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THE WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY

Deal me in, Dave: Join the Farmington Single Professionals for cards and dinner from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Cowley's Old Village Inn in downtown Farmington.

TUESDAY

Wadaya know, Joe? U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg will address the Farmington Rotary at noon at the Brass Pointe restaurant at Orchard Lake and 10 Mile roads. The public is welcome. Lunch is \$10.

WEDNESDAY

Look on the bright side: The Optimist Club meets at 7:30 a.m. at San Marino's On the Tee restaurant.

THURSDAY

Talk, talk, talk: The Windbaggers/Toastmasters Club meets 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Kerby's Koney Island, 21200 Haggerty, in Farmington Hills.

FRIDAY

Grab some coffee: People ages 16-25 can enjoy the relaxing atmosphere of The Basement Coffeehouse from 8 p.m. to midnight every Friday at the Harvest Temple Worship Center, 29233 Drake, Farmington Hills.

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Hills hosts regional police school

Farmington Hills hosted the Northwestern University Traffic Institute's School of Police Staff and Command recently, placing four officers in the graduating class of 40 officers from around the state.

By JONI HUBERD
STAFF WRITER
jhuberd@ec.hometown.com

Imagine cramming seven college courses into 10 weeks, all the while working in a high-stress career and coping with the joys and challenges of family life.

Forty police officers from throughout Michigan celebrated the completion of that accomplishment Friday, emerging from Glen Oaks Country Club as graduates of Northwestern University Traffic Institute's School of Police Staff and

Command. Among them were Farmington Hills Police Lt. Gilbert Kohls, Sgt. Craig Summers, Sgt. Timothy Connor and Sgt. Timothy Swanson.

Police Chief Bill Dwyer said the institute's 192nd session represented the first time the school came to the officers, instead of the other way around.

"We're the first local agency that has brought the Northwestern staff to the community," he said. "Because we were able to coordinate this, it allowed officers to be in their positions with their departments and still get this valuable

training. I'm very proud we were able to do this."

Farmington Hills staff helped set up the sessions, which were held for a solid week, once a month, at the Costick Activities Center on 11 Mile Road. Whatever costs the department incurred in refreshments and staff time were more than offset by the fact that hosting meant Farmington Hills' four officers had their \$4,000 tuition paid.

But being involved has meant much more for the department, Dwyer said.

"The payoff is these people have not only gone through one of the most prestigious command schools in the U.S., but also what they bring back to the department and the interaction with executives throughout the state and the knowledge they've gained," he said. Students put in a total of 350 hours class time, plus hundreds of hours

studying during the three weeks between classes. Connor said he and his classmates, faced with stacks of textbooks, three-ring binders and other materials, may have wondered what they were getting themselves into.

Coming from Wayne, Eaton and Jackson counties, the University of Michigan and 22 local police and public safety departments, the officers had varied backgrounds and came from communities large and small, metro and out-state. Altogether, they represent agencies that employ more than 6,500 law officers, cover nearly 2,000 square miles and serve a population of 2.6 million people, Chief Dwyer said.

Still, they all found common ground. "We graduated as team," he told the graduation day audience of more than 120 police chiefs, law enforcement

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REUNION

Gathering ends with a salute and farewell to fallen captain

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@ec.hometown.com

Jazz music and jovial conversation filled the fast-darkening sky outside The Burroughs Home.

Almost unbelievably, the second day of the 14th annual U.S. Navy Landing Craft Infantry Gusboat 450 reunion suddenly was nearly two-thirds completed.

But nobody bothered to yell these World War II veterans and their guests that another evening's worth of festivities would end. In fact, LCIG-450 communications man Len Rochon, of Belleville, kept the evening going with some lively recollections of how tough it was to find surviving crew members when the first couple reunions were organized in the mid-1980s.

Despite a hoarse voice due to continuous story telling, Rochon remembered being recruited, pardon the pun, to track down the sailors he spent two years with. The first step entailed doing research at a library, in hopes of tracking down about 16 guys.

Ed Gray was one particular LCIG-450 comrade he had an interesting experience trying to find. At the first reunion, people came up to Rochon and asked, "Where's Ed Gray?"

That became quite a quest for Rochon.

"I said, 'I can't find Ed Gray,'" Rochon said, flanked at the table by his wife, Helen, and LaBelle Ross, the wife of crewman Mike Ross. Several others stopped by to listen, including Ed Goossens and George Kern of Farmington; Goossens and Kern co-organized the Ft. Myers, Fla. get-together held Nov. 18-21.



Top 20: From left, reunion-goers Vaughn Hampton, John Socha, Tom Campbell and Jack Manuel were among 20 members of the LCIG-450 at the three-day festivities.

"People were ticked off about it. So I went home and made up my mind I was going to find Ed Gray" for the second reunion, Rochon continued.

After determining that Gray hailed from a small Maryland town, he checked it out on the map and wrote a letter to the local chamber of commerce.

"I knew damn well they didn't have one (chamber of commerce)," Rochon said. "The post office got the letter and sent it to the town's volunteer fire department. They had a meeting the last Sunday in September. And, the chief opened the letter up and he said 'This guy's looking for

Ed Gray.' Nobody knew anybody named Ed Gray."

A couple months later, a woman wanted to organize a Christmas party for everybody in town.

Finding old friends
The only adequate building for such an occasion was the fire hall. One of the party organizers asked the fire chief for permission to use the facility. The OK was given, with the stipulation that the room be cleaned up afterward.

Paperwork to reserve the hall needed to be completed, the fire chief explained. Near the desk was a waste paper basket that apparently hadn't been emptied out since September. Lo and behold, Rochon's

letter about how to find Ed Gray remained in the basket, unopened.

A woman fished the letter out, opened it and read it. She said she knew a family named Gray that lived around Frederick, Maryland. Sure enough, Ed Gray turned out to be related to that family, Rochon continued. The letter finally was delivered.

"On Christmas Eve," Rochon said, "my telephone rang and he says 'This is Ed Gray, who in the hell are you?'"

Rochon later went to see his old friend in person, and Gray - who was on heavy medication at the time for a heart condition - still did not recognize him.

"He said he didn't remember anything about me," Rochon said. "And I relieved him so that he could come home" from the war.

Two months later, Rochon happened to be in Virginia visiting relatives and telephoned Gray.

"I said 'I'm in Virginia and I'll be there in about 35 minutes,'" he said. "So when I got there, he was sitting at the end of his driveway in a lawn chair, with a baseball hat on with '450' on it. ... When I got out of the pick-up truck he recognized me."

Only because of Rochon's persistence, Gray did show up at the second LCIG-450 reunion and has been a regular attendee ever since.

At the Ft. Myers reunion, Gray enjoyed card games and kibitzed with Kern, Rochon and others. He still wore a baseball hat, too.

"It was a miracle the way it happened," said Rochon, particularly how the original letter was not thrown out despite sitting in the waste basket for three months.

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Botsford tops performance report

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@ec.hometown.com

A patients-first approach at Botsford Hospital is keeping the customers satisfied.

So much so that the Farmington Hills-based hospital topped the list of 31 southeastern Michigan hospitals in a just-released performance report issued by a consortium of employers and health care purchasers.

The report, put out by the Southeast Michigan Employer and Purchaser Consortium, focused on how hospitals performed in emergency and cardiac care. Patients at Botsford were surveyed in early 1999 to determine level of satisfaction with health care services.

Botsford scored highest in the survey because doctors and nurses strive to quickly care for patients who enter the emergency room and relieve their pain as much as possible, said Dr. Ronald Lagerfeld, director of the hospital's emergency room.

"We, probably for the last year, have put forward this effort at our (staff) meetings," Lagerfeld said. "We practice medicine. But the business we're in is truly a hospitality business."

'We practice medicine. But the business we're in is truly a hospitality business.'

Dr. Ronald Lagerfeld
—emergency room director

According to Lagerfeld, a bedside registration system is a key factor in the top ranking. "It brings all our resources to the patients."

Those who enter Botsford's urgent care and emergency room are evaluated for the seriousness of their condition and placed into one of 23 beds before they are registered.

"When our bed capacity gets full, then we might have to revert back to the other kind of registration," said Lagerfeld, referring to where patients register before being taken back to the unit. That can be frustrating and slow for people in pain.

The system enables urgent care patients to be released in 90 minutes. Those with more serious medical needs usually are discharged after about three hours.

"If they get admitted, we try to get them to the floor (their room) in four

hours," Lagerfeld said. "Those are our benchmarks."

Other areas where Botsford did well included the answers to questions about whether patients had confidence in doctors and nurses and would they return or refer a friend to Botsford's emergency department, the doctor said.

Botsford is a 320-bed teaching hospital, with an emergency medicine residency program. Lagerfeld said the focus on "hospitality" - which is practiced throughout Botsford - might have contributed to a significant increase in patients.

In 1999, according to available data, 57,000 people have visited the hospital. That is up from 1998, when 50,500 patients were treated.

Only William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak saw more patients this year, Lagerfeld said.

How it worked

The Southeast Michigan Employer and Purchaser Consortium represents more than one million customers, who account for \$2 billion in health care purchases each year. Representatives from area hospitals

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Cities A-OK with Y2K

By JONI HUBERD
STAFF WRITER
jhuberd@ec.hometown.com

By now, everyone's pretty much Y2K'd out, but Farmington Hills officials have a few final words of advice for surviving the rollover from 1999 to 2000.

First, don't worry. "I believe we are, as a city prepared," said City Manager Steve Brock. "We're confident as much as we can be with things under our jurisdiction."

City staff members have been working on the issue for two years to ensure Brock could make that statement. Their mission has been to track down potential problems that might occur when computer calendars change from 1999 to 2000.

Because programmers once used two digits as a year designation to save memory space, older computer programs may recognize the "00" as the year 1900. Predictions about Y2K effects have ranged from airplanes falling from the sky to nothing at all.

Months of preparation for either eventually started in local municipalities in November 1997. Representatives from each city department conducted a city-wide inventory, which

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