



"ALL ABOUT SPRING" was the title of the operetta first and second graders at Deford Elementary School performed for more than 110 parents, grandparents and friends last Thursday evening. Harriet Warner's first graders are shown above. Virginia Crawford's second graders are below.



Migrant workers face possible housing shortage

Migrant laborers coming to work in the Thumb area's sugar beet fields may be faced with a shortage of adequate, licensed housing this June.

This assessment of a developing problem came from Marvin G. Johansen, chief of the state Health Department's Agricultural Labor Camp Section.

Johansen said that proper migrant housing in the counties of Tuscola, Sanilac, and Huron was so scarce last year that some migrant families were discovered living in vacant houses not licensed for such use, a clear violation of state law.

"The housing situation will be worse this year," Johansen warned, "because of what is shaping up to be even less available migrant housing."

Two owners of agricultural labor camps that have been licensed in the past, one in Tuscola county and one in Huron county, have advised the Health Department they do not intend to license the facilities this year.

The Abke Camp in Tuscola county, owned by a Unionville man, was licensed last year for an adult capacity of 104. The Verona Camp in Huron county, owned by the Michigan Sugar Co., was licensed to house 72 adults.

Since both owners do not plan to operate the camps in 1980 because of needed major improvements to make them licensable, migrant housing accommodations in the area will be able to handle 176 fewer adults. Without the Abke and Verona Camps, if the same

camps in the three counties are again licensed this season, there will be available housing for only 349 adults in 13 camps.

Fearing the problems that could arise from this situation, Johansen said the health staff advised the Office of Migrant Services in the Michigan Department of Social Services and the Huron and Tuscola County Departments of Social Services of the pending potential housing problem.

"If all of the migrant workers and their families who previously occupied the Abke and Verona Camps came to Michigan this summer and had no alternative housing available, a significant problem could arise in the placement of these persons," Johansen cautioned.

"That's why we alerted other agencies with an interest in migrant affairs, some as far back as last December, that a potential problem was in the making."

He explained that the law requires any agricultural labor camp providing living quarters for five or more migratory workers to be licensed by the state Health Department.

For licensing, a facility must meet minimum requirements related to such basic items as construction, sanitation, sewage, water supply, plumbing, and garbage and rubbish disposal. "These requirements apply," he emphasized, "whether the living unit is a single family house, mobile home, or multi-family structure."

Colleen Stafford, mother of 3, gets college degree

Colleen Stafford had an audience of six Saturday when she received her B.A. degree in commencement ceremonies at Saginaw Val-

ley State College.

The former choir director at the First Presbyterian church in Cass City graduated with a perfect 4.0 average. She majored in general music, specializing in voice.

She and her husband David have three children, Jessica, 8, Jeremy, 7, and Jonathan, 5. The family lives at 4178 E. Cass City Road.

In addition to her husband and children, also in attendance at the commencement ceremonies were her parents from Warren, Ohio.

Mrs. Stafford, 35, began her college career at the University of Michigan in 1963. She studied voice there for two years, then transferred to Wayne State University in Detroit, where she took some classes part-time and worked as a welfare caseworker and later ran a child day care center.

She resumed her part-time college career at SVSC in fall, 1977.

She and her husband were married in 1968. They moved

to Cass City in 1970, where he was the area representative for the Michigan Education Association (MEA).

Mrs. Stafford was choir director at the First Presbyterian church here for about three years and for the past year has performed the same task at the Presbyterian church in Caro.

She was director of the Cass City Bicentennial Choir in 1976. In the summer of 1978, she sang in three operas performed as part of the "Matrix: Midland" festival

in that community.

Mrs. Stafford may continue her musical studies some day at the graduate level.

For now, her days of commuting to SVSC, either two or three times a week, and finding babysitters are over. The latter task eased the final semester when the college opened a child care center.

The family will be moving this summer to Grand Blanc, where David Stafford has been the MEA representative for more than a year.

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Probate workers hearing postponed

The scheduled Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC) hearing of a complaint by the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners against the union representing court-house employees has again been postponed.

It was originally scheduled to be heard March 24, but was postponed until Monday of this week so that the board's labor attorney could be there.

It has now been postponed a second time, without a new date being set. The hearing was to have been conducted by MERC Judge Shlomo Sperka.

The reason for the postponement this time, according to county Personnel Administrator Jackie Larson, is that both sides wanted time to examine the study conducted by the state court administrator's office of salaries paid to county probate court employees. The study, which has not been made public, was released last week.

The union and county board's personnel committee both agreed to the postponement.

The complaint was filed by the county board in January against the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 25, AFL-CIO, its business agent, Rick Kloor, and the seven probate court employees who are the center of the dispute.

The complaint charges that the probate court employees were included in the contract the county negotiated with its courthouse employees, members of AFSCME Local 2697, which went into effect Jan. 1.

The union later negotiated a separate agreement with Probate Judge W. Wallace Kent Jr. for the seven employees, which called for salaries totaling about \$17,000 higher than called for in the contract for all courthouse employees.

In an effort to avoid a showdown between the

judge and the county board, both sides agreed in February to have the court administrator's office conduct a study to compare wages of the probate court employees with those of other courthouse employees

Search on for tax alternative to Tisch

By Warren M. Hoyt
Mich. Press Association

Legislative leaders and the governor are searching for the right combination to shift taxpayers' liability away from the property tax system with the lost revenue -- estimated at around \$500 million -- to be picked up by either an increase in the state income tax or sales tax rate.

This is not being done out of the goodness of their hearts but it is a conscious effort to short circuit the Tisch property tax cut ballot question of 1980.

Homeowners, continuing to feel the squeeze of escalating property taxes, are probably ready to vote for the Tisch plan this year after opting for a less radical approach at the 1978 election.

At that time, voters selected the less radical tax limitation constitutional amendment in hopes it would put the brakes on soaring property taxes and government spending.

However, after nearly two years, that amendment has done little in providing relief for individual taxpayers.

Petitions are now being circulated again to get the Tisch property tax cut back on the ballot -- an action expected to succeed without question.

The proposal is simple. It slices property taxes in half

and in similar-sized counties.

By action of the county commissioners, the probate court employees are receiving wages and fringe benefits at 1979 levels until the dispute is resolved.

and prohibits state government from taking any action to recoup the lost revenues.

Feeling the mood of the voter, legislative leaders and the governor have been meeting to try to reach a middle ground and put forth a proposal the voters would adopt over the tax cut plan.

Citing already shrinking revenues as a result of the hard-hit automobile industry in Michigan, government officials say basic human services cannot be met with such a radical cut in state revenues.

In order to soften the blow on property owners, several tax shift plans have been proposed. Simply put, they would give individual taxpayers a break of around \$500 per year on their property tax bills, but the lost revenue would be shifted to the income tax rate or to the sales tax.

The legislature will soon put on a push for the adoption of a proposed constitutional amendment to get the question on the ballot in direct competition with the Tisch tax cut proposal.

After getting the question on the ballot, state officials will be covering the state with a concentrated personal and media blitz promoting the plan as a responsible alternative to the Tisch plan.

In Michigan, this campaign will overshadow any other question on the ballot or any race including the presidency.

Not only will voters be voting for either the tax shift plan or the tax cut proposal, but a more crucial question may be answered in November voting on the issue.

That is the basic question of whether to put confidence in public officials who will be proposing the shift in light of the state's revenue problems or in those who advocate a tax cut who say there is too much government and that it is time the people take control through the election process.

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