gathering their extensive clan together for a reunion is how Bennie and Minnie Gabard of Livonia would celebrate Sunday. But their 18 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren are scattered across the country, which makes that difficult.

"I would like for them all to love me, which they do," is an alternative for Mrs. Gabard, who celebrated her 50th wedding anniversary last March.

Honoring grandparents long-distance can be difficult, however, as Rick Freund would agree. The 12-year-old Farmington Hills resident recently visited with his grandmother who left Germany for a vacation in the States this summer.

But distance isn't the only barrier in the relationship.

"She speaks German, and I only understand it a little," Rick says. His mother translates, and "body language" does the rest, he explains.

He'll write a letter to his grandparents in Oklahoma a letter in honor of their special day, he says. Janet McKinnon, 14, of Farmington, probably won't get a chance to be with her grandparents on Sunday either. They live in Canada, and Janet doesn't know whether Canadians will be celebrating.

Whether it's reliving your own children through your grandchildren or the stirring of memories, grandparenting can be a special treat.

And it has one distinct advantage over parenting—"You can love them and when you're tired of it, you can say good bye," says one grandmother of three.



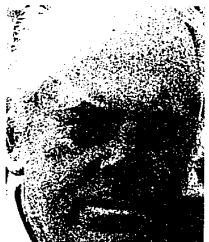
ELLEN CHALMERS



RICK FREUND



JEANETTE LEARNED



GORDON MOORE



WYLIE PRUNER



JANET McKINNON

School district saves \$400,000

Thanks to a little extra money from Lansing and spending cutbacks in the district last spring, Farmington schools managed to save about \$400,000 from the 1977-78 budget, board members learned this week.

Reimbursements from the state for special education and transportation added an extra \$250,000 to district coffers, while the district's thrift meas-

ures chalked up about \$150,000 in savings.

The money will be allocated to this year's budget, although school officials will wait for the fourth Friday enrollment count before earmarking the dollars to specific funds, according to William Frisk, assistant superintendent of finance. The fourth Friday count measures the official enrollment in the district, upon which state aid is calculated.

"We're pleased we weren't put into a hole," says Frisk, who warned the district that spending would have to be curtailed last spring. Turning off lights, a moratorium on secretarial substitutes, a hold on capital expenses and other economic measures were enforced to hold down expenses.

"It will help makes things a little better this year," Frisk explains. When the final figures are in, officials will allocate the funds, although Supt. Lewis Schulman hopes to hold some of the money aside for emergencies.

THE DISTRICT cut about \$500,000 from the new 1978-79 budget last spring, including staff reductions, overtime for community activities, supplies and replacement vehicles. Most staff positions have been restored this year, including three high school secretaries, custodial workers and teaching staff members. Projecting expenses for \$28 million budget is a tight operation, Frisk says. He's proud that expenses totaled within .7 per cent of projections last year. With that kind of record and a small, but important, fund equity, the district should see itself in a better position this year, he hopes.

That depends on the fourth Friday enrollment count.

(Continued on page 6A)

Inside

- Amusements.....8-12B
- At Your Leisure.....14A
- Business.....3C
- Classifieds.....7-20C
- Club Circuit.....2B
- Community Calendar.....3B
- Editorials.....18A
- Feature Angles.....3A
- Library Line.....7A
- Obituaries.....6A
- Sports.....14C
- Suburban Life.....Section B

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