

Highmeadow students build miniature business world

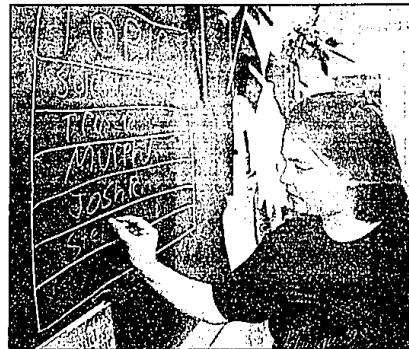
This story marks another installment of Today's Lesson, an occasional series which chronicles classroom activities in Farmington Public Schools. It is the final installment of the 1998-99 school year.



meadow Common Campus, "mayor" Brian Noble listed on the blackboard top concerns of other third graders.

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
timsmith@homecomm.net

With the Mini Society Town Hall meeting in session at High-



Issues: During the Mini Society Town Hall meeting at Highmeadow Common Campus, secretary Jordan Lindsey lists topics of discussion.

Question: Teacher Karen Farber listens to the mini-society meeting, while student David Hayhow raises a hand to voice a concern.



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by Herbert M. Gardner, D.D.S.

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All ears: Joel Millman is a casual listener during the Mini Society session.

At the top

of the list

were solicitation

and money,

kind of like issues

of the real

world.

"I've had

people come

up to me

saying peo-

ple were

going into

their busi-

nesses and

saying, 'Can

you buy

this?'"

recounted

Brian to the

other third

graders in the

class-

room of teacher Karen Farber.

"Even if you have a solicitor's

license, you can't go up to the

businesses."

"We need to discuss this and find out what solicitation means and what it doesn't mean," interjected Farber, moderating the town hall talks.

The Mini Society, comprised of the classes of Farber and Carol Apol, created products, operated their own businesses - and, yes, had solicitors licenses. To get a taste of the real world of retail, they had previously visited real stores in a real city, Farmington.

"Kids found out if you put a 'No Solicitors' sign in the window, kids can't come in to sell goods in the store," said Farber, who described the Mini Society as a class project intended to help youngsters gain a hands-on lesson in being thoughtful con-

sumers.

Those in the Mini Society, which was funded by fake "Super Sellers" money, needed to find out whether that also applied to their own businesses.

Some of those included the following: the hand-painted rocks (featuring the U-M logo, for example) of Lindsey Coursen and Emily Willey; laminated bookmarks, produced and sold by Alex Blugerman, David Hayhow and Ferique Rothari; or Cheryl Cuthbert's color-splattered greeting cards and stationery, created with sponges and marbles instead of paint brushes.

"If you solicit," asked one student, "what if someone doesn't want to buy it?"

"Then they don't buy it," retorted another.

The exchange, and several others, illustrated how the Highmeadow town hall session featured the same kind of free-flowing discussion as those staged by adults.

Mini Society member Matt Scott had his own creative solution to the question of whether to solicit or not. He paid \$5 in SS money for a license to carry a sandwich sign. Matt said he did better because he didn't have to pay rent.

"And more people saw you because you weren't crammed into one space," added another student.

Later during the town hall meeting, students delved into matters such as respecting others' retail space, and the items contained therein - displayed on desks, doled out for a weekly fee of a mere \$12 in fake money.

"Kids came up and said, 'Do you want to buy this?' and then they dented some of our cards," lamented one student.

Farber then asked if businesses had the right to ask problem customers to leave the premises.

"Yes," said one Mini Society member.

"But they'd lose business," noted another.

Computer bid on board agenda

elements.

The Farmington school board, during Tuesday's 7:30 p.m. meeting at the Lewis Schulman Administrative Center, is expected to award a \$3.1 million bid for the purchase of about 1,600 computers, of which 80 are laptops.

Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent of business and operational services, said the bid would include monitors, printers and installation, among other

elements. Money for the purchase will come out of a special budget fund established two years ago and is not part of the \$93.1 million bond issue approved by voters in September 1997.

Eight companies bid for the job, said Dan Sutton, director of information technology. The computers would be installed over the summer and into fall, if needed.

The board also is expected to

award a bid for new televisions

and VCRs for classroom use at

several schools. Cannon said all classrooms are targeted to

receive TVs and VCRs over the

next two or three years.

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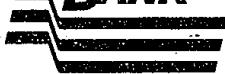
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