

Dancin' rules at 'senior prom'

Seniors outnumbered students 150 to 35, but nothing was going to stop the older adults from having a dancing good time.

The Adult Senior Prom Wednesday at Farmington Hills Harrison High was a success by all accounts. The annual event is co-sponsored by Farmington Community Education and the Farmington Hills Senior Adult Division Department.

"In the past we've looked to the students to dance with the seniors," said Terry Leland, Community Education supervisor. "Before I knew it, though, there were senior couples on the dance floor."

"I think they had a great time."

Participants were treated to a Disney musical revue by elementary school students as well as hearing swing music of Bennie Goodman and Glenn Miller performed by the Harrison High jazz band. A disc jockey spun semi-classical dance-floor favorites "The Hokey-Pokey" and "The Macarena."

Many seniors took part in previous prom efforts. Two granddaughters joined their grandfathers at this year's dance.

"One senior said to me, 'I think it's good for the students to see our capabilities and interests,'" Leland said.

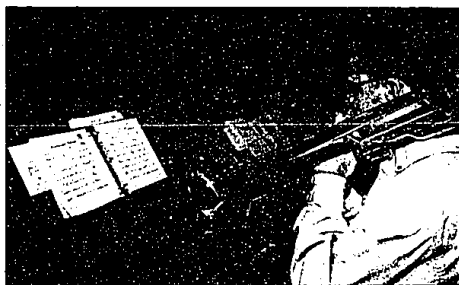
STAFF PHOTOS
BY SHARON LEMIRUX



Dance lesson: Farmington Hills resident Gene Emerson shows Harrison High School junior Lynn Popowitch a two-step move.



Dancing times: Above, "Uncle" Ed Kowalski of Standish, Mich., makes his way through a line dance with a smile. At left, John Rumbell, sophomore in director Mark Phillips jazz band, plays "Sentimental Journey" on his trombone.



Restaurants in, out of town

It's out with the old, in with the new for restaurants in the Farmington area. Gone from the restaurant scene are the Downtown Cafe (where silverware and napkins still sit on the tables) and The Legacy Dining Club on Grand River near Drake.

New in town is "Vaatika" Indian Cuisine, 39241 Grand River in Farmington Hills. The owners are Ashu and Parbhat Ahluwalia of Northville. They will specialize in fine Indian cuisine with authentic dishes from Southern and Northern parts of that country. The restaurant will open soon.

Also opening soon will be The Pasta Shop, on Farmington Road right next to the Bank of America in downtown Farmington. Owner Roger Ratkowski will offer pasta entrees ready in two minutes, seven days a week. He also operates a pasta business in Livonia.

Add living space

The Oakland Builders Institute and Farmington Community Education offer a 12-hour class on Adding Family Living Space.

Students will learn to enhance a home's value by adding a room or refinishing a basement, with classroom focusing on building codes, planning, permits, insurance, estimating materials and more. Cost is \$85, plus a \$10 textbook fee. The instructor is a licensed builder who is experienced in home remodeling.

Classes are 6:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, May 20-29, at the Farmington Community School. To register, call (248) 499-5533.

New office in Detroit

A Farmington architectural firm has expanded, opening a second office in Detroit.

John Allen had opened his Grand River storefront in 1954. The firm developed with a growing list of suburban development clients and grew with the community, before adding Allen's

son, Robert, in 1988 and Sandra Loux in 1996.

While maintaining its office in Farmington, the newly named firm, Allen & Loux, Inc., recently opened a downtown Detroit office in a converted loft at 422 W. Congress, Suite No. 400. The firm's number is 474-3350 in Farmington.

New health firm

Lansing-based Health Management Associates, a health care research and consulting firm, has opened an office in Farmington Hills.

It's located at 30800 Northwestern Highway, Suite 210. Phone number is (248) 539-9701.

Hills native on board

Lynn Amato Madonna, daughter of Robert and Barbara Byrum of Farmington Hills, was elected to the board of directors at Calspan SRL Corp., a Washington, D.C.-based aerospace company.

Madonna was the founder and principal officer of Corporate Marketing Group in New York City, where she currently lives.

Children sought for bipolar disorder study

Davis Counseling Center in Farmington Hills recently launched the first-ever study of the long-term impact of early diagnosis and treatment on bipolar disorder in children.

And it's seeking volunteers for the study. Bipolar disorder, also known as manic depression, has not been subjected to longitudinal studies in this population because, until recently, it was not recognized that children had the disorder. Rather, these children often were diagnosed inaccurately as having attention

deficit/hyperactive disorder (ADHD), or were not diagnosed at all.

"There is some reason for the confusion," says Linda C. Spock M.D. "ADHD and bipolar do have some overlap of symptoms but they are two separate entities. Bipolar disorder is a problem of mood, and appears in episodes. It also tends to occur more often in families. Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder affects attention and concentration, and does not run in families."

"Recently, however," Spock

said, "adults with bipolar disorder have been reporting that their difficulties began in early childhood."

The question researchers want answered is: Would the course of their mental health be different if they had been diagnosed and treated when they were young?

Families with a child presently diagnosed as ADHD, or with bipolar disorder, and having a family member who also has a mood disorder should call (248) 553-5550 during business hours.

Growing pains

Cities debate funding expanded court, library

BY WILLIAM COVANT
STAFF WRITER

The 47th District Court in Farmington manages one of the busiest case loads in the state and could become even busier. That discussion came up as part of the Farmington and Farmington Hills joint budget session on May 13.

The court, library and other agencies that are funded jointly by the two cities gave reports of the past year's activities and future needs, both budgetary and otherwise.

The court, which generated \$2,441,345 in revenue for the two cities last year, requested \$269,270 in funding from Farmington and \$1,785,441 from Farmington Hills for a total of \$2,054,711.

The court also receives \$82,304 in state salary standardization money and expects to earn about \$15,000 in investment income for the 1997-98 fiscal year.

But the court, which had 17,081 cases per judge as compared to 12,385 on average statewide, will likely be in for some changes.

"There is pending legislation in Lansing that will affect district courts," said court administrator Dave Walsh. "The threshold on criminal cases (from misdemeanor to felony) could be reduced. Already the civil jurisdiction is changing from \$10,000 to \$25,000."

The legislation would raise the monetary loss or damage standard for cases to stay misdemeanors (in district court) from \$100 to at least \$1,000, which would add tremendously to the district court case load statewide.

That, in addition to current building needs at the court, will make some changes likely. And, Walsh said, with the likely addition of a third judge, who would join Judges Fred Harris and Maria Parker on a full-time basis, more space is needed.

Walsh said the court will set aside \$5 out of every civil infraction fine in order to build up a fund to pay for either a new building or an expansion/renovation of the current one on 10 Mile east of Farmington Road.

In addition to the need for a larger jury room, records storage and a new roof, the current facility has a single hallway that prisoners, victims, attorneys and the public all use together. The situation does not meet security needs, Walsh said.

Improved computer and technology services, better records management and refined financial procedures are goals for the coming year, Walsh said.

He said the money generated by the \$5-per-infraction set aside would generate from \$75,000-\$100,000 a year that would be combined with another \$167,000 that the state returned to the court from previous overpayments. He asked that the councils consider the formation of a building committee to plan for a new or expanded court house.

The councils also discussed changes at the Farmington Community Library.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said the cities should consider an alternative way of paying for the libraries.

The advent of Proposal A, which limits property taxes, will make it tougher to increase city contributions to the library.

Creation of an autonomous library board, directly elected rather than appointed by the city councils, could allow the library to operate independently. "Let the library deal with any millage, the same as Farmington Hills Public Safety millage or Farmington's Road millage," Lauhoff said. "It would help provide revenue for a first class library and eliminate that cost from city budgets."

Farmington Community Library Director Bev Papal quoted Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi as describing the library "the most

used city service other than trash collection." But it needs to grow in size and services.

The library has already bought land next to the branch on 12 Mile, and a millage proposal will likely be on the ballot in 1998.

Papal said the two library buildings are 25-35 years old, and need more maintenance each year.

Hills Councilman Jon Grant suggested a joint study session on how to fund the libraries in the future. Grant said the cities could continue to budget the current millage amount, \$144 mills, work toward an independent library board and later ask voters to transfer that millage amount to the library as a separate funding agency.

Farmington Hills will contribute \$2,382,963 and Farmington \$243,305 to the library respectively if they approve the library's budget request.

Papal said that contrary to tradition, the demands on library services are increasing despite a booming economy.

The library had 812,000 items in circulation for the past year, 200,000 reference questions, 42,000 attending programs — two-thirds of them children — 240,000 log-ins to electronic resources, 22 outreach locations for senior citizens, 2,466 children reading 20,900 books in the summer reading, Internet training and \$172,000 in grants.

The library was selected by the American Library Association as one of 50 exemplary young adult programs in the country. Papal was named president of the Michigan Library Association and was appointed by Gov. John Engler to the Library Board of Michigan.

The councils also reviewed budgets for the Farmington Area Arts Commission, Farmington Youth Assistance, the Farmington Area Commission on Aging and the Farmington Area Counseling Centers.

The voice of public education

Public schools work—see for yourself

Bridget Looby-Baumgarten didn't know much about Saginaw's public schools.

She grew up in the city, but attended Catholic schools. And now she's sending her two children to Catholic schools.

Yet she believed that the 13,000-student public school district was failing children.

"I expected to see utter chaos, unmanageable students and teachers who were apathetic," said Bridget, a public relations specialist who toured the city's schools recently through a program sponsored by the Saginaw Education Association. "It's easy to think everything is terrible if you pay attention to the media. But it's not true. I discovered just the opposite."

Bridget said she saw caring, energetic teachers, clean buildings, lots of computers and real learning taking place.

"You just can't fake the great things I saw," she said. "You really have to see it to believe it."

But more than two-thirds of Americans do not get the opportunity to see for themselves what our public schools are doing, mostly because they do not have school-age children.

Their ignorance is our enemy and our opportunity.

In this era of intense scrutiny of and attacks on public education, public school employees have realized that we must educate more than the children in our classrooms. We must open the eyes of the general public to the truth about public education.

That means that we must start touting our own success.

It isn't easy for public school employees to show off. Most would rather focus on children than on themselves. But since educators know better than anyone what works in education, it is our responsibility to share the good news.

The Michigan Education Association (MEA) takes that responsibility seriously.

This month, the MEA revealed 133 successful partnerships and school programs in wealthy and poor school districts and in urban, suburban and rural school districts across the state at part of our second annual Showcasing Public School Success program. The MEA has compiled 252 concrete examples of excellence in public education since the program began last school year.

We're not the only ones searching for and celebrating public school success. The Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) has recognized nearly 1,000 exemplary programs in a similar four-year-old program. And in February, a group of Republican lawmakers formed the Republican Alliance to Identify Solutions in Education (RAISE).

We have proof that public education works. We owe it to ourselves and to our children to pay attention to our success stories. Public education—and public school employees—will continue to face many challenges as we strive to prepare all children for the demands of the next century. One of the surest ways we know to conquer the challenges of tomorrow is to identify and build upon what is working today in public school classrooms across the state.

Rep. Jon Ijlemma, a Republican from Grand Haven, recognized this as he announced the formation of RAISE. "Our families are demanding solutions, and some of those solutions already exist," he said at a press conference in February. "There are schools throughout Michigan that experience success even when the odds are stacked against them. We need to talk to those schools and learn why they work so well."

The MEA will continue to seek, recognize and reward excellence in public education because we know that nothing succeeds like success. And we encourage all of our politicians, parents, and business and community leaders to take some advice from Bridget Looby-Baumgarten. "You cannot speak out about public education if you do not have all the facts," she said. "You need to get out and educate yourself about what's going on in the public schools. You might just be pleasantly surprised. I sure was."

You may obtain a copy of the 1997 MEA Showcasing Public School Success booklet detailing 133 outstanding public school programs by calling the MEA Communications Department at 1/800/292-1934.



Julius A. Maddox
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mea Michigan Education Association

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