

Elementary students develop nose for news

By Casey Hans
staff writer

TODAY'S YOUNGER students are getting the scoop.

Enrichment classes in newspapering are becoming more popular in Farmington elementary schools, where students get lessons in writing, technology and communicating with others.

"We've always wanted to do something with newspapers and having the computers there, it worked out nicely," said fourth grade teacher Cathy Smith, who team-taught a newspaper enrichment class for Forest Elementary third graders with another fourth grade teacher, Julie Hines.

Students at the Farmington Hills school published The Elementary Express, which offered news, sports, features on the school's principal and staff, an interview with a local meteorologist, movie critiques, student reaction to the Persian Gulf War and other student-generated material.

"We tried to teach every aspect," she added. "They all came up with their own headlines. They did all their own work."

A bank of computers was obtained by the school through a grant last year, and they were used for writing,



The editing process for the Forest Elementary newspaper is done on computer and by hand. Here, students write and edit.

ACROSS TOWN at Eagle Elementary in West Bloomfield, third graders in Helene Blackman's class took their newspapering craft one step further by participating in a program called Computer Chronicles, a 15-week session in which nine schools from across the country and world gather news and share it in putting together a newspaper.

Students at Eagle chose to handle

sports and fashion as their area of interest.

"They've yet to name their product each participating school will vote on a name. 'We're going to spend the next month gathering information and then we'll put it all together,'" Blackman explained.

Eagle students are working with classes from across the U.S. and Quebec, the International School of Paris and British Columbia. Blackman said the project has piqued student interest. "I would say there are a couple," she said. "Enough so I would say this did spark their interest. Just to have a couple (of students interested) is pretty good."

Smith said the project helped the 30 third graders who chose the eight-week enrichment class at Forest to develop, and she hopes to continue the project or have something similar in the future.

"I wasn't sure how much they would get out of it," she said. "They really went gung-ho into this. They had notepads, interviewed teachers, office staff and students. They were proud."

And at Eagle, Blackman said she would like to expand the class into a regular school newspaper. "We've talked about that maybe for next year," she said. "I'm hoping to expand and do it with more grades and more students."



Forest student Alex Robins looks over classmate Eddie Hillery's shoulder as Eddie edits copy for the enrichment newspaper project.



A news editing team follows instruction from teacher Cathy Smith. Pictured are (from left) Brad Scheinker, Steve Colquitt, Smith and Jeremy Brown. Smith teaches the enrichment newspaper unit with Julie Hines. Both are fourth grade teachers.

Officials hope to harvest ballfields from ex-farm

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills officials are asking for state money to help buy a former sod farm of more than 90 acres on Eight Mile, between Halsted and Gill roads, for ballfields and soccer fields.

City Manager William Costick will apply to the state Department of Natural Resources for a matching grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to buy the approximately 93.80 acres for \$12 million. If approved, the grant would pay 75 percent of the price and the city would pay the remaining 25 percent. The land is owned by Glen Eden Church.

The assessed value of the flat land is \$889,580, which is supposed to be 50 percent of market value. The asking price is more than double that. "We hoped we could acquire it for less, but we can't," Costick said Monday night.

City officials are applying for the grant before voters go to the polls May 7 to vote on a half mill levy for eight years for parks and recreation.

The grant would pay 75 percent of the price and the city would pay the remaining 25 percent.

Such applications are accepted only once a year and are due by April 1.

IF THE CITY receives the grant officials won't be notified until next year — the city's share would be paid with millage money, if voters approve the levy.

City council members asked that the land be specifically designated for ballfield and soccer field development on the city's south end, across from Glen Eden Cemetery in Lawson's. Councilman Terry Sever also recommended to adopt a resolution regarding sports field development, but councilman Larry Lichtman said the grant application refers to the need for sports fields on that site.

The motion passed authorizing

Costick to apply for the grant says the land will be for soccer, baseball and "other related activities for active recreation."

Though no plans have yet been drafted for development of the land, an average of three acres are needed for each baseball field or soccer field. That does not include parking and picnic areas. The acquisition grant would not help develop the land for recreation.

In the grant application city officials have noted that purchase of the land would expand city-owned parkland in the southern end of the city, where there are only five acres of parkland now.

City officials also show on the application that the city falls short of the DNR's guidelines for the acreage a community should have for parks. According to the DNR the city should have 20 acres per 1,000 residents or 741 acres. The city is currently 427.5 acres short.

Land acquisition — particularly for sports fields — has been given top billing and priority in the city's parks and recreation action plan for the half mill levy that will go before voters May 7.

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Farmington school district schedules budget hearings

The Farmington school district has scheduled school board meetings and public hearings where 1991-92 budget issues will be discussed.

Officials encourage residents interested in the district's finances to attend, especially in light of the February millage defeat and ongoing school financing problems at the state level.

The first two meetings will be study session formats where the meat of the budget will be proposed and discussed.

All meetings will all be held at the Farmington High School auditorium, 32000 Shiloh, except the last which will be at the Lewis S. Subliman Administrative Center, 32500 Shiloh.

THE SCHEDULE is as follows:

• April 16 — the regular board meeting at 8 p.m. will be devoted to an overview of the proposed budget, including discussion about proposed cuts and employee layoffs.

• May 7 — there will be continued discussion of the budget during the regular meeting which begins at 8 p.m. Copies of the planning budget will be made available beginning Monday, April 29, at Subliman Center for interested residents.

• May 21 — the required Truth in Taxation Hearing will begin at 7:15 p.m., followed by the required budget hearing at 7:30 p.m. A regular board meeting will follow.

• June 4 — during the regular board meeting, the budget will be officially adopted and a tax rate set.

The April 16 budget session will be videotaped and copies made available after the meeting for interested residents. The tape will also be cablecast on education access Channel 10, residents with cable in Farmington and Farmington Hills can view Channel 10's calendar of events for presentation times.

Residents with questions can call the district's School Community Relations office at 489-3349.