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YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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today's
hot line

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what's inside

Scared To Teach?

Why sex education in Farmington schools? Cannot the parents do a better job at home? Parents probably can, but Martha Mahan presents an analysis in today's edition which shows that, for the most part, parents don't.

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March or April or...

The Board of Education in Farmington was going to vote Monday night on the proposed human sexuality curriculum. Instead, trustees voted 4-2 to make the decision at the March 22 meeting when the issue could receive a tie vote.

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Many Faces Of Lib

They considered many questions related to women's liberation when they celebrated International Woman's Day on the OCC campus Monday. So we had two reporters on the scene, and you can read about what they heard in our Women's Section.

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Parish Parents Organizing To Keep Sorrows Open

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic High School in Farmington may not reopen next fall with the parish operating the school for only grades 9-12.

A group of parishioners has organized an ad hoc committee to keep the high school open, but the final decision will be made March 15 by Cardinal John Dearden, archbishop of Detroit.

DEARDEN HAS set the March 15 deadline for all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Detroit to submit criteria on their operations to determine their financial conditions.

Once the reports are in, Dearden will decide if Sorrows High will remain open and also whether St. Fabian Catholic School will open next fall.

St. Fabian, on W. 12 Mile in Farmington Township, is in its sixth year of operation and enrolls 415 students in grades one through six.

OUR LADY OF SORROWS has 314 students in grades 9-12 and 647 in grades 1-8. The ad hoc committee of laymen wanting to keep OLS High operating is chaired by Mrs. Jane Fieten and Roger Bergeron.

Bergeron says it appears the guidelines established by the archdiocese will make it financially impossible to keep the high school open.

The decision to close the high school was announced Feb. 28 by the Sorrows' school board, which further said it was hoped the archdiocese would allow the board to operate the grade school through the ninth grade.

Shortly after the announcement, a group of concerned parents formed the ad hoc committee and called for a meeting of all parents of school children. "The meet-

ing was well attended and orderly with an intelligent discussion of all the problems involved," says Mrs. Fieten.

Encouraged by a signed pledge of financial and/or moral support by 250 of the 280 persons attending, a committee was selected for the express purpose of forming a program of financial responsibility that will be acceptable to the archdiocese.

THE CLOSING of Sorrows High could pose somewhat of a problem to the Farmington School District, adds Bergeron.

Not only would it create a burden on the already strained budget by adding 300 or more students at a cost of about \$300,000, he states, but could also create a problem of overcrowding in some areas.

"The citizens of Farmington will truly miss this high school that enjoys an enviable reputation for scholastic excellence as well as statewide recognition of the achievements of their athletic teams which regularly compete for local and state championships," says Bergeron.

"Let us hope that the termination and the fighting spirit of those concerned parents will prevail so that the decision to close this school can be rescinded."

SISTER Mary Camille, principal of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School in Farmington, says the all-girls school "is very much in operation and we plan to continue next year."

The school draws 1,170 girls from 16 cities and 72 parishes for grades nine through 12.



WHERE IT IS—The gray, shaded areas on the map indicate where highway projects will be done.

Pressure State For Freeway Ramp Changes

Concerted local efforts are being made to pressure the State Highway Dept. into approving major road projects in the Farmington Area.

Spearheading the effort for new interchanges are the Farmington Chamber of Commerce, the City of Farmington and Farmington Township.

THE CITY has joined the Chamber in a dual effort to convince the state to locate an interchange at I-96 and Farmington Rd.

The chamber is cooperating with the township for major improvements at Grand River and Halstead, I-696 and Halstead, and Orchard Lake and I-696.

Drawn into the lobbying efforts as mediators have been Sen. Carl Pursell (R-14th) and Rep. Raymond L.

Baker (R-64th), the two legislators representing Farmington.

Pursell and Baker set up a meeting Feb. 24 in Lansing between state highway, chamber and city officials.

Attending from Farmington were City Manager John Dinan, city council members, Chamber President John Anbut, and Mrs. Barbara Sluya, the chamber's executive secretary.

PROMPTING the meeting was the state's decision to reopen the entrance ramp to I-96 on Freedom Rd. just west of Orchard Lake.

The state had closed the ramp for a 90-day period, conducted a traffic survey, and decided the ramp should remain open. The west-bound entrance ramp reopened on Feb. 23.

The ramp has caused a nuisance, according to Dinan, because of eastbound automobiles making an illegal right-turn onto the ramp in order to head west on I-96. Eastbound trucks, unable to negotiate the turn, often continue east across Orchard Lake Rd. to find a residential drive to turn around in.

"The city, at the meeting, had asked the state to consider locating a temporary westbound entrance ramp to I-96 west of Farmington Rd."

THE CITY'S preference is the ultimate re-designing of the Farmington Rd. and I-96 intersection to allow traffic to enter and leave the city at ease.

But the total re-designing of the Farmington-I-96 intersection would cost about \$2 million, and state officials say, this project will receive a very low priority in the near future.

The city plans to pressure the state until convincing it of the need for a westbound entrance ramp west of Farmington Rd.

"The message was given the state that the city is quite concerned over the present condition caused by the reopening of the temporary ramp east of Farmington Rd.," says Dinan.

"It is an inconvenience to our residents and hurts the economy of our downtown area by being bypassed by westbound traffic that cannot get off I-96 to enter the city."

THE CHAMBER Expressway Committee, co-chaired by Bill Bowman and Ed Baldwin, is backing the city's plea for some type of relief

at the I-96-Farmington Rd. intersection.

But the committee also is exerting pressure for three improvements in Farmington Township.

Gerald Harrison, chamber executive director, says the committee feels major improvements are needed at Grand River and Halstead.

Arthur Gibson, a traffic engineer for AAA, is conducting a survey for the chamber on existing traffic congestion. Gibson spent 28 years with the State Highway Dept. before joining AAA.

With the growth of the north part of the township, Harrison explains, it is becoming a real problem for persons to drive north.

The chamber's committee would like to see an overpass built at Grand River and Halstead and an entrance-exit ramp built further north at Halstead and I-696. The interchange at the north, adds Harrison, hopefully would provide relief for Orchard Lake and I-696.

THE ORCHARD LAKE-I-696 intersection is receiving top treatment from the chamber, and the state is more responsive on this problem.

Highway planners know this intersection is too congested and a nightmare for motorists. The state reportedly has agreed to an exit ramp at the northwest corner of I-696 and Orchard Lake so that westbound motorists can get off I-696 and make a right-hand turn to head south.

Presently, motorists get off I-696 and must turn left to head south. During rush hours, traffic will back up to Middle Belt because of the great difficulty in turning left onto Orchard Lake.

The chamber and township would like a full cloverleaf intersection at Orchard Lake and I-696, and the state might eventually agree—but not right away.

Before the added exit is built for the northwest corner, the chamber would like to see a traffic light installed at the present westbound exit ramp. The state has not committed itself, however, on the light.

The Orchard Ridge campus also is cooperating with the chamber on the Orchard Lake-I-696 bottleneck. The situation has become so bad that the college reportedly is considering revamping its class schedules to improve class schedules to improve traffic flow during peak hours.

Police Legal Expenses

Will Township, State, Or County Pay Bills?

Farmington Township would like Michigan to make it legal for a county or municipality to pay the legal expenses of any police officer who has been exonerated of a criminal charge.

Farmington Township is also getting sued for \$50,000 by a former police officer attempting to receive payment for legal expenses.

ON MARCH 5, attorney Noel Gage filed a lawsuit in Oakland County Circuit Court on behalf of William Sonnenberg Jr. against the township.

The lawsuit seeks payment of \$10,000 legal fees which Sonnenberg owes Gage and \$50,000 punitive damages.

Monday night, March 8, Trustee Earl Oppertshausen introduced a resolution asking the legislature to adopt a bill enabling counties and municipalities to pay an officer's legal defense when the officer had been charged with

a crime and subsequently acquitted.

The resolution passed 7-0 after the reading which included a recitation of the past history prompting the action.

SONNENBERG WAS charged with first-degree murder for the July 3, 1970, death of Harold Braun of 35605 Johnston, Farmington.

Gage, who is retained as counsel for the township Police Officer's Assn. (POA), was Sonnenberg's defense attorney during the pre-trial examination.

At the end of the exam, presiding Judge James McCann of Livonia ruled there was not sufficient evidence to prove first-degree murder and ordered the charge dropped.

The township had earlier paid Gage \$1,500 for successfully defending Patrolman John Hedrick, POA pres-

ident, of an assault and battery charge. Hedrick was found innocent in Southfield District Court.

WHEN SUPERVISOR Earl Teeples assumed office he asked for an opinion on the legality of paying legal fees for defense of a criminal charge.

Township Atty. Joseph T. Brennan stated it was illegal for the township to pay legal expenses for defense of a criminal charge.

The board instructed Brennan to ask Gage for the \$1,500 back since payment was made illegally. The township had not heard from Gage until the lawsuit was served March 5.

Another township policeman, Cpl. Thomas Godwin, is also faced with legal expenses for defending a criminal charge. Godwin was charged with first degree murder in

the August, 1970, death of Eldon Kephart. Godwin was also exonerated in pre-trial examination.

A MONTH ago, the board passed a resolution introduced by Oppertshausen asking Oakland County to pay the legal bills of police officers charged with a crime by the prosecutor but exonerated.

The county board of commissioners answered that its attorney gave the opinion the county lacks legal authority to pay the bills.

Oppertshausen describes the plight of Hedrick, Sonnenberg and Godwin as "a miscarriage of justice and a black eye to our system."

The resolution will be sent to Sen. Carl Pursell (R-14th) and Rep. Raymond Baker (R-64th) asking them to sponsor the enabling legislation in Lansing.

INSIDE YOUR
HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER



The new Observer plant shows its 38-acre site with one of the area's only virgin hickory forests. During the construction of your hometown newspaper plant, wildlife care was taken to insure the preservation of trees growing within a few feet of the foundation.

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