

Farmington Observer

Volume 95 Number 6

Monday, October 31, 1983

Farmington, Michigan

32 Pages

Twenty-five cents

Mile definition fogs road to cable peace

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Only two residents showed up last Friday morning for what was expected to be a meeting between the Southwestern Oakland Cable Consortium (SWOCC) and the MetroVision cable firm's national president to discuss a dispute over cable installation.

Instead, Henry Harris of Atlanta met informally last Thursday with the three city managers of Novi, Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Both Farmington Hills City Manager Lawrence Savage and Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman said the meeting was never intended to be a public meeting, rather a work session with the cable firm's president.

The Farmington Observer, however, reported in the Oct. 27 issue that the SWOCC would meet in public with Harris. Although the decision to meet with Harris was made after about 50 angry residents left a SWOCC meeting last Tuesday, Lark Samouelian, SWOCC executive director, acknowl-

edged the following morning that if the consortium met, it would be open to the public.

"We agreed to get together again," Deadman said. "We just covered the problem — in detail."

THE PROBLEM concerns who will pay for the installation of cable and whether some residents in the less densely populated neighborhoods of the tri-city franchise area will get cable at all.

Angry residents, particularly from the Power and 11 Mile neighborhood first complained in early October about having to pay a \$200-\$300 installation fee while about 95 percent of the Hills' 21,000 potential subscribers are receiving free installation. Under MetroVision's "line-extension policy" customers may be charged for cable installation in areas which have fewer than 30 houses in a linear mile.

At a SWOCC meeting last week, which drew about 50 angry and frustrated residents, MetroVision local general manager Tom Bjorklund said that according to the firm's current data, the Quaker Valley subdivision also will not be wired with cables.

While residents in Novi, an even more sparsely populated community than the Hills, are similarly affected by the "line extension" policy, Deadman said Farmington residents are not because of the city's densely populated neighborhoods.

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Access committee seeks participants

Anyone interested in producing health-oriented cable-TV shows is invited to help form the Southwestern Oakland Cable Consortium's health access advisory committee at a 2 p.m. Wednesday meeting.

Moderated by Lark Samouelian, SWOCC director, and a member of public access cable-TV committee, the meeting will be in classroom C of Botsford General Hospital's administration building.

The meeting's purpose is to organize the health advisory committee which will later recommend, to the larger 10-member public access committee, specific health programming and equipment needs.

Although the public access committee is responsible for coordinating the use of the 15 public access channels available through the MetroVision cable firm, the smaller advisory committee is formed to make sure that specific interests and needs, such as health, are addressed, Samouelian said.

So far, two other advisory committees, religious and educational, have been formed, Samouelian said. The educational committee is developing recommendations for equipment MetroVision will buy for producing shows. Money has been allocated in the tri-city's franchise proposal for the educational committee's use, Samouelian said. The religious access committee represents all denominations in the tri-city area, she added.

Back up tax plans, school chief warns

By Diane Gale
staff writer

The freedom of legislators to take unpopular tax proposal stands and not fear a recall campaign is the primary force that will determine the fall or rise of Michigan schools, according to state School Superintendent Phillip Runkel.

"You see people wanting to support education, but when you ask them to put out the bucks it doesn't happen," Runkel said.

State Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, invited Runkel to speak before a group of educators including school superintendents, school board members and teachers who are in Faxon's 15th district senatorial district. The discussion took place at Harrison High School Thursday.

"This is a serious, serious, serious problem," Runkel said. "I'm frightened that by recalling when you don't like a vote that we'll lose stability in the system."

Runkel is referring to the election slated for Nov. 22 on whether to recall Sen. Phillip Mastin. The recall drive was started by constituents who opposed Mastin's support for Gov. James Bligh-

hard's 38 percent temporary income tax increase.

"You can't expect too much out of a legislature that is standing at the gullitole," Faxon said.

HE SAID that the issue of improving American schools must not die. The politicians are discussing this point in the state and across the country following the release of recent studies like "A Nation at Risk."

"I believe in Lansing there is more support in both parties than I've ever seen in my tenure as superintendent," Runkel said. "The momentum is there, but the burden is on us to invest in human resources for our state and for our nation."

"I don't believe our futures are very

bright, unless our values change," he said. "The monies are there, and it's a matter of how we want to place them."

The following are suggestions Runkel made for improving Michigan schools.

- Specific certification for teachers in middle schools.
- Retraining of teachers, because the average age of teachers is 42-years-old.
- Certification for administrators.
- Develop foreign language programs.
- Adjust to the changing structure of the family unit, which now has more one-parent homes.
- Develop training programs for administrators.

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What's that?

Ghostly encounters unfold

By Karen Hermes Smith
staff writer

Ghosts have long been associated with Halloween, but do they really exist?

They do, according to three suburbanites — Richard Brooks, a philosophy professor at Oakland University in Rochester, Marlon Kuelo of Garden City, a 22-year teacher who practices witchcraft using the name of Gundella; and So Lewis, director of the Michigan Metaphysical Society which meets in Southfield.

All three said they have seen, heard or felt ghosts or have investigated and believed other peoples' ghost stories.

"I'm not willing to accept that something can't be until I'm shown that it can't be," said Brooks, an associate member of the Parapsychology Association who's taught parapsychology classes at Oakland.

BROOKS SAID he has experienced two paranormal happenings.

While sitting in church about a year after his father died, he said he saw a "fleeting glimpse" of his father's face and shoulders. The image, he said, surfaced about six

feet in the air. "I figured he was kind of looking in on me," Brooks said.

In the second incident, Brooks said, some palm branches tucked behind a picture suddenly fell down two feet to one side within an hour after his first wife died.

"The furnace was off and the windows weren't open," Brooks said, adding that, after uprighting the palms, he tried jiggling the picture and blowing on them to make them move. The only thing that moved them was his touch, he said.

A common experience, he said, is for people to "pick up something" in the corner of their eye, then as quickly as they turn to look at it, it disappears.

LEWIS, WHO'S taught parapsychology at Wayne County Community College and lectures throughout the country, said many people feel or smell ghosts, which are more common occurrences than seeing one. A family friend, he said, frequently caught whiffs of her husband's cigar smoke years after he was dead.

Most ghosts appear because they have hopeful messages for the living, according to Gundella. Frequently, the disembodied spirit of a dead person will appear to his loved ones and assure them that he's alive on another plane, in another existence.

How the issues match up with debate

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Because there is no new money in the budget this year, the Farmington Hills City Council is moving ahead more slowly with capital improvements it has planned for several years.

These projects are among issues being debated by challengers and incumbents in the current City Council election campaign. In June, the City Council defeated a 1.26-mill increase holding local taxes at last year's 7.825-mill (per \$1,000 of assessed value). But that automatically excluded a proposed one-mill levy for capital im-

provements to help pay for major drainage projects and a proposed police department expansion, major items listed in a six-year capital improvement plan.

Although maintaining last year's tax levy, the council adopted its originally proposed \$14.3-million budget, taking a total \$821,329 out of \$1.8 million in reserves to balance the new budget. The city now has about \$1.3 million in reserves.

While the city is surviving without its tax increase, capital improvement projects had to be cut to accommodate the loss of the proposed one-mill levy.

The proposed police building, the most notable of projects listed in the

capital improvements plan, received no "new money" because of the defeated tax increase. Although some time away, the \$1.3 million in reserves could be used in part to begin paying for a station.

The architects' original \$2.3-million estimate for a police building was based on a national standard of 330 square feet per employee, or a total 33,000 to 38,000 square feet. Surprised at the estimated cost, council asked city administrators and architects to develop plans based on a total cost not to exceed \$2.5 million.

"So we are studying the exact space needs with that (cost limit) in mind," said William Costick, assistant city

manager.

"We are going to build a police building that is similar to this building (City Hall) in quality," said William Costick, assistant city manager, maintaining that city officials never had the intention of building a "big shabaz."

The police building issue began with a feasibility study by Luckenbach & Ziegelman, Birmingham architects, to determine the best location for a new police building.

Once the empty Middlebelt Elementary School was ruled out as a possible location, council members leaned toward putting the new police building

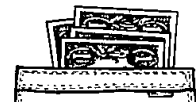
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