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It is true that a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis usually means a lengthy and possibly lifelong reliance on medication and rest therapy. However, most arthritis you will experience is not rheumatoid arthritis. The dominant condition is osteoarthritis, followed by shoulder, back and neck conditions. In the vast majority of cases, if one form of therapy does not help, then another will. What you and your doctor will do is start from the most cost and least expensive treatment, and progress to more sophisticated therapy as needed.

For example, you may develop pain in a knee that flares most when you walk up or down stairs. The problem could be wear and tear arthritis, or that the meniscus of the knee is injured. Your doctor's initial therapy could be a joint injection. This is the simplest treatment. If successful, you will not need to take daily medication or begin physical therapy that could be time consuming and expensive.

If your knee doesn't respond, then nonsteroidal and physical therapy is an option. If your knee still pains and limits you then your physician likely will refer you to an orthopedic surgeon. You then may get a knee arthroscopy to determine if you have osteoarthritis or a mechanical tear. If indicated, the doctor will undertake surgical repair.

At some point in this chain of treatment, you will reach the degree of medical care you need to resolve your pain and physical limitation. The standard now is not to treat so you can cope with your limitations, but to provide therapy that returns you to an active life.

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Farmington Hills Kmart's survive restructuring

Farmington Hills' two Kmart stores avoided the chopping block Friday as the financially troubled retail giant disclosed its list of under-performing stores scheduled to be closed.

Nearby stores that are scheduled to shut down include the Livonia Big Kmart on Plymouth Road near the Wonderland Mall and the Novi Big Kmart on West Onks Drive.

Store managers at the Farmington Hills' Kmart's refused to

comment when contacted Friday, referring all questions to the company's corporate office in Troy.

The company announced it will close 284 under-performing stores as part of its initial Chapter 11 financial objectives review. The stores to be closed include 271 Kmart discount stores and 12 Kmart Supercenter retail outlets in 40 states, and one Kmart store in Puerto Rico.

"The closure of these stores is expected to significantly enhance the company's operational and financial performance," the company said in a press release.

The stores will remain open for business pending approval of the store-closing plan by the Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois and thereafter until the related store-closing inventory sales are completed on a store-by-store basis, according to the release.

Kmart anticipates that the sales generated from store closings and related cost savings will enhance its cash flow by approximately \$550 million in 2002 and approximately \$46 million annually thereafter.

Employees affected by the closings were notified Friday and will receive information about benefits and other resources available to them, the company stated.

-By Paul R. Pace

Local Republicans to interview candidates

Anyone considering running as a Republican for the state House of Representatives is being invited by the Farmington Area Republican Club to participate in an endorsement interview process.

The club will hold interviews sometime at the end of this month or in April. A formal announcement will be made in April. Currently, there are three declared candidates: John

Akouri, Valerie Knol and Terry Sever.

The club's primary criteria for endorsement will be which candidate is the most capable of winning the seat for the GOP and which person best represents the club's goals.

All interested people should contact Endorsement Chairman Christopher Cummins at (248) 471-3219.

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put temporary mail boxes by city hall for the Orchard Lake Road residents, Bisell said.

"This way they can just drive up and get their mail," he said.

The plan was supposed to start Saturday, he said, and residents were to get a notice in their boxes and at the local postal annex about the change.

"At least they're doing something and it's closer," she said, adding that the problem was getting frustrating since complaints to the post office, the city and the Road Commission for Oakland County were going nowhere.

"No one was coming up with a decision," she said.

Bisell said he understands residents' frustration and that putting up temporary boxes near city hall on Orchard Lake and 11 Mile should at least minimize the inconvenience until the sidewalk is built.


For Orchard Lake Road resident Laurie Adams, the fact that the postal annex is open only from 7 a.m.-5 p.m. daily made it practically impossible to get her mail during the week since she works in downtown Detroit.

She said she is glad a compromise has been worked out for now.

"This will allow us an opportunity outside business hours to pick up our mail," she said.

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