

Farmington Observer

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Twenty-five cents

Angry mothers protest teacher who transfers

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Some of the 12 angry mothers who dominated Tuesday's meeting of the Farmington Board of Education may want to adopt that old "rather fight than switch" cigarette commercial as their rallying cry.

A fifth-grade teacher switched schools in the middle of the year, and the parents of her former students seemed ready to fight about it.

"We're upset," said Chickie Fayne, one of the mothers. "We feel that these children have gotten the shaft."

Her comment was typical of several heard by the board of education during a stormy "public inquiries and comments" segment of the meeting.

The problem stems from teacher Audrey Bowditch's decision to leave Forrest Elementary for Gill last month, a move allowed by the teachers' contract with the board. Bowditch was replaced at Forrest by Evelyn Kaplan.

"Normally we don't like transfers, but they have a right to do it according to the contract," said Lewis Schulman, superintendent of the Farmington Schools. "We really don't have that many."

Bowditch's self-transfer may have been legal, but it left the Forrest parents feeling that their children were the losers. The youngsters would have trouble adjusting to a new teacher in the middle of the school year, the parents told the board.

The same thing — a teacher transfer in mid-year — happened last year with many of the same Forrest students, then fourth-graders, a parent complained.

SCHULMAN, SPEAKING of "obligations to our employees and obligations to our students," agreed with most of the parents' sentiments on the transfers.

"We agree with you 1,000 percent that a change during the year does not benefit the children or the school," Schulman said. "We're not the least bit happy about this change, not the least bit."

"But we'll do everything in our power to make the remainder of the school year a good one for your youngsters."

Some parents suggested that mid-year teacher transfers be outlawed in the next contract the board signs with the Farmington Education Association (FEA), the Farmington teachers' union.

"We'll try to make every effort, when negotiations come up again, to correct the situation," said Schulman, noting that the FEA's two-year contract runs out in August.

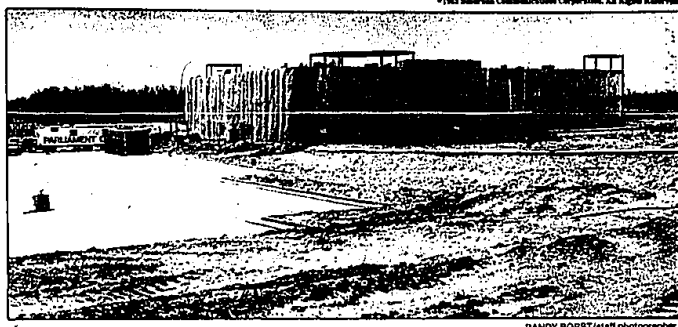
"There is a list with many items . . . we assured this will be one of them." Meanwhile, Trustee Janice Roisick urged the disgruntled parents "to make it a point to see the proper administrators" about the problem. Added President Jack Inch. "If the administrators don't respond, I expect to see you back here in two weeks or four weeks."

SOME PARENTS indicated that the size of this year's Forrest fifth grade — 31 students — and last year's fourth grade has contributed to the teacher turnover.

Lawrence Freedman, the district's assistant superintendent for instruction, said that the student-teacher ratio in that class was "hitting the cap" of 30 imposed by the contract. Districtwide, the student-teacher ratio is 25 to 1, he said.

After the meeting, Freedman said that a teacher's aid would be hired to

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A 21-year-old worker fell to his death while working on this three-story building — the first phase of the Arboretum Office Park on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Worker dies from fall

A 21-year-old construction worker was killed Saturday when he fell through the roof of a three-story building under construction on 12 Mile Road in Farmington Hills.

Patrick Outwater of Pinckney died of multiple injuries at Botsford General Hospital approximately two hours after his fall, according to officials in the Oakland County Medical Examiner's office.

Outwater was found at about 8:20

p.m. laying on his back in the interior of partially constructed building, the first phase of the Arboretum Office Park, according to Farmington Hills Officer John Markey.

POLICE LISTED the incident as an industrial accident.

Markey indicated in his report that he observed a large hole in some black plastic that covered the roof approximately three stories up from, where

Outwater was found.

Outwater's co-workers, James Granate, a foreman, and Robert Meli, told police they had been on the roof of the building picking up garbage. When the crew later met in the parking lot, Granate and Meli noticed Outwater was missing.

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Trustee expands duties by joining county group

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Helen D. Prutow, a trustee on the Farmington Board of Education, will serve as an additional educational institution — the Oakland County Intermediate School District (ISD).

Prutow was picked from a field of 27 candidates to fill the unexpired term of Dorothy Beardmore, a Rochester Hills resident who won a seat on the state Board of Education, on the five-member Intermediate School Board.

Beardmore's ISD term expires in June 1986. Prutow, who was chosen by the county board members, may run for a six-year term of her own after that.

"I've considered it [joining for the Intermediate School Board] long and hard for quite a while," said Prutow, a Farmington Hills housewife who will continue to serve on the Farmington Board.

"I have the time. I've made up my mind that this is the area on which I want to concentrate my time."

Prutow, who won a third term on the Farmington Board last June, said she was especially interested in special and vocational education — both controlled to a large extent by the ISD.

"There are some interesting things happening with special and voc ed, also," she said. "With the federal government cutting back so much, I'm concerned about where the funds for these things will come from and what the ISD gets used for the right things."

THE ISD, WITH its \$31-million budget, was described as "a service agency

for the 28 school districts in Oakland County" by William Keane, its superintendent.

"The county," as it's known among Oakland school officials, is responsible for "center" special education programs for handicapped students.

"Where there might not be enough [handicapped] youngsters in one district to run a program, we aggregate them and one district will run a program on behalf of a number of districts," Keane said.

The ISD also operates four vocational centers and provides more than

7,000 educational films for use in county schools. Using its data processing service, the ISD will, for a charge, put out a district's report cards.

"We charge them what it costs," Keane said. "Hopefully, we keep it in the black."

Explaining how Prutow was picked, Keane said, "the board decided on a process whereby each board member would study the 27 candidates and rank them. Each then would call the board

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Cop-shop plan saved

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

With a potential construction boom ahead in Michigan, the sooner a new police building is built in Farmington Hills, the more economically it can be done.

That's the opinion given to the city council from a group of architects, developers and engineers who in the past few months have been reviewing existing design plans for a proposed 35,000 square foot police facility.

"We are concerned that to delay further will just result in increased costs due to what we all feel will occur to the building industry in the spring of 1985 with the expected rise in construction activity," said Leon Koble, chairman of the ad hoc police building architectural review committee.

The committee of local professionals was formed last spring to play devil's advocate with design plans developed by architects Luckebach & Ziegelman of Birmingham.

"On the whole the overall goals were

to achieve a design and building that was functional, efficient, and as cost-effective as possible," according to the minutes of the committee's last meeting in December.

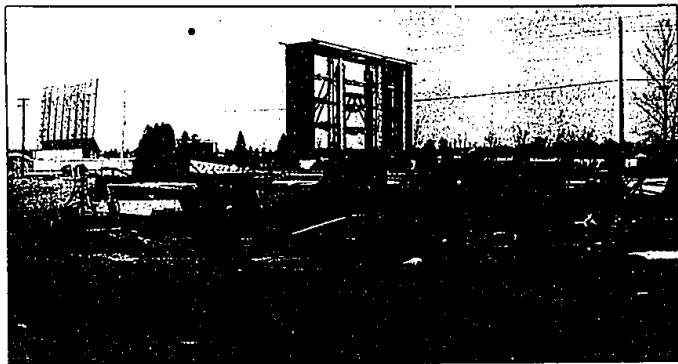
In reviewing plans for the proposed facility, committee members indicated that "timing of construction bids would have a dramatic effect on cost estimates for the project."

... It is forecast in the construction industry that in the spring of 1985, especially in Michigan, that construction may explode and the longer the community waits for building a structure like a new police building, the more serious the problem of bidding within a given budget may become," according to the committee.

Council last year indicated they preferred to stay under \$2.5 million for the proposed police facility.

But City Manager William Costick, a committee member, last week indicated that according to "revised and updated cost estimates," the whole

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A new sign, shown under construction above, is one of many improvements being made to the Grand River Drive-In in Farmington Hills.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Drive-in gets facelift

By Tom Baer
staff writer

PEOPLE SCRATCH their heads and squint when asked how long the Grand River Drive-In has been doing business in Farmington Hills.

"It's been around since before most the homes out here come up," said Balis Blaskenits, who manages the outdoor movie theater on Grand River Avenue.

Whatever its age, the Grand River's owners hope it'll be doing three times the business next spring after two additional screens have been installed on

the lot, making it a three-movie theater.

Fred Pellerito, general manager of Community Theaters which owns the Grand River and several other Detroit-area theaters, was reluctant to discuss the expansion, which got under way recently.

"Our policy is that we generally don't talk to newspapers," said Pellerito from Community Theaters' Southfield office. "It's been a longstanding policy ever since the days of daylight savings time."

He did confirm, however, that the theater would have two new screens when it opened for business in the spring.

Other improvements include a "refurbished" marquee sign in front of the drive-in (the remains of the old sign is rubble on the lawn), expanded projection and concessions facilities inside, new fencing around the property and drainage and landscaping changes "for our neighbors," Pellerito said.

"We hope to be playing first-run products (movies)," he added.

THE DRIVE-IN'S capacity, about 1,000 cars, won't be affected by the renovation, said Pellerito, who wouldn't reveal how much money was being spent on the project.

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oral quarrel

How about teacher transfer regulation?

For the second time in as many years, a teacher at Forrest Elementary School in Farmington Hills has switched to another school in the middle of the term. Such transfers are allowed under the terms of the teacher's contract with the Farmington Board of Education.

Last Tuesday, a group of angry parents of Forrest students showed up at the board meeting to ask that the mid-year transfer privilege be

disallowed in future contracts.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is: How do you feel about Farmington teachers being allowed to transfer to another school in the middle of a school year? Explain your answer.

To answer this question, call 477-5450 anytime before 1 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 11. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please look in Monday's Farmington Observer.

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NEWSLINE . . . 477-5450
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Big family homes, beginning homes, retirement homes, country homes, city homes, townhouses, apartment homes, condominiums...there's a place that was designed and built just for you.

CREATIVE LIVING REAL ESTATE SECTION

And we have it. Every Thursday in our Creative Living Real Estate Section. You're sure to find what you're looking for advertised by qualified Realtors.

Cairns is honored at Botsford dinner

Retired Farmington Hills city clerk Floyd Cairns retirement dinner will be Tuesday in the Botsford Inn, 28000 Grand River, Farmington Hills. Cocktails will be at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.

Tickets, at \$20 per person, may be purchased at the Department of Special Services at the Farmington Hills City Hall no later than 4 p.m. Friday. If you are unable to attend the retire-

ment dinner and wish to contribute toward Cairns' gift, you may send a check to the City of Farmington Hills, 5155 11 Mile, Farmington Hills 48011, made out to the Department of Special Services.

In addition, messages from well-wishers will be included in the evening's program. Send your message to the Department of Special Services. Attention: D. Gaynor.