

Cast members include:

"Damn Yankees" is performed 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday by Farmington High School students in the Farmington Theatre.

Following are the main characters of the play, in order of appearance: "Joe Boyd/Harry," "Gail Holland," "Meg Boyd," Meghan Osborne, "Mr. Apologate," Matt Swann, "Charles," "Gus," "Hagala," "Doris," "Amy Elford," "Henry," Mark Mashlay, "Bokovik," Brian O'Sullivan, "Smokoy," John Sloan III, "Linville," James Kourakis, "Van Buren," Devin Fardus.

DAMN YANKEES

"Rocky," Ryan Laverly; "Gloria," Rebecca Christon; "Lynch," John Shea; "Welch," Nick Ward; "Bryant," Jeff Reasi; "Bouley," Owen Weber; "Lew," Adam Pierce; "Lola," Julia MacMillan; "Miss Weston," Lindsey Morgner; "Commissioner," Matt LeBlanc; "Post Master," Richard Hayford.

Blakeney's from page A1

and our sons took over. It was a very nice, family restaurant."

In its heyday, Blakeney's became a tradition with many families, hosting everything from wedding receptions to baby showers. New moms and dads would bring in their new babies for a celebratory meal on the way home from Botsford Hospital, and many children enjoyed their very first restaurant dinner there.

Those family connections have meant a lot to Blakeney's. They made it tough for Robert and Diane to close up shop, and for their customers, who flooded the

business answering machine with messages expressing shock and sadness.

"I have mixed feelings," Robert said. "We'd been in the community a long time, serving people, providing jobs and building a lot of memories."

Still, the clientele changed over time. Regular customers moved out of the area. Business was good, but not what it once was.

The Blakeney's had even approached the city about some kind of redevelopment, because they were involved in the Grand River corridor revitalization

efforts. Nothing panned out.

It has also been frustrating for them to see so little publicity given to an area that is so much a part of the community, yet is still struggling to maintain its vitality. Robert wishes the same newspaper calling to ask him questions about his closed business had given its contributions and history a little more coverage when Blakeney's was still open.

But he's not much for pointing the finger of blame. While their decision was a difficult one, Robert said, it was also the right one.

"We felt it was time," he said.

Robert isn't sure what's going to happen to the building. A neighboring business has expressed interest, and other potential buyers have inquired. It may or may not be a restaurant again, he said.

Customers like Lawrence Niblet will miss the place. He and many others have emailed and called into the Observer to find out more about what happened.

"We're very disappointed," Niblet said. "It was a good place. Nice hospitality."

Frosh

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work hotline.

"Their grades are a little better than other ninth graders," Barrett told school board members. "So the attention seems to be working."

Barrett and other members of the Transition Study Committee reported on things that have already been done or are about to be done to smooth out the bump in the road many kids experience going from eighth to ninth grade. For example:

On Thursday, Jan. 27, parents of incoming Farmington High School freshmen received a primer about what their kids might expect in fall 2000. Similar programs will take place at Harrison and North high schools.

On Tuesday, Feb. 22, at Farmington Training Center, current freshmen from all three high schools will participate in a focus group to talk about their first impressions of high school. At the workshop, teachers from the middle and high school levels also will "talk and develop plans about how to strengthen plans across all levels," Judy White, assistant superintendent of instruction for the district, said during her update to the board.

Near the end of the school year, eighth graders visit high school and "move up" to sample freshman life. They follow an abbreviated schedule of ninth grade classes.

Also discussing efforts at their schools were North Farmington High School Principal Rick Jones and Ann Blanz of Harrison High School's counseling department, both on the Transitions Study Committee.

Jones reported that 36 percent of activities during Student Enrichment Time are devoted to transition activities. A team of 22 teachers are instructing ninth graders on topics such as goal-setting, time management, study skills, conflict management and substance abuse.

"They also provide (students with) work-world information through career clusters," Jones said. "This ... gives us a chance to offer important topics without compromising our instructional time."

During the second semester, students with a grade-point-average falling below 2.0 will face mandatory tutoring sessions with teachers. Meanwhile, Jones said a "mentor-mentoree" program is in its formative stages.

He told the board that the program would identify eighth graders at North's two feeder schools (Dunkel and Warner) who might be at risk of having difficulty making the jump to high school.

Those students would team up with juniors, with those pairings continuing into 2000-01, when participating students would be freshmen and seniors, respectively.

Also, North students in the National Honor Society are scheduled to this spring visit middle schoolers to discuss what they might expect next year.

Although Jones emphasized that "people, and not programs, make kids feel at home, we're confident our people, our staffs ... and our students will continue to work on making these transitions as relatively painless as possible."

Harrison is scheduling a "Moving Up" day, which includes a guided tour of the campus. Current students discuss ways to be successful, while next year's freshmen will complete worksheets about "How Much Do You Really Know About Harrison," Blanz said.

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