

OBSERVER SUPERSTARS

The following students have been named Observer Superstars for their academic achievements:

Jason Lubin - age 13, Duncel Middle School
 "My favorite class is choir. I love to sing. I also like to play hockey and chess."
 Algebra - A, American History - A+, Science - A+, Language Arts - A, Physical Education - A+, Concert Choir - A+
 Michael Smith - age 15, Harrison High School
 Honors English - A, Spanish 3

A, Wind Ensemble - A, Honors Math 2 - A, Core - C+, Social Studies - A, Chemistry - A+, Physical Education - A+
 Julian Hazelton - age 12, Warner Middle School
 "My favorite class is gym. I like to deliver the Observer because I get to get the car very cold when I roll down my window."
 Math - A, Science - A, Physical Education - A, Band - A, Geography - A, Language Arts - A, Academic Extension - A

By JONI HUBRED
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She may never have worn a badge or carried a gun, but when Rita Heenan left the Farmington Hills Police Department this week, everyone agreed the place just wouldn't be the same.

Handing her a chief's citation and an official retirement badge - the first ever awarded to a civilian - Chief Bill Dwyer called Heenan's contributions vital to the department. Everyone who spoke at her retirement celebration Thursday afternoon used words like "classy" and "nice."

"What a wonderful lady of grace," said Assistant Chief Marty Bledsoe. "You're an example of everything a person should be in their careers and more."

Assistant Chief Chuck Nebus recalled Heenan's support during difficult times in his life and noted she'd been an inspiration to everyone as she dealt with challenges of her own. He brought her a box of candy bars, a tribute to their traditional sharing of a Snickers cake on her birthday.

"No matter where she is or what she's doing," commented

Commander Pat Brown, "she always brings a touch of class." Heenan, who has served as Chief Dwyer's secretary for the past 15 years, told the gathering

six grandchildren and with her parents and "enjoying every moment I can," she said.

But the day full of gifts and citations and a dozen, long-

stemmed roses from her soon-to-be former boss was certainly bittersweet for Heenan.

"I'm going to miss you all so very much," she said.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BLEDSE
 Lovely Rita: Honored for more than 20 years of service to the Farmington Hills Police Department, Rita Heenan just finished up her last week as Chief Bill Dwyer's secretary.

School, post office work to resolve parking problems

By TIM SMITH
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Officials for William Grace Elementary School and the Farmington Hills Post Office are working out a solution to the problem of mail carriers parking in handicapped spaces in front of the school.

The problem was brought to the attention of William Grace Principal Mark Morawski by at least one parent of a handicapped student, who said the spaces have been used by mail vehicles since November 1999.

"I've had at least four incidents" where attempts to park her van into a handicapped-only space were blocked by a mail truck, said parent Carolyn Das. According to Das, whose son, Stephen, is a special education student at William Grace, postal workers "know what they're doing" when parking inside the blue lines - a common violation in parking lots everywhere, she said.

"This is an epidemic kind of problem, and not just with the (U.S.) Postal Service," Das said. "We get blocked in. What really burns me is people disregard the right thing to do."

Das said that when other vehicles use handicapped spaces, it makes it difficult, if not impossible, for some parents to get wheelchairs out of vans, up handicapped-access ramps and into the school building.

Morawski wrote a letter dated April 4 to Deborah Redmond, manager of the Farmington Hills Post Office on Indoplex Circle.

In the letter, Morawski wrote that "We have a variety of families and students who rely on using those spaces everyday at all different times, and we're looking for your strong support in making sure that we do not park in those locations at any time."

There are four handicapped spaces at William Grace, all marked with blue lines and posted "no parking" signs.

Laszlo Redmond said she talked with Morawski and was confident a quick solution could be reached, involving finding a parking spot that is mutually agreeable to the school and post office.

She emphasized that the postal carriers only parked in the spaces when delivering mail to the Farmington district school, and did not leave their vehicles there for more than a few minutes.

"I'm going to go to the site," Redmond said. "He (Morawski) has a parking space in mind. They (carriers) know they're not supposed to park in the handicapped spaces."

Morawski could not be reached for comment.

'This is an epidemic kind of problem and not just with the (U.S.) Postal Service.'

Carolyn Das
 -William Grace parent who uses handicapped parking spaces

Clarenceville invites 14 to summer school program

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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Clarenceville district officials have identified at least 14 third graders who will be "invited" to state-mandated summer school.

The larger question is: Will they show?

Though districts must offer a summer program for third-graders needing help in reading and math, students are not required to attend.

Clarenceville's third grade summer academy runs 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Thursday, July 30-Aug. 16, at Botsford Elementary. The three-week program includes 36 hours of instruction.

Clarenceville includes portions of Farmington Hills, Livonia and Redford.

Parents of those students will be notified after spring break, Superintendent Tom Tattan said.

"Plenty of them have been identified," Tattan said. "The problem is convincing them this is a good thing."

The academy is primarily designed for incoming fourth graders who are not credited in math or reading, which is based on standardized test results and other factors.

Students who have also completed third grade and feel they

need assistance in either subject can also attend. Depending on space the district may allow students from other grades to take part.

Two teachers will instruct, one for reading and writing and the other for math. Additional teachers may be added to maintain a seven-to-one student-instructor ratio.

Pupils can attend either or both 90-minute sessions. If 10 or more students need it, the district will provide bus transportation for those who attend the entire morning.

"We believe this is a more realistic time for people to show up," Tattan said.

The district opted to go later in the summer in hopes students will better retain what they learn when they start fourth grade. Pupils in the fourth grade take the Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests for the first time.

Cost for the academy ranges from \$4,700, depending on the number of students. Districts are required to pay for the state-mandated program, which is a sore point with some trustees.

"It was a political move, that's all," Trustee Bryan Bentley said. "If they really are concerned about kids' math and reading scores, they would mandate that they show up."

First-aid class offered for pet owners

American Red Cross volunteers Dee and Jerry Webster will teach a pet first-aid class from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 28, at 4 Legged Friends Daycare in Farmington.

The cost is \$25, which includes a pet first-aid book from the Red Cross.

The class will help pet owners know how to respond when an animal stops breathing, becomes overheated in the sun or mistakenly eats something poisonous.

Students will also learn

CPR, mouth-to-snout breathing techniques and how to recognize signs of different poisons being present in an animal's system.

4 Legged Friends Daycare co-owners Kim Thomas and Chris Towns would like to have the sessions monthly, depending on interest.

For additional information, call 248-474-4100. Space is limited to the first 10 who sign up. 4 Legged Friends Daycare is located at 33400 Nine Mile Road, just east of Farmington Road.

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