

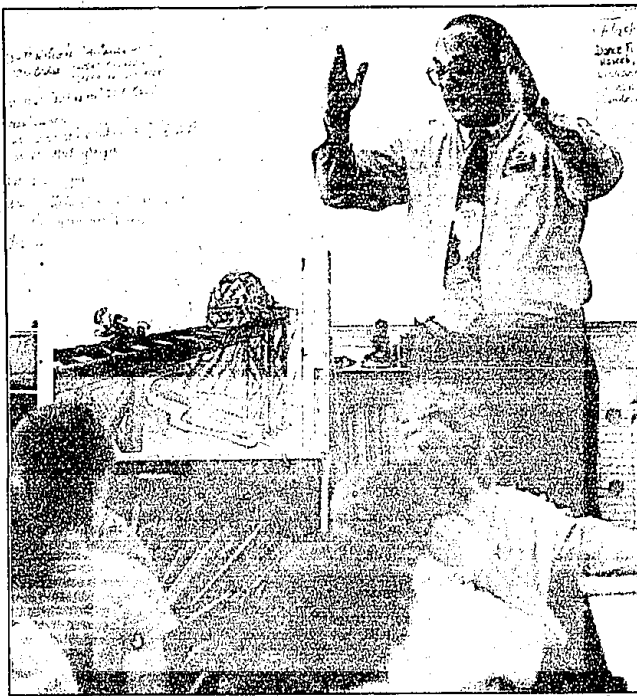
Some fast facts on railway safety

The following facts about railroad crossing safety were shared with Hillside Elementary School fourth graders:

1. Approximately every 100 minutes, a vehicle or pedestrian is struck by a train in the United States.
2. A motorist is 40 times more likely to die in a crash involving a train than in a collision involving two automobiles.
3. There are approximately 268,000 public highway and pedestrian at-grade highway rail grade crossings in the United States.
4. More people die in highway-rail crashes each year than in commercial airline crashes.
5. More than 50 percent of crashes at public grade crossings occur where active warning devices such as gates, lights and bells exist.
6. The majority of highway-rail crashes occur when a train is traveling less than 30 miles-per-hour.
7. It takes a train traveling less than 30 miles-per-hour about two-thirds of a mile to come to a stop.
8. Since 1990, there have been over 4,151 people killed while trespassing on railroad property.

STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL DEXLER

Taking It In: Ron Bedra, a Conrail risk management manager talks to the class about train safety while, at right, Noah Lipson listens intently to the presentation.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL DEXLER

AGENDAS

Farmington City Council
8 p.m. Monday, Jan. 4
City Hall
(248) 474-5500

Agenda items include:

- Consider proposed 1999 goal statement
- Report by public services director about Rouge Program Office - GIS Grant
- Renewal in Michigan Municipal League
- Proclamation of Martin Luther King Week, from Jan. 18-24
- Resignations from Downtown Development Authority board of directors, beautification commission
- Reappointments to beautification commission, building authority, construction board of appeals; appointment to DDA.

Farmington DDA
8 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 5
City Hall
(248) 474-5500

Agenda items include:

- Quarterly report, city treasurer
- Adoption of city investment policy
- Annual meeting, merchants
- Playscape project presentation
- Business recruitment report
- Executive director's report

Farmington School Board
7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 5
Lewis Schulman Administrative Center
(248) 489-3300

Agenda items include:

- Evidence of Excellence: recognition of administration, staff and students; recognition of district PTA council
- Instructional reports, elementary study progress report
- Sale of property
- Tentative agreement, Farmington Custodial, Maintenance and Cafeteria Association
- Early Childhood Study Committee Recommendations
- Bids: furniture, Dunckel Middle School phases 2-3; Wooddale Elementary School additions and remodeling projects; carpeting, Highmeadow Common Campus.

Students follow right tracks to safety

BY TIM SMITH
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Darting across railroad tracks, in front of or between box cars, apparently remains a favorite curiosity for thrill-seeking American youngsters.

But the price for such daring escapades is not worth the risk, Hillside Elementary School fourth graders were told during a recent "Parent Pizzazz" classroom presentation about railroad crossing safety.

"You cannot outrun a train," said Ron Bedra of Operation Lifesaver, a national program designed to teach students the importance of obeying railroad crossing signals.

Proof is the recent tragedy in Wayne County, where a Redford teenager lost his legs during an accident, after running along side of the train in attempts to touch it.

"It's real important that we educate kids to the danger of the railroads," railroad conductor Don Carter, parent of student Meghan Carter, said after talking to the kids. "It's a fascinating thing, but it's a dangerous place."

"(Exercise) common sense. Stay away from places you shouldn't be."

The visitors did not hold back when it came to describing the kind of damage trains can inflict on cars and pedestrians.

"If you're in the tunnel when a train comes through," Bedra said, discussing drawings he showed to the class, "you're going to be a permanent painting on this wall."

And impatient motorists also don't have a chance in on-the-tracks confrontations.

"The impact of a train hitting an automobile is like a car hitting a dog," Carter said. "Just a thump."

Bedra also talked about how many train-pedestrian

accidents are caused by youngsters racing to get to school in time.

Again, he urged them to not even try.

"No one is going to be upset with you (for being tardy), if you say you waited for the train to go by," Bedra said.

Another pointer was for kids to refrain from wearing stereo headphones when walking or jogging across railroad tracks.

Hillside teacher Dodie Harris invited Bedra and Carter to inform and enlighten the class about the subject.

Harris said she holds the regular "Parent Pizzazz" sessions to help enrich and inform her class about the many interesting jobs and hobbies held by parents, grandparents and other family members.

"In light of the recent tragedy... I thought this to be very important and timely," Harris said.

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almost double in size from the existing 34,000 square feet. The main floor of the library will be enlarged and another story will be added. The expansion actually will go into the existing parking lot. Two acres immediately to the west of the library will be constructed as the new parking lot for the facility.

During construction the library will remain open and the existing entrance at the back of the library will likely be used, Papai said.

When construction begins on the Hills parking lot, renovation work will simultaneously begin at the Farmington branch. "It will be the first to be done," Papai said.

Work at the Farmington branch will include replacement and upgrading of the heating and ventilation units that were built in 1976.

"We haven't established a date. It depends on what kind of problems we run into," Papai added.

Both libraries will have a new

'I truly believe in feeding the mind and you feed the soul. There has to be a place where people come to gather information.'

Bev Papai

—Farmington Library director

security system, one that allows books to check in themselves.

Library officials are now getting into a detailed analysis for the Hills expansion.

Among items to be determined are how and where to house staff, circulation desk operations, desks, what things should go where — items that library staff has studied.

Because it was unknown whether voters in Farmington and Farmington Hills would pass the millage to retire the almost \$12 million in general obligation bonds, detailed expansion plans weren't completed

earlier this year.

"All of these plans are costly to do," Papai said. "We did minimal cost studies. Otherwise, tax money would have been wasted."

But patrons are assured that just about everything in the Hills branch will be moved. Approximately 3,000 square feet will be added to the youth department and the audio visual department will be moved up from the lower level. Staff space and offices, as well as a computer clean room and telephone operations space will be in the second-story addition.

A second auditorium also will be built because of the large number of organizations that ask to use space in the library for meetings, Papai said. "I truly believe in feeding the mind and you feed the soul. There has to be a place where people come to gather information. But the ambience will make it a place they will want to return to," Papai added.

Books from page A1

354,926 the previous year.

In professional services in November, the Farmington branch had phone requests for help of 1,298, and in person at 4,640; the Hills branch had 2,637 phone calls for help and 8,634 in person requests. A year-to-date total for professional services for both branches was 84,923.

In the Internet and electronic resources area, log-ins, dial-ins and connections amounted to 31,769 with a year-to-date total of 136,368.

"By the time the new building opens, we will have a one million circulation," Papai said. "Our overall goal is to eliminate barriers to public use. That includes the physical building and policy obstacles," Papai said.

In response to a February 1998 survey of residents, the library board eliminated fees for feature video rentals and the rental collection of best sellers. Patrons are no longer required to pay a reserve fee.

Instead, the rental collection has been opened to a no-holds collection. "That means someone stands a chance and if they are interested in best sellers, there could be one available for them," Papai said. "The fee no longer made sense. We decided this was a barrier that was no longer logical."

Other changes include making videos — for kids and non-fiction of the type not typically found in video stores — free.

BUSINESS SCENE

Industry hires MacKinnon

The Industry Source, a Natick company located in Farmington Hills, recently hired Linda MacKinnon for the position of vice president of



Linda MacKinnon

Resident senior account exec

Kim Skeltis of Farmington Hills was promoted to senior

account executive at Shandwick International. Her responsibilities include media relations and international communications for real estate and software manufacturers.



Kim Skeltis

Eastern Michigan University Is Putting Down Roots in Metropolitan Detroit.



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