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Farmington FOCUS

If you have a news item, feature story idea or an action picture with a Farmington area connection, send a note to our downtown office at 3203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

FARMINGTON'S sidewalks and streets will be used for a hunger relief program fund-raiser at 2 p.m. Sunday, June 1, from the First United Methodist Church, 3312 Grand River.

Farmington City Council has granted permission for a Church World Services-sponsored 10-kilometer benefit walk. Twenty-five percent of the proceeds will be used locally.

Church World Services is required to provide the city with a \$1-million public liability insurance policy naming the city as an insured.

WILDFLOWER seeds were sown along Michigan highways last week to bring color and beauty to motorists as the state's pre-150th birthday celebration began.

The early birthday gift came from Michigan Federated Garden Clubs members. Among the officers doing the sowing was Nancy Passfield, a Farmington Hills resident and Hill and Dale Garden Club member, one of the chapters of gardeners sponsoring the statewide planting of wildflowers.

Michigan turns 150 next January.

ROAD work's set. Farmington Hills City Council has established a special assessment district for road improvements in the Westgate/Franklin Village subdivision.

The work will include paving and improved drainage.

Affected roads are West Gate Road, South Brook Lane, North Brook Lane and Richmond Hill Road. Sixty-two percent of the affected property owners signed a petition requesting the work.

Of the total project cost of \$306,368, the city will pay about \$42,180. Affected property owners will share the remaining \$264,187, based on an assessment formula. The average homestead will be assessed \$3,823. The largest assessment will be \$4,665. Work is expected to be done next construction season.

WATCH where you park near St. Alexander Church. Farmington Hills City Council has prohibited parking at all times along the south side of Shilawasse from the east edge of Verdun to the west edge of Colwell in front of the church.

The request is based on the very congested and unsafe conditions which occur when motorists using the church's baseball field park along the south side of Shilawasse Road, City Manager William Costick said.

The church has off-street parking available for ballfield users.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — State, local and county officials met in an attempt to ease the path toward repaving and widening the 12 Mile Road corridor. "We know the problems are there," Mayor Jan Dolan told those at the meeting. "Obviously, it's a very important issue in Farmington Hills."

Shut nuclear sites, state urged

By Casey Hans
staff writer

The nuclear plant accident in the Soviet Union prompted strong reaction last week from a Farmington Hills resident and the assistant di-

rector of an environmental, anti-nuclear group.

"The accident is what we have been abstractly talking about all along," said Mary Johnston, assistant director of the Safe Energy Coalition of Michigan.

Her group believes the Soviet Union incident is a global one, despite assurances from Environmental Protection Agency officials who have said they "don't expect it to pose any threat" to our environment in this hemisphere.

"We look upon it as an increase in the total body burden" of radiation, she added. "Everything's contributing."

Localizing the nuclear issue, the coalition approached Michigan Governor James Blanchard last Thurs-

day, asking for an executive order closing all nuclear facilities in the state. They also picketed late Friday afternoon in downtown Detroit at the Detroit Edison building in sup-

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

A smoky encounter

Although it looks like a life-threatening situation, this house fire April 22 was part of a training drill conducted by the Farmington Hills Fire Department. About 25 firefighters from Farmington Hills and Novi took part in the four-hour exercise, which focused on firefighting, ventilation and rescue. "It's probably the best type of training we can get," Lt. Peter Baldwin of the Farmington Hills Fire Department said. The crew putting water on the fire with the hose is trying

to contain a garage fire while the crew on the roof is cutting a hole to ventilate hot gases from upstairs flames. Land developers often donate old houses to the city and the city allows the fire department to burn them for practice. This house is on the future site of an office building on Haggerty, north of Eight Mile, in Farmington Hills.

Maverick rabbi challenges tradition

By Joanne Moliszowski
staff writer

For a man who sparks controversy for many, Rabbi Sherwin Wine appears delightfully at peace with himself and his philosophies.

"From the beginning, I knew what I believed and that what I teach is good and important for people," said

Wine, 58, founder of Humanistic Judaism.

"The key is not to have everyone agree with you. If you say something no one disagrees with, then it's vague. If you say something specific, people are bound to disagree."

So Wine forges ahead with the feeling that those who regard him and his philosophies of Humanistic

people

Judaism with hostility could very well be insecure about their own religious philosophies and attitudes toward life.

And from all appearances, the Detroit native seems anything but insecure. "To be a leader, you have to have the ability to say something specific and the ability to deal with hostility," Wine said.

Those who maintain that his Humanistic Judaism defies the sanctity of age-old religious belief and tradition are also told to consider the growth of his following.

WHEN HE first founded the Birmingham Temple in 1963, eight families were members. Today, the temple, which moved from Birmingham to Farmington Hills in 1971, is host to 410 families. Despite the congregation's growth, Wine is philosophical and tempered in his view of success.

"I think growth is one of the signs of success. But it isn't sufficient. Success is that people understand the message," Wine said.

Wine's message of Humanistic Judaism is described as "the philosophy of those who affirm their Jewish identity, their independence of supernatural authority, and the right to determine the purpose and course of their own lives."

Viewing Judaism as "the culture of Jewish people," Wine maintains that traditional Judaism is a "God-centered culture," with the primary focus on theological issues.

"We are a people-centered culture," Wine said of Humanistic Judaism. "The religious experience comes from the discovery of one's own power. To me, religion is relevant only if it does that."

WINE'S GOAL is to record the philosophies of Humanistic Judaism for future generations. So far, Wine has completed one book, "Judaism

Beyond God."

He's currently working on another, titled "The Real History of the Jews." In the future, he would like to write a celebration book for holidays and ceremonies, as well as another on "the life of reason and dignity."

A philosopher at heart and by profession, Wine made up his mind long ago that his role would be one of providing people with a livable philosophy. That's a key to Wine's choice of becoming a rabbi rather than a col-

lege philosophy professor.

"I chose to become a rabbi because with the academic, you never really develop close relationships with people," he said.

As philosopher and rabbi, Wine strives to help people live by finding answers to questions such as, "What is the purpose of my life? How do I

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Arson: costly, deadly

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

This is Arson Awareness Week in Michigan.

And both Farmington Hills Fire Lt. Peter Baldwin and Farmington Fire Marshal Michael Wiggins urge residents to take heed.

Arson threatens people and property and costs taxpayer money. Arson costs Michigan \$80 million in direct losses yearly.

"Most arson fires are done to defraud insurance companies — to get out from under debt, from under a lease and liability," Baldwin said. "The end result is that we all pay for arson."

"Each person who pays a premium in part supports people who burn property and get away with it. Insurance premiums will rise. Insurance companies aren't in business to lose money."

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Rabbi Sherwin Wine inside the Birmingham Temple — founded in 1963 and moved to Farmington Hills in 1971.

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