

Visionaries look at the future

Toffler foresees breakup of world industrial system

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Alvin Toffler has a visionary view of a "third wave" of civilization, and an audience of 1,300 at Schoolcraft College clearly liked it.

"The de-massification of society is occurring," said the one-time factory worker turned magazine writer, author and social philosopher, and those who fail to adapt "condemn themselves to the past."

Toffler was the headline attraction Friday evening at the community college's "Say Yes to the Future" exposition last week.

HIS LISTENERS:

- Raised their hands en masse when he asked how many made purchases in the last year by telephone or mail.
- "The supermarket is obsolete," said Toffler, explaining that market segmentation is making possible "made to order" manufacturing.
- Laughed aloud after he described the work place of the future. More jobs will be done at home, and many people will work partly at home and partly in the office. He quipped, "You may work in the office three weeks, and then take work home — to get it done" — and the audience cracked up at his allusion to madhouse conditions in offices and factories.

● Applauded when he said, "Some education will transfer to the home. In the second wave (industrial society), many well-educated parents turned over their precious children to teachers who are less well-educated."

His 75-minute lecture was a condensation of his 1980 book, "The Third Wave." In it, Toffler detected three "waves" in history: 1) the agricultural revolution starting 10,000 years ago, 2) the industrial revolution with its mass production, mass distribution, mass education and mass media, beginning 300 years ago, and 3) the "de-massification" movement, beginning sometime between 1955 and 1960.

THE FIRST exposition of its kind, at least in metropolitan Detroit, "Say Yes to the Future" featured 30 exhibits on jobs, education and robotic gadgets; discussions of outer space; a rescue helicopter demonstration; and examinations of the society of the future.

It attracted a broad stream of schoolchildren, teen-agers, collegians and older residents, many asking questions about technology, others about public policy, virtually all curious.

Toffler tied together new events of the stock market, inventions and military action, not with predictions of the 21st century but an analysis of "inter-related forces" that will be at work.

"We're restructuring not just our



Lt. Col. Robert Springer
Industry in space

economy but our political and social lives," said the former editor at Fortune Magazine. "The basic industries will never be basic again. We are witnessing the breakup of the world industrial system of which capitalism and communism are both a part."

He traced the birth of the "third wave" to such anti-conformity books of the late '50s as "The Man in the Grey

Flannel Suit" and "The Organization Man."

"The new wave is diverse," Toffler said.

"My wife and I visit factories all over the world. We visit factories while others visit cathedrals. Factories today are turning out not billions of this and 200,000 of that but 25 of this, 15 of that. . . . Because of computer controls, there is a shift to customization."

U.S. ASTRONAUT Robert C. Springer, who expects to fly in one of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's space shuttle missions, painted a glowing picture of pharmaceuticals being manufactured in space labs with "unbelievable degrees of purity."

The reason for such quality, Lt. Col. Springer said in a news conference, is that in the micro-gravity of space, materials can be separated by electric charges and won't be re-mixed by the force of gravity.

"An orbiting space station is an exploitation of space. The Mercury and Apollo missions were exploration. It's like a new industrial age," said the former naval combat pilot.

How far away is a space station? "As far off as the budget," he replied. "We have the technology. It's a shame we lack the budget to go with it."



Gerry Hermann feels the gentle touch of HERO 1, a robot built at home and displayed at Schoolcraft's futures exposition by Franklin High School of Livonia.



Alvin Toffler said "the third wave" of civilization began with the 1950s revolt against conformity and standardization and is made possible by the computer.



David Groat, 14, of Canton manipulated the Schoolcraft College Electronics Club's HERO (Heath Educational Robot) along the floor of the college gym. Thirty colleges, universities, computer sales firms and industries and social agencies set up exhibits at the "Say Yes to the Future" exposition.

INSIDE ANGLES

Know someone doing something notable? Let us know. Write: Inside Angles, Farmington Observer, 23352 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024.

CAROLE TAYLOR, daughter of Robert and Janice Taylor of Farmington and a 1980 graduate of Harrison High School, has been accepted in the Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority at Grand Valley State College. Carole is currently the treasurer of the sorority.

A RED CROSS Bloodmobile will be located at the Orchard Methodist Church, 20450 Farmington Road, from 2:30-8:30 p.m., Thursday Nov. 10. Share your Thanksgiving with the sick and injured in your community by giving blood. For an appointment, call Marie Volkert at 661-0728 (home) or 471-8486 (work).

CHRISTMAS WILL come early for some 500 leukemia children in the Tri-County area at the 31st annual children's Christmas party sponsored by the Children's Leukemia Foundation (C.L.F.). Donations of new toys are needed for the party. This year's party is slated for Dec. 4. Sought are toys for children up to 12 years of age. Only new toys will be accepted. Cash donations earmarked for the party also are welcome. Although the drive is focused during the holiday season, the benefits are felt all year. Toys not used for the party are sent to various Michigan hospitals for use in the pediatric hematology clinics where these children receive treatment for their blood diseases. Send toys or donations to the Children's Leukemia Foundation, 19022 W. Ten Mile Road, Southfield 48075. If necessary, arrangements can be made to pick up toys unable to be mailed or delivered. For more information about toys, cards or cookies call 353-8222.

THE NEW LIFE SINGERS, a group of 33 Christian students from Central Michigan University, will be presenting the musical, "Psalms Alive" at the Salvation Army, 27500 Shawwassee (corner of Inkster) at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 12. Free admission. Public is welcome.

HILL AND DALE GARDEN CLUB members, now on the countdown leading to their Christmas Walk, staged their own in-house contest for the member who could design the best ticket. Purchasers will be holding the ticket designed by Joyce Jankowski who took the first prize, which is her choice of anything offered for sale in the club's boutique. Walkers can either start or wind up their tour of homes shopping in the boutique, located in Farmington Community Center, between noon and 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11.

TODD CHERKASKY, a senior at Harrison High School, has been named the school's top Century III Leader according to James Geiger, principal. Todd is now eligible to compete with

other local winners from around the state for one of two \$1,500 scholarships and an all-expense-paid trip to the National Century III Leaders Conference, slated for March 2-5, in Colonial Williamsburg, Va. The Century III Leaders program is designed to bring together and recognize student leaders who show both strong leadership abilities and an interest in the future of America. Students are judged on the basis of leadership skills, school and community involvement, and a current events examination. They must also write a short essay on a particular issue that challenges America in its third century. Runners-up in the competition at Harrison High School were John Stewart and Scott DeChant.

THE FARMINGTON COMMUNITY CENTER offers a unique gift idea for the upcoming holidays, as well as birthday, anniversaries, etc. Gift certificates can be purchased in any amount and are applicable toward all classes and activities sponsored by the center. The winter program starts with registration on Jan. 4 with classes beginning the week of Jan. 16 and running through February. For further information regarding the center's winter activities, call 477-8404 or refer to the brochure which will be available mid-December in time to make selections for gift certificates.

LAURIE SPIVACK, daughter of Edward Spivack of Farmington Hills, makes her premiere performance as solo dancer and choreographer this week in New York City. She is assisted in the production of "Entertaining Muses" by Dance Theater Workshop in New York. The performance contains five premiere solo works utilizing the dancer's wide range of abilities and ideas.

CONGRATULATIONS TO AARON WRIGHT, 8-year-old son of Patricia and Danny Wright and a student at Flanders Elementary School, who won a five-inch color TV complete with AM/FM radio and cassette deck in the Draw Your Prize Dreamstakes sponsored by the Balfour Beatty Corp. Aaron drew a Panasonic television set.

KUDOS to Farmington High School's boy's cross country team. The boys now hold the city championship as well as the division championship with their 11-1 record. Team members are Brian Lawton, Dan Clappison, Dave Dunneback, Chris Inch, Scott Wallis, Steve Arbor and Brad Tobin.

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