

Teachers from page A1

"It helps him establish some rapport ... It's the ideal situation. You normally wouldn't have that with a guest teacher. It's a good match."

Actually, Duff helped open the door for Avery by contacting Farmington schools' personnel administrator Larry Lobert about whether it was proper to bring Avery into the fold instead of a sub already on the waiting list.

"I wanted to make sure," Avery said. "I didn't want to interfere with anybody else's employment." He emphasized, however, that he doesn't want to be put on the sub list for next year.

After everything was approved, Avery began volunteering in early March. He won't receive any guest teacher salary until his daughter delivers the baby and he takes over the class.

Enger to help

So far, Avery is managing just fine.

"You have kids who can study independently," said Avery, laughing. "Otherwise, I wouldn't be here."

The idea for Avery to teach his daughter's students began in January.

"He approached me a few months ago," Gray recalled, "and

asked me if I had somebody lined up to take over the class. At that time he said he'd sub."

Avery said his daughter was worried about leaving her class in midstream.

"I was concerned, particularly with the fourth/fifth-grade split," chimed in Gray, in her fifth year as a teacher in the district. "He said he could come in a couple months before I left and help with the continuity."

She also conceded that she'd feel more comfortable knowing her father, a lifelong educator, would be in charge.

Judging from Thursday, the transition is seamless. Avery and Gray each led half of the class - which was smaller than usual because of the national "Take Your Kids to Work Day" - in a reading lesson.

Avery's group talked about the post-Civil War era and slavery, including the Underground Railroad. Gray discussed the topic of wildlife with her group.

Then, both teachers went to the front of the classroom and asked students to talk about entries to their journal, pertaining to last Monday's field trip to the William Costick Activities Center. There, the class experienced a butterfly and hummingbird garden, a Kids Intergenerational Community Service pro-

ject that Avery helped spearhead.

In recent weeks, as Gray's stomach grew, the class toasted their teacher with a "Diaper Derby Relay," with students racing through the various steps required to diaper an infant. There also was a baby shower given by the youngsters.

Coming to visit

Gray also plans on returning to Gill before the end of the school year, to show off her newborn to her "second" family.

"She's not going to abandon the class," assured Avery. "That's just not her nature."

The rare arrangement, Gray said, is becoming the talk of the school. "One of the teachers here said to me, 'It's wonderful that the person that instilled a love of education in you would be able to share such a special time.' I don't think a lot of people get that kind of connection with their parents."

Gray said she hopes her students learn something about family values because of the set up.

"I'd hope they see that, as you get older, you can keep your relationship with your parents and have similar interests," she said. "And make similar career choices and help each other out ... I think it's a great situation. I couldn't think of a better way to spend time with my dad."

Charged from page A1

was caught after being shot three times in the legs by South Lyon officers. A bag containing \$27,000 in cash and a silver .357 Magnum revolver were found at the scene.

The revolver - which was found loaded and cocked - was the same pistol stolen last June during a Farmington Hills break-in, said Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss.

At each of the 10 robberies that Alexander is considered a suspect, a ski-masked man, wearing latex gloves and clutch-

ing a revolver, struck at closing time. The robber made a habit of fleeing out the back door. About \$176,000 in cash was stolen from the first nine holdups, which took place between Sept. 14 and April 6.

Sunday's arrest followed a call for backup help from South Lyon Sgt. Chris Sovik, who was assigned to a nightly stakeout at the Showerman's since the first time the store was robbed in November.

Alexander's arraignment

comes less than a month after he and his wife, Michelle Griffith, were sentenced by 47th District Judge Maria Parker for hosting an Oct. 25 party at their home in the Chatham Hills subdivision in Farmington. More than 100 teens paid \$5 each to drink all of the beer they wanted at the party, thrown to toast their son's selection as Farmington High School homecoming king.

Both Alexander, who is the teen's stepfather, and Griffith were put on a year of probation and fined \$500 by Parker.

Cable from page A1

company has been busy negotiating franchise agreements with other cities.

"There's just been a great demand - especially in the Detroit area - for cable competition," Potter said. "We're moving as fast as we can to build our state-of-the-art system. Each one takes time."

To use the cities' rights of way, Ameritech New Media officials would have to work out a similar contract to the one SWOCC has with Time Warner. Such an agreement would cover franchise fees and public access.

SWOCC and Time Warner are renegotiating its franchise agreement, which dates from 1982.

"I think the cities would have to look at what Ameritech is offering and what considerations

they would need to come into the cities," said Caren Collins, SWOCC executive director.

Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi, who is a SWOCC trustee, is "cautiously optimistic" about cable competition.

"The experience in most places is that it hasn't affected rates," Vagnozzi said. Nationwide, cable rates leapt 8.5 percent last year.

In some areas, a competing cable provider has stabilized rates. Canton residents who have a choice between Media One or Ameritech pay \$22.95 a month for expanded basic service; Farmington area residents pay \$29.02 for a similar service from Time Warner.

"You can say that's a direct result of the competition," SWOCC's Collins said. "When

you take in the other communities, though, we haven't seen a major reduction of rates."

Rates are not the only area to measure cable service. In communities where Ameritech is offered, existing cable operators have beefed up service and renovated their systems, Ameritech's Potter said.

"They've been given incentives to compete for the first time," Potter said.

Without Ameritech's presence, Time Warner completed a fiber optic upgrade a few years ago and increased channel offerings.

"We don't mind competition as long as it's fair," said Tom Bjorklund, Time Warner regional vice president. "And as their obligations to the cities are the same as ours."

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