

Community Corner

This week's question:

What's your idea of a great pet?

We asked this question at the Pets 'n' Particulars pet store and Plaza Veterinary Clinic in Farmington.



"I prefer dogs, especially the terriers. They have their own temperament and they're so intelligent."
—Karen Micaloil
Westland



"I'm partial to dogs, but I like cats and birds, too. They each have their own personalities."
—John Richardson, DVM
Farmington



"Horses. I love to ride them and take care of them."
—Debbie Simon
Farmington Hills



"A dog... they're friendly and loyal. They live up to their billing as 'man's best friend.'"
—Howard Simon
Farmington Hills



"I've had everything from skunks to rattlesnakes. My favorites are the large lizards."
—Rudy Quesada
Canton Township



"Dogs. I like the little mixed breeds. They seem to have more personality."
—Cheryl Juranok
Redford Township

Year-round schooling gets positive response

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A ONE-YEAR pilot for the year-round, "school-within-a-school" program at Gill was approved by the Farmington school board in January, following months of study on the concept. A community/school ad-hoc committee had studied various options, including opening a year-round magnet school which would draw from throughout the district.

They settled on the "school-within-a-school" concept because of space and cost concerns, and because they wanted to start out small.

The year-round school program at Gill is expected to involve between 100 and 125 students in grades kindergarten through five, though Duff said the final decision on grades will depend on who signs up. It would likely operate in the west wing of the building, where maintenance staff could work without disturbing other students on a traditional school schedule and where there is air conditioning.

Proponents for year-round schooling say the traditional school calendar was created to support an agricultural society, and that a year-round calendar is more realistic in today's world. Shorter and more frequent breaks allow learning to flow without the gap which comes with a traditional summer break.

Parents can sign their children up for the Gill program until March 6, and class planning is expected to be done by March 20. The year-round school schedule and

staffing considerations are still being coordinated and negotiated with the teacher's union.

DUFF SAID he hopes there is enough interest in the program to have Gill students fill it. If that is not the case, the district is prepared to open the program to students at overcrowded schools.

Guests at Monday's meeting were representatives from Leggett Elementary School from the Waterford school district, who started a "school-within-a-school" program this year. Duff said they offered some insight into what parents can expect from the program.

Some things noted by Farmington Hills parents Monday included:

- concerns over family schedules if one child is in a traditional program and another in the year-round program;

- concerns about how a student would adjust to a traditional program if a family moved away.

Several parents said they wanted to see the district look at a similar program for the middle school level, as well, saying they were concerned with a student going from the year-round program back to a traditional one. District officials have said they are not considering such a move at this time.

But Duff said if that's what parents decide they want, the district would likely study it. "I think it will happen if the community wants it," he said.

Defense witnesses tell different story

Continued from Page 1

admitted under cross-examination.

MONDAY MARKED the first day of testimony from witnesses put on the stand by defense attorney Cornelius Pitts, who defended Rutherford.

Lindsey also showed jurors the videotape of the beating, taped by Dan Warner who worked at Galligan's in downtown and who later sold copies to local television stations as well as CNN and the networks. The 13 jurors showed little reaction to the tape.

Despite Was' earlier testimony that she didn't see a beer trailer outside the Omni and did not order a drink, Omni Hotel employee Jessie Wilson Jr. disagreed. "I was serving Mrs. Was a beer and a Coke..." he testified. "She had a buzz on."

At that point, Wilson said, a black woman and white woman ran up to the beer stand. "It was a blonde-haired girl... and a black young lady was behind her. They were running to Mrs. Was," he said, adding the black woman pushed one of the white women. "That's when she threw the pop on the young lady."

THE COMMOTION outside the Omni began, Wilson testified he saw Was run at several black people chased her.

"I came through the crowd and pushed them out of the way," he continued, describing how he pulled Was to safety.

His co-workers witnessed the effort and walked with him and Was into the hotel lobby. While in the lobby, Was told Wilson she had lost her

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purse and an earring. He went back outside to find the items and when he returned, Was snapped at him, Wilson testified.

"I guess she forgot I had helped her," Wilson said. "She told me to get the [pop] out of her face because she's sick of us mother f---ers."

The Omni Hotel's restaurant manager, Tim Howe, confirmed Wilson's

story. "She was very hostile and made a racial slur at that time."

Another man, Michael Fayz, testified earlier that he helped Was out of the crowd that was beating her and he never heard her make any racial remarks. His girlfriend, Ida Shaheen, testified Monday that she, too, never heard Was make racial slurs.

"I saw a white lady and a black lady chasing her. The white lady stopped and the black lady slapped her on the face," Shaheen said.

Throughout the trial, defense attorney Pitts has attempted to characterize the incident as a black-versus-white confrontation.

"Why didn't you help the black lady?" Pitts asked Shaheen, who responded, "She was chasing her."

Pitts quickly returned the verbal volley: "You went automatically to the white lady."

LIKE ANOTHER of his co-workers, Wilson admitted he had been summoned to Mayor Young's office to discuss what happened the night of the fireworks, June 28, 1991.

"Is it safe to say you came forward after you met with the mayor?" Lindsey asked Wilson, who said it was true and that he made no written statement to police. "Was there a suggestion during the conversation that perhaps the attack was provoked?"

Wilson said that he was asked at the meeting with Young if police reports of the incident were accurate. He testified that he didn't come forward earlier because "the hotel said they didn't want to get involved and I was still an employee."

Wilson also testified that he was unaware of Was' multimillion dollar lawsuit against the city when he spoke with Young. "But I could figure she would sue somebody."

Witness Alice Bankston told Lindsey that she finally came forward with her story because she was concerned about the multimillion lawsuit and because her son had been murdered. "His murderer got away because people wouldn't say what happened."

Lindsey asked her: "You already have feelings about Mrs. Was suing the city?" Bankston responded: "Somewhat."

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