

Westbrook school to be renovated for apartments

By Susan Buck
staff writer

A reformed Farmington Hills manufacturer representative and building renovator has bought Clarenceville School District's closed Westbrook Elementary for \$47,555.

John White, 54, owner of Farmington Distribution Center, on Grand River Ave., plans to convert the school into an apartment building and call it Westbrook Place. The cash sale will be

finalized the middle of this month. District Superintendent Michael Shiller said that White's offer was accepted over a \$57,000 bid made by a small group of American Moslems of Indian and Pakistani descent who planned to renovate the building for use as a nursery school and cultural school there.

Shiller said the school board decided to pick White's offer because his plans for an apartment building would gen-

erate additional tax dollars for the school district while a private-school use would be tax-exempt. In addition, the apartment building will rent to families with children and thus will provide added students for the tiny school district.

THE SCHOOL, closed 10 years ago, was used by community groups for the first five years after the school's closing but has been boarded up and vacant for the last five years. It has been used as a storage site by the district since it

was closed due to declining enrollment. Shiller said that the school district lost 350 students in the last five years. About 2,100 K-12 students attend Clarenceville schools, down from 3,500 in the late 1960s.

White has renovated buildings in Farmington Hills and Hartland. He is renovating the Farmington Distribution Center, formerly known as the Winery.

White said that the 33-year-old school building on Osmus Street in

Farmington Hills will be called Westbrook Place, thus preserving a bit of the school's history in its name. He estimates that \$200,000 will be needed for renovation.

Rezoning of the property, which has not yet occurred, will determine how many apartments will be built, and whether additional apartment buildings can be constructed on the five-acre parcel.

"Our plans are just to renovate the school," White said. "We don't want to

saturate the land with buildings."

He said he wanted to preserve the property's country setting.

White speculates that 25-35 one- and two-bedroom apartments will be built initially. White's five sons will help in the renovation.

Former Westbrook student James Bedson, who is a friend of White's son, Jeff, will help with the electrical work.

The Clarenceville School District includes parts of Livonia, Farmington Hills and Redford Township.

Computer classes set for educators

Tomorrow's elementary and secondary teachers studying at Madonna College, Livonia, will be "computer-wise" thanks to the computer education component of Madonna's Teacher Education Program.

In 10 professional preparation courses of Madonna's Teacher Education Program, ranging from sophomore to senior level, a computer component is

included which utilizes the information gained from the particular course. The prospective teacher uses the computer to successfully apply what he/she has learned to achieve maximum efficiency, whether it be in the form of research, classroom management or student instruction.

Registration for the fall term is being held through Aug. 15. In addition,

workshops for teachers seeking continuing certification are scheduled through June and July. For information or registration, call 591-5552.

"The computer is as important to teaching as the textbook," according to Donna Wissbrun, assistant professor and coordinator of student teaching.

"While not every teacher can be expected to design computer programs, each teacher should understand the concepts and applications of computer technology in the classroom and the strategies for appropriately integrating those concepts into lessons," she said.

The computer component is divided into several skill development seg-

ments; one is computer-assisted instruction. This segment focuses on using the computer to aid the students in mastering specific skills. Children in the classroom would use computer programs to practice what the teacher has taught and to reinforce basic skills.

The teacher assistance segment identifies ways the computer can be used as a management assistant for classroom teachers.

"Teachers will be able to record student's grades, as well as what assignments have been completed, so that they will be able to track each student in terms of skill development," Wissbrun said.

Carlson receives engineering award

A Farmington Hills engineer has received the 1985 Engineering Achievement Award from GMI Engineering and Management Institute. Dwight W. Carlson, president of Perceptron, a machine vision company in Farmington Hills, was honored at GMI's Alumni Day May 18.

The Engineering Achievement Award recognizes significant and lasting contributions to the field of engineering.

A 1967 graduate of GMI, Carlson is a well-known entrepreneur in Michigan. Shortly after graduating from GMI, he started his first company, Process Computer Systems, which made vehicle emissions testing systems.

He then founded and was president of XYCOM Inc., a supplier of industrial microcomputers for use in harsh environments and industrial controls for a variety of source data operations. Carlson has been instrumental in the push toward the automated factory and the growth of new business in Michigan.

In January 1982, he was appointed by Gov. Blanchard to Michigan's Small

Business Advocacy Council.

In April 1984, he was selected to serve on the Governor's Entrepreneurial and Small Business Commission and to chair the Research and Technology Task Group.

The goal of the commission is to position Michigan as the "source" of emerging industrial technology. In addition, Carlson serves on numerous other boards and committees that relate to advancing technology within Michigan.

The college offers bachelor's degrees in mechanical, industrial and electrical engineering, and industrial administration. Students alternate 12-week periods of classroom and laboratory academic studies with work experience at more than 150 businesses and organizations across the United States and Canada.

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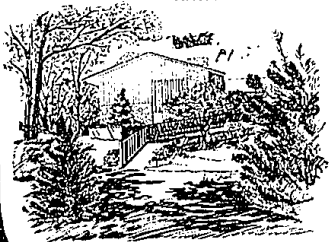
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