

Musical day planned with strings attached

BY CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

Professional Farmington-area musicians, including several affiliated with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, are planning the first daylong event for stringed instrument students in Farmington.

A "Day for Strings" will be held Saturday, Nov. 21, at Harrison High School, culminating with a free 3 p.m. concert for friends, family and the public.

"This is something we've never done before," said Farmington Public Schools music coordinator Paul Barber. He said he is "excited about the potential" and predicted that Farmington's effort could be "the start of something like this across the nation."

The day is co-sponsored by the Farmington school district, the high school band and orchestra booster groups and community musicians.

Musical students from fifth grade through high school are invited to participate in a variety of activities from string music clinics and rehearsals to working with more than a dozen professional musicians who will be on hand.

Students will also be part of a 3 p.m. "Informance" — which will include orchestra performances by fifth- and sixth-graders, middle school students, high school students and a performance by a guest orchestra of visiting musicians, including several from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Guests will conduct

Guest conductors for the day will include Robert Culver, a professor of music education at U-M; Robert Phillips, orchestra director for Saline Area Schools; Roxanne Oliver, orchestra director for Troy schools; and Andrew Dabczynski, supervisor of fine arts for the Waterford school district.

Helping to involve the professional musicians was Farmington Hills resident Marshall "Larry" Hutchinson, a former university professor and now a full-time string bassist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra who also chairs the DSO's Musicians' Education Committee.

"The symphony's investment in the music program is really an investment in the future," said Hutchinson. "Music is a vital part to an excellent

education. This is my community and everybody participating feels that string program is vital to the health of our schools."

Hutchinson said Farmington elementary instrumental music teacher Kay DeLuca approached him with the idea for the "Day for Strings" at a summer conference, then took the idea to Barber who pursued it.

Many from area

Other DSO members from the Farmington area participating in the day are violinists Bruce Smith, Linda Sneeden-Smith, Ron Fischer and Velda Kelly and cellist Paul Wingert and his wife Karen who also is a professional cellist and teacher.

Retired Farmington Public Schools string teacher Marge Mowat and violin maker and string instrument repair technician Tom DeLuca will also play an instrumental part in the "Day for Strings."

Hutchinson said the DSO participates in many music education programs, including an ongoing program sponsored by Ford Motor Co. in which stu-

dents come down to hear the DSO at Orchestra Hall, and another in which members visited Interlochen last summer for a four-day residency.

He said instrumental music offers students more than musical knowledge. Other skills include concentration, discipline, working with others and problem-solving.

The Farmington district eliminated fourth-grade instrumental music in recent years when cutting back staffing positions and programs. But Barber said, surprisingly, there are as many students involved today in the instrumental music program. "We have more high school kids than we ever have had," he added. They're just starting later.

Barber said the "Day for Strings" was planned during the fall months so students could put to use what they had learned at the event. He praised the 13 instrumental music teachers in the district who are giving of their time for the special day.

"We hope this day will inspire our students and parents to appreciate and understand how important the arts and music specifically are to the quality of our lives," Barber added.



The Rev. Gene Stone

Minister retires after 55 years of service

The Rev. Gene Stone of Farmington Hills is retiring as an active minister of 55 years. He leaves his post as assistant minister of Redford Presbyterian Church, Detroit, after 10 a.m. services Nov. 22. He has served the congregation 14 years.

Stone spent 10 years as a reporter and editor on daily and

weekly newspapers in Philadelphia before earning a degree in theology in 1937. He was pastor of several Presbyterian Churches in Pennsylvania until he became a chaplain during World War II. He served in the United States and the European Theater.

He has also held several area and synod positions and has writ-

ten and edited articles for many church and secular publications. Stone plans to spend time writing and enjoying his hobbies, such as collecting religious cartoons, postmarks, and first-day-of-issue covers.

He married Viola Kirchner in 1940. The Stones have four children and eight grandchildren.



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