

Ruling rekindles free speech debate

In a recent decision, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a 1992 law authorizing cable carrying certain types of constitutionally-protected speech on public, educational, and governmental channels on cable television.

The Alliance for Community Media, a non-profit organization committed to assuring everyone's access to electronic media saw the decision as a victory. Barry Forbes, executive director of the Alliance stated, "We are delighted that the Supreme Court has struck down a statute that was clearly unconstitutional from the very beginning. The federal government attempted to use cable operators as 'cover' in order to censor speech protected by the First Amendment. The government should not be permitted to do that without using the least restrictive means. Allowing cable operators to use their discretion to decide what they will and will not allow on PEG access channels is definitely not the least restrictive means to achieve the state's purpose. Had the PEG provision of the statute been upheld, I am certain we would have seen censorship applied, not only to indecent speech as defined by the FCC, but any speech which the cable operator didn't like. Fortunately, we no longer have to face that situation.

Affected programming could have included programs on breast cancer self-examination, AIDS/HIV prevention, abortion, childbirth, art censorship, and civil disobedience. The 1992 statute allowed a cable operator to suppress programming which contains so-called "indecent" material or material soliciting or promoting unlawful conduct. This decision impacts several channels in our communities: INFO TV-12, and Channel 9 (public access), Channels 8 and 13 (government access), and TV 10 and 20 (educational access). However the leased access Channel 22 remains subject to

Time Warner's editorial control. Forbes stated, "This case has enormous implications, not only for the content of television programming, but for freedom of expression and the right of privacy on any electronic medium which the federal government attempts to regulate. An adverse decision would have expanded the rights of the government to decide what viewers can see over the cable medium." The next CAC meeting is Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 7 p.m. at SWOCC. The next SWOCC meeting is Tuesday, Sept. 3, at 4:30 p.m. at Farmington City Hall. Mary Linda Calderone is the Community Outreach Coordinator for SWOCC.

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RECREATION NEWS

Each week the Recreation Division of the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services presents a synopsis of upcoming activities in this column. For further information regarding programs, contact the Recreation office at 473-9570. Pre-registration is required for most activities.

For matters regarding Hills City Council agenda items, call the news line at 473-9552.

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FOUNDERS FESTIVAL ROAD RACE

During the festivities of Founders Festival, a four-mile run will be held Saturday, July 13, starting and finishing at Shinnecock Park. The route will take you through various areas and terrains of the city of Farmington. The race starts at 9 a.m. with check-in at 8:15 a.m. There will be divisions for men and women, for 17 and under, 40 and over and open. Fee is \$11, \$13 after July 9. Fee includes race T-shirt & D. You can pre-register at

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FRIDAY NIGHT MADNESS

Children ages 6-12 can enjoy a night of swimming, movies, snack and organized games in an air conditioned building. The program is held on July 26 or Aug. 16 at the Activities Center. Fee is \$10 per child, per night, and you must pre-register. Bring a bathing suit, towel and gym shoes.

INTERNATIONAL BALLET PERFORMANCE

On Monday, July 22, you will have the opportunity to see a ballet company from Jever, Germany perform "La Fille Mal Gardée" at the William M. Costick Activities Center. A free performance will be held at 1:30 p.m. and an evening performance at 7:30 p.m. For the evening performance there is a \$2 fee per person at the door only.

STARS IN THE PARK

Bring your lawn chairs or blankets and listen to the sounds of the Farmington Community Band on Thursday, July 18, and the Jim "Knight" Nuckolls Band on Thursday, July 26, at Heritage Park. Concerts begin at 8 p.m. and there is no fee for the concert.

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