



# Farmington Observer

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## Auditors smile on district

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

Financial audits have driven worried businessmen to the bottle in despair.

But Farmington School Board members were so pleased with the results of the district's recent audit that they headed for the Elias Big Boy restaurant on Orchard Lake Road for ice cream sundaes.

"It's really hard to say anything about an audit, except that they didn't find anything wrong with the financial information," said board trustee Jim McGlinchey, while he waited for his hot fudge with whipped cream and cherry.

The board heard the results of the state-mandated yearly audit at its regular meeting Tuesday evening. Plante & Moran, a Southfield auditing firm, gave a 35-minute presentation on the district's finances for the year which ended June 30.

"The audit shows us that our budgeting process is very accurate," said Farmington superintendent Lew Schulman after the meeting. "We've been right on target."

"It speaks well for the management of our district," said McGlinchey. "We have been as big as the state, it's a picture of our district."

The "picture" showed, for one thing, that the district's general fund revenues amounted to more than \$40 million. Of that total, \$36.2 million came from local property taxes.

THE AUDIT also showed that the state's contribution to the school system continues to shrink — \$170 per pupil in 1983 compared to \$359 in 1978.

"The proportion of our budget depending on local revenues has increased over the years," Schulman said.

"That means that education as a state-wide priority has decreased."

"That's good and bad. It's good that the people are willing to take on the responsibility of supporting the school system."

The audit's per-pupil analysis of general fund revenues and expenditures showed that the district spent \$3,569 on each student last year, up from \$1,926 in 1978. The amount of money behind each student has nearly doubled since 1978.

The majority of the district's \$44.3 budget is spent on instruction (\$23.3 million) and support services (\$17.7 million). The district has about 10,500 students.



The Rev. Seamus Ryan bestows a blessing on Whiskers, a cat being held by 6-year-old Drew Lund and his mother, Barbara, during Tuesday's celebration of St. Francis Day at St. Fabian's Church.

## St. Francis tradition continues

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

"Bless the Beasts and the Children" was the title of a popular song of a few years ago.

The Rev. Seamus Ryan of St. Fabian's Roman Catholic Church in Farmington Hills accomplished the first half of the command Tuesday afternoon in the church parking lot.

Dressed in his priestly garb, Ryan traversed the asphalt sprinkling holy water on an assortment of dogs, cats, rabbits, mice, gerbils and fish — all pets of St. Fabian's Elementary School children.

With the Blessing of the pets, the first ever at St. Fabian's, the priest was helping celebrate the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the Catholic saint of animals.

Appropriately enough, the celebration took place on Oct. 4 — St. Francis Day to Catholics.

Some 320 youngsters in grades one through six and an unknown number of animals were on hand for the event, according to St. Fabian's principal, Sister Lorette.

"This service provides an opportunity to praise and thank God for the gift of animals and all creation," she

said in a letter sent to the parents of the children.

"Therefore, all the students will participate in the Blessing of Pets whether they have pets or not."

TUESDAY, Sister Lorette stood behind a cart on which rested a bullhorn, a receptacle of holy water and a poodle named Princess, the Sister's pet.

"It'll probably be a yearly event," she said. "The children seem so excited about it. One wanted to bring a horse. We discouraged him."

Before the blessing, the youngsters gathered in the parking lot with their pets to sing songs celebrating ani-

mals. There were plenty of older folks around, too, since every child's pet had to be accompanied by an adult.

Bobbie Kramer, a Farmington Hills mother, was there with her son Kevin, 8, and their cat Moses.

"I think it's a lovely idea," she said, keeping a close eye on Kevin to see that he kept a firm hold on Moses. "I think it's important for kids to realize that pets are special and to have the blessing of the animals."

St. Fabian's, on 12 Mile between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads, recently dedicated a \$1.25 million renovation of its building.

## Adamany boosts colleges

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

David Adamany, Wayne State University's well-schooled president, delivered the news — both good and bad — last Monday concerning higher education in Michigan.

Speaking before a crowd of about 100 persons at the Birmingham Temple, Adamany kicked off the Monday Forum series of four speakers sponsored by the Farmington Hills synagogue.

The 47-year-old educator, who holds a law degree from Harvard and a doctorate in political science from the University of Wisconsin, spoke on "The Quality, Direction, Problems and Responsibility of Education in America."

Adamany's talk came, appropriately enough, on the eve of national Higher Education Week.

First his good news about higher education in Michigan.

"With Higher Education Week coming up, I think it's fair to say that Michigan has an excellent system of higher education," Adamany said near the end of his 45-minute talk.

But all is not sweetness and light in the land of those institutions of higher learning, he said. Lack of funds beleaguers the schools.

"Unfortunately, it's also necessary to say," Adamany continued, "that the state's adult citizens have chosen to do less for higher education than it has done for them."

ASKED TO expand on that thought after the talk, Adamany said, "What we want to say is that we were seventh in the United States in (financial) support per student 15 years ago.

"We're now 41st in the country. And we're 50th in the nation in terms of new appropriations for higher education. That's disgraceful."

Adamany, WSU's president since 1982, quickly was asked to supply the answers to the financial problems plaguing Michigan's colleges.

"You have to say to the public officials (in the state legislature, which supplies much of the school's funding) that you appreciate their support of higher education," he said.

"Whatever the answer is — as arrived at by the legislature — I'm willing to support it."

The answer, Adamany said, certainly does not lie in the efforts of large numbers of state residents to recall Gov. James J. Blanchard because he imposed a 38 percent tax increase last spring.

"Without that tax increase," Adamany said, "the university I work for would be closed up tight for six months of the year."

Adamany, whose books, articles and essays have influenced educational reform nationally, had a warning for those who would "dismantle" the state's system of higher education in the face of steadily declining enrollment.

Noting out that in 1994 those institutions are expected to serve about 158,000 students — about the same number they served in 1972 — the WSU president said, "One would be very misguided to dismantle an educational system so painstakingly built."

ASKED by an audience member to speak on remediation — that is, a university's efforts to help certain minority or ethnic students overcome learning disabilities or problems so that they can do college-level work — Adamany said he favored the concept.

"We need to do it out of obligation," he said. "You've got to take society as you find it."

He added, "We need to put the heat on the high schools and on the community colleges to see that these students are better prepared."

The Birmingham Temple's Monday Forum series continues Oct. 10 when Bishop Gumbleton, an outspoken foe of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, speaks on "The Will to Make Peace, Not Preparation For War." The talk begins at 8:30 p.m.

## Community Center seeks resident support

The Farmington Community Center, with two weeks left in its fundraising campaign, is hopeful that it will meet its goal of \$30,000.

The annual campaign was kicked off two weeks ago with supporters gathering at the Solaford Inn to outline their strategy. Letters seeking support were

sent out to a cross section of the community.

Persons interested in contributing to the effort can call executive director Betty Paine at 477-8404. Contributions also can be mailed by sending them to the Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills 48018.

"The Farmington Community Center is a unique and significant asset to our community," said Conroy in his letter. "We hope you find it in your heart to help us provide — this asset."

The Community Center has served as a meeting place and learning center since 1969. Located on Farmington Road, just north of Ten Mile, it is a private non-profit corporation.

Up until last year the Center had been plagued by red ink in its ledger due to increased costs and maintenance problems. But in the past two years the Center has raised \$10,000 and \$14,000.

"The success of these campaigns has made it possible for the Center to operate in the black and grow in the service provided," said Conroy.

In 1982-83 more than 500 classes were offered at the Center. Private parties hosted nearly 6,000 guests, said Conroy.

Although pleased with recent years' contributions, Conroy warned that increased contributions are needed to keep the Center solvent.

## oral quarrei

## Guns in the home: What's your view?

The United States Supreme Court has spoken: It will not prevent attempts by local communities to ban handguns in residents' homes. In Morton Grove, Ill., a Chicago suburb, an ordinance outlawing the possession of handguns. And now the high court has cleared the way for more local gun laws.

Would you support an ordinance banning handguns in Farmington and Farmington Hills?

Call 477-5498 to answer this question. You have until 1 p.m. Friday to respond. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please see Monday's Farmington Observer.

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## Football fans to know score

It'll be a lot easier for football fans to know the score — as well as the down, quarter and time left to play — when they attend games at Farmington High School these coming Saturday afternoons.

Farmington's Board of Education voted unanimously last Tuesday to pay \$4,847 to a Farmington Hills firm to provide a new Neveo scoreboard for the school on Shawansee Road.

Michigan Sports Associates, 35237 Caryn Drive, submitted the lowest of three bids received by the board. The new board, which replaces a constantly malfunctioning one, is green and measures 18 by 8 feet. It includes a horn.

The funds came from the district's capital needs account.