



Sworn in: Kathryn Meldrum, Wade Neubauer, Terrence Sloan, Theodore Wathman and Rose Marie Walker are sworn in as Farmington Public Safety reserve officers.

# Taking the oath

Five new Farmington Public Safety reserve officers were sworn in during a ceremony at City Hall May 15. The new reserve officers are: Kathryn Meldrum, 34, of Livonia; Wade Neubauer, 24, of Farmington; Terrence Sloan, 30, of Farmington; Theodore Wathman, 23, of Novi; and Rose Marie Walker, 29, of Southfield. All five are graduates of the Schoolcraft College Police Reserve Academy. They spent 100 hours studying on search and seizure, criminal law, first aid and CPR, laws of arrest and other. All but one has received their firefighter II certification from the State of Michigan. In order to receive certification, officers had to com-

plete 150 hours of training. Four officers also received certification in Medical First Responders. Walker is expected to attend Fire School in the fall. Each reserve will be required to qualify with a firearm on the Farmington Public Safety Department's range. After that, they will receive 24 hours on the job training. The Public Safety Department is accepting applications. Reserves applicants have to be 21 years old and high school graduates. Training for new reserves begins in the fall. For information, call Commander Chuck Lee at 474-4700.

# WL School candidates challenge district's ethics

## WALLED LAKE SCHOOLS

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

With the June 10 school board election date nearing, the war of words is escalating about campaign-related literature that questions the tactics and ethics of Walled Lake Consolidated School District officials.

Recent campaign flyers by school board challengers Kenneth Braun and William Drum are critical of district transportation spending practices, among other issues. District officials are calling the allegations inaccurate and misleading.

Meanwhile, the April 1996 newsletter of the Southwest Oakland Taxpayer's Association alleges impropriety in the district's "exclusive" school-building contract with architectural firm TMP Associates. Those published comments could become the source of litigation.

"Very reliable inside sources tell us that it is not uncommon for superintendents to receive some type of honoraria in the form of a commission from architects and also firms who sell bonds," read part of the SOTA newsletter. "Even a fraction of a percent of \$100 million dollars can be substantial."

"Hopefully this is not the motivation the Walled Lake Schools have in choosing a firm which has not demonstrated that they can provide a building at even close to the average cost per square foot."

Those published comments

were being reviewed by attorneys for TMP Associates. Larry Morris, vice president for the architectural firm, said Tuesday afternoon.

Morris said a letter was being drafted to be sent to SOTA, requesting either an immediate printed retraction of "very serious false charges" or concrete evidence.

If SOTA does not do either, "Then we have another decision to make," regarding a potential lawsuit, Morris said.

Superintendent James Geisler called the allegation "probably the most insidious insult" of his career.

"I would invite anyone to track backwards to every place I've worked and inquire as to whether they think I have, or am capable of, taking a bribe. I am highly offended."

One member of SOTA, Greg Williamson, is no stranger to the school district. Williamson is a longtime critic of how the district spends money, being particularly opposed to the string of bond issue proposals that many expect will continue in late 1996.

"Most people are upset with the fact (now school) buildings are very extravagant, and that money is not geared to what's in the classroom; just the facade," said Williamson.

He added that, if another bond issue were voted on it would also

be defeated, because of how the district treats opposing residents.

The candidate flyers - one written by Braun; the other distributed by Drum's camp - also are triggering ill will between the district and some citizens.

"When transportation, a basic service, is nearly twice as costly in Walled Lake (\$489 per student) as it is for the same number of students in Huron Valley (\$279), and when this additional cost provides less than half the number of miles traveled, the voters have every right to question the spending priorities of the board of education," read a portion of Braun's flyer.

Drum's flyer, which only recently came out, states "Why are we paying twice as much as other districts for transportation in our school district? Check out the empty buses any afternoon at the high schools."

Braun, who resides near the border of the Walled Lake and Huron Valley districts, said he based his flyer on information published in the spring 1996 issue of the Huron Valley Schools Report Card.

"Cost containment is the key thing in my opinion," Braun said. "Huron Valley's report talked about being good stewards of money. But Walled Lake's attitude is 'If we don't pass the bond issue we're going to cancel the next sunrise.'"

# WL officials rebuff campaign flyers

Walled Lake school officials are trying to combat what they call "erroneous" information about transportation costs contained in campaign flyers.

According to a press release, that information "purports to show that our transportation cost-per-student is significantly higher than those of other nearby districts. This is incorrect and misleading . . . the entire community needs to have the correct information."

The press release stated that data from the Huron Valley Schools Report Card comparison of transportation costs in several districts was "unclear and lack comparability relative to which expenses are included in calculating costs."

not all districts with which Walled Lake's costs were compared included the costs of new bus purchases in their figures. Neither did all the other districts include maintenance and parts costs for vehicles other than buses, or the cost of transporting parochial school students.

"Walled Lake, however, included all of these costs in its budget figures. In addition, the figures in the flyer did not reflect the cost of transporting special education students to districts throughout the county where they are educated."

The statement also pointed out that district-to-district costs "vary widely" in categories such as: special education and

parochial school transportation; bus purchases; non-bus vehicle maintenance; and safety programs such as road training and re-certification of drivers.

Two other points were emphasized in the statement:

• "Walled Lake Schools' safety rating of excellent on the annual state police bus safety inspection places us in the top 25 percent of districts in the state."

• "Unlike many other districts, Walled Lake requires its drivers to be road-tested and re-certified every four years."

In addition, the district provides a minimum of two days of training per year for each driver on bus safety and effective student discipline. We include this cost in our \$367/pupil figure.

## INKWELL

Inkwell provides information about educational issues and on people in the Farmington area. Mail information to: Inkwell, Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335, or fax information to 477-9722. Items can be sent by E-mail to: [backy@mail.oonline.com](mailto:backy@mail.oonline.com). Please include a daytime phone number on your news release. Items will not be taken over the phone.

## MASONIC SCHOLARS

Harrison High School senior Jeff Marinucci and North Farmington High senior Amy Chen were awarded scholarships by Farmington Masonic Lodge No. 151. Marinucci and Chen receive \$1,000 scholarships each from the lodge. Scholarships were awarded on academic achievements, community service and leadership. The pro-

gram is open to any high school graduate living within the Farmington Public School District.

## ESINGING WINNERS

Farmington High School vocalists, Kim Yoder, Karen Pawluski and Juliet Petrus brought home first division ratings from the state "Solo and Ensemble" festival at the University of Michigan April 20. Yoder, a freshman, is active in the Farmington High color guard, Falconaires, mixed chorus and studies voice privately. Petrus, a junior, is active in the school concert choir, debate and various musical groups. Beside studying voice and viola privately, she also received a One rating for the

state award winning string quartet.

## VIDEO BESTS

Gill Elementary received two first place awards and one second place in the Detroit Area Film & Television 1996 Michigan Student Film and Video Festival. "Gotcha" and "Saving Our Planet" videos, under the direction of teacher Lorna Bussa, were first place winners. Students who worked on the "Gotcha" video were: John Donovan, J.P. Duprey, Emily Moses, Michael Schmidt, Leo Devito and Robb Lane. Margaret Vaillancourt and Rebekah Howes worked on "Saving Our Planet." "Flight" won second place and included Jerome Aviles, Megan Drozcan, Greg Fellowa, Eric Gaughan, Rachel Miller, Tom Peszek and Paul Romine.

# City keeps lock on picket fences

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

They might look dandy in a Norman Rockwell painting, but picket fences don't stand any taller in Farmington city ordinances.

Lynn and Penny Oglesby and their daughter and her husband, Nancy and David Yarmuth, asked for a fence variance for their adjoining properties at 34002 and 33928 Grand River at Monday's Farmington City Council meeting. Council members liked the way the decorative fence would look, but still turned the request down.

"We've had a number of residents come in here and ask for variances," Councilman Arnie Campbell said. "I just don't like to break the precedent we have set for the historical character of the neighborhood."

The Oglesbys asked they be able to erect a picket fence surrounding both properties, which are bounded by Grand River and Shawassee.

The fence would be made of western red cedar in character and 4-feet by 4-inches in height.

Character of the fence is not the problem, council members said. In fact, Councilwoman Mary Bush called the design, "exquisite."

It's a matter of consistency, council member said. The proposed fence is in front of the building line and on roadway right-of-way property, which are

not allowed under city statute. Fences must set back 25 feet from the roadway.

The ordinance also limits decorative fences in height to three feet in front of a building line. The proposed fence would be 3 1/2-feet high.

Council members urged to the Oglesbys to meet with Public Services Director Kevin Gushman to work out a solution.

Another factor is both properties are in the city's historical district.

The picket fence could serve as a marker for the historical district, Lynn Oglesby said, citing a Lawrence Technological University study done last year the recommended such a focal point. Council members weren't swayed.

"This is a whole lot of fence," Mayor Jo Anne McShane said. "It would stand out definitely."

For information, call Commander Chuck Lee at 474-4700.

Arnie Campbell - councilman

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