



Michelle Davis got to wear a Harbor Seal costume. The purpose of the masquerade was to show how animals adapt to their environment.



Emmy Strong (standing) taught the children about different kinds of whales and used inflatable replicas of the mammals to illustrate her talk.

Kids learn some big tales about mighty big whales

We're swimming up the coast
Can't fly up the coast
How come? 'Cause we're whales!
So, we're swimming up the coast

By Tom Baor
staff writer

Slapping thighs to keep time with the above ditty, more than 300 youngsters at Beechview Elementary School in landlocked Farmington Hills last week learned why

whales and other marine mammals do what they do in the waters off the west coast of North America.

The experience has been or soon will be shared by just about every child in every elementary in the Farmington district.

Put on by Sea World — the Aurora, Ohio, marine-life park which is home of the famous Shamu the Killer Whale — the hourlong educational program "promotes awareness of the ocean and the environment to the children and gives them a better idea of what sea life

is all about," according to Ray Patacca, Sea World's educational specialist.

PATACCA, WHO has degrees in biology and education, and Sea World teammate Emmy Strong are telling marine mammals stories to packed gymnasiums in schools in Ohio, Michigan and West Virginia.

"We'll probably see 30,000 students in 60 buildings this year," said Patacca while setting up his displays at Beechview.

"I think they (the students)

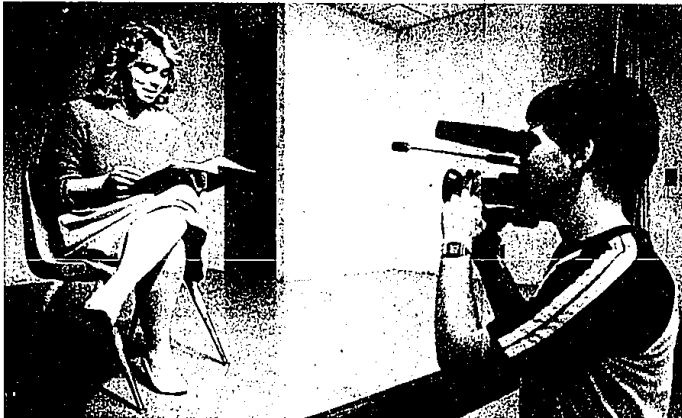
should have an awareness of these animals and the roles they play," he added. "Everything has a special purpose. Every animal has a job."

Patacca and Strong use a slide show, "role-playing activities" where students dress in animal costumes and a puppet show to get their lessons across.

Youngsters oooohed and aaaaahed as various facts were presented ("If you were to eat as

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Students get firsthand look at television world



By Tom Baor
staff writer

Teacher Dean Cobb stands with one foot up on a student desk and surveys Room E8 of North Farmington High School. Cobb has big plans for that 638 square feet.

Presently unused, the room is scheduled to be transformed into the new telecommunications center for the Farmington School District. Cobb will coordinate the program.

Soon the room will house some \$20,000 worth of audio and visual equipment and lots of eager students as the Farmington Public Schools enters cable TV with a special education channel.

The school television station will be channel 10 on the MetroVision cable system, which is available for a fee to Farmington-area viewers.

"Everyone's been so cooperative and enthusiastic about it," said Cobb, an English, speech and drama teacher with an extensive broadcasting background.

Cable TV could be used for activities as diverse as televising live sports and drama and providing security alarms in buildings, school officials have said.

Cobb, 37, said he hopes to have a "full-service" studio, which can be used as a training center for would-be "telecommunicators."

"It's a tremendous training ground for the kids," said Cobb. "When they're through with whatever program we have set up, they should be able to go out and get at least an entry-level position."

"We're in a technological age and television has become rather important both as an information and an entertainment medium. So a program like this is important."

"We can keep up with technology and the tremendous wealth of information that goes back and forth."

CLASSES SHOULD start by next semester and "we should be doing some broadcasting by January or February," Cobb said.

Cobb's undergraduate degree ("It was in speech, but with an emphasis in broadcasting") came from Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant. He gathered some on-air experience at several outstate radio and television stations.

He also has a master's degree in broadcast management from Wayne State University and experience in making educational and documentary films. He's been a broadcast consultant and a voice and writing coach.

"He's quite knowledgeable about the technical aspects of television, plus the directing and coaching . . . this sort of thing," said Lawrence G. Freedman, a Farmington assistant superintendent and the head of the telecommunications program.

"It's a teaching program," Freedman added. "So his salary will remain the same. He'll continue to teach two morning speech classes. The balance of the day will be devoted to telecommunications."

MetroVision will be donating a "complete complement" of equipment, including cameras, lights and editing

gear, according to Freedman.


THE FARMINGTON District is linked with the Novi School District, Oakland Community College, about 20 private schools and the city governments of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi in a franchise area served by MetroVision.

MetroVision is the cable company which provides programming for the area under contract with the Southwest Oakland Cable Commission, a decision-making body which is made up of the

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Checking plans for the new video production studio are (right) Dawn Holland and Bob Ferrer. Lisa Mycek and Mike Stone (above) try out a portable camera on the stage that will be turned into a director's booth when the facility is completed. News shows will be featured as production begins.





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