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THE WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY

Sign up: Feb. 2 is the deadline for kids ages 9-18 to register for the Farmington Soccer Club's spring season. Fees are \$45 for returning players; \$65 for new ones. After Monday, there is a \$25 late fee. Forms are available at both libraries or by calling 471-4379.

TUESDAY

Future shop: Farmington's Downtown Development Authority will meet at 8 a.m. Feb. 3 at city hall to discuss how to budget for plans to improve the city's aesthetics.

Bids in bloom: Remodeling bids for Dunchel Middle and North Farmington High will be awarded by the school board at its meeting at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 3 at the board office.

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Ordinance to ban downtown skateboarding

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Teenagers will not be permitted to skateboard in Farmington's downtown business district if a proposed ordinance is approved by the city council.

City Manager Frank Lauhoff said the skateboarding ordinance will be introduced at Monday's 8 p.m. council meeting, to be held at 23600 Liberty Street. The measure could be adopted at the council's following meeting.

"It's primarily a safety issue," said Lauhoff, noting that the cities of Birmingham, Northville, Rochester and Royal Oak already put downtown skateboarding bans on the books. "They (skateboarders) are blocking entrances. (Businesses are) getting complaints from their customers. ... Some customers are actually fearful."

Interference with pedestrians isn't the only safety concern. Lauhoff noted that skateboarders have been involved in parking lot collisions with vehicles.

Lauhoff said the ordinance would prohibit the skateboarding within the central business district, on places that would seem inappropriate because they can cause damage, like monuments and on private property - unless a skateboarder receives permission from the homeowner. Violators could be fined between \$25-100 if found guilty of the civil infraction.

Vandalism is another reason an ordinance is being considered. During this school year, there have been several incidents reported to the Farmington Public Safety Department of teens causing damage to benches outside of Longacre Elementary School because of skateboard use.

But a city ordinance would not totally pull the skateboarders out from under teenagers' Nike's. They can still skateboard on neighborhood sidewalks, parks and, of course, on their own property, he said.

Head to head combat



STAFF PHOTO BY BRIAN MITCHELL

To the mat: Sevan Sahiner of Farmington High (right) wrestles Fritz Schultes of North Farmington in the 145-pound weight class. Sahiner pinned Schultes during the FHS victory. For more details see today's Sports section.

Drug war calls for passion

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills are committed to a full-fledged war against teenage substance use and Estralee Michaelson is leading the charge.

Michaelson, who is Farmington Public Schools' coordinator of Student Assistance/Health/Family Life Education, empowered an

audience of 120 community leaders of all ages and vocations during Wednesday night's Farmington Families in Action-sponsored "Call to Action Summit."

Following her speech, "The Pendulum is Swinging," community members, including high school students, gave suggestions for a forthcoming task force about the subject.

Those in attendance at the

Farmington Training Center were also invited to attend a FFIA advisory board meeting on March 4 to refine the needs of ideas and then craft a workable action plan.

During her talk, Michaelson emphasized to educators, parents, students, clergy, business and media representatives the need to unite and tackle the growing drug

Please see DRUGS, A3

Family primer

Practical, 'how to' advice aimed at parents during Feb. 4 talk

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

For many, efforts to unite families are as splintered as today's fragmented society.

So-called "quality time" might mean parents rushing children from home to school to soccer practice to dance rehearsal. Or sitting silently in front of a television set.

An expert on family topics, Chick Moorman of Saginaw, hopes to provide Farmington-Farmington Hills families with practical "how to" advice about how to step back, knock something off of that busy plate and begin to work toward attaining family togetherness.

Moorman, who has written several books on the subject, will present "Building Family Solidarity" at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the North Farmington High School auditorium. The program is free and sponsored by Farmington Public Schools' PTA Council, in conjunction with Farmington Area Youth and Family Services.

"Family has to be a top priority," said Moorman, owner of The Institute for Personal Power. "Raising children is the most important job we'll ever have. The one thing I'm going to tell them is every kid in the world spells love T-I-M-E."

Those who attend the program should leave with "practical, usable, doable ideas" that can be put to the test immediately. That's why Moorman recommends people bring a notebook and pen to jot down his recommendations. Following are a couple of them.

"One of the best things that they can do for family solidarity," Moorman said, "is to turn the TV off once in a while. Interacting is absolutely critical to crafting this sense of togetherness."

Another idea is for a parent to grab a

■ 'Family solidarity is as simple as playing checkers. Or it can be as complicated as having a family meeting every Sunday.'

Chick Moorman
—author

child once a week and go for a walk, for no reason other than to spend time together.

"Family solidarity is as simple as playing checkers," he emphasized. "Or it can be as complicated as having a family meeting every Sunday. Just be together."

Also during the program, Moorman intends to read uplifting family stories from his book, "Where the Heart Is: Stories of Home and Family" (Personal Power Press).

Moorman said parents who attend will also learn how to "purposefully structure in this solidarity, create it as a goal and ... incorporate it into their life."

Those strategies are essential for today's families to unite. By contrast, 100 years ago, family unity was often built right in, with dads working side by side with their sons in the fields, he said.

Another problem for families in the late 1990s is that extended family members, such as aunts and uncles, reside all over the map. That takes something away from the celebration of birthdays and holidays.

"I'm 55," Moorman noted. "When I was 10, my whole family lived in Chicago. It's not like that anymore."

North Farmington High School is located at 32900 W. 13 Mile. For more information, call 851-0957.

Voters to check out library tax

Bond issue for expansion
returns to polls this fall



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Folks at the Farmington Community Library want 1998 to be known as the year they finally pass a ballot question.

The Library Board is looking to put a proposal on either the August or November ballot to ask approval of a millage. Money raised would pay for an expansion and increased operating costs of the Farmington Hills main library on 12 Mile Road, which staff contends is busting at the seams.

How much bond money is needed will not be known until a cost analysis is completed later this month.

Voters in both Farmington Hills and Farmington would take part in the election as the library district includes both communities.

"It's still exploratory in that no decisions have been made yet," said Bev Papai, Farmington Community Library director. "The concern is the problems we have won't go away and they have to be addressed."

By slim margins, voters turned down two library-related ballot proposals in 1989 and 1993. Both of those involved building a new library at a different site, though.

Under this scenario, the library building stays put while a 34,000-foot extension is built to the south. Two acres of city-owned land west of the library would be used for a parking lot.

Bob Plummer, Farmington Library Board chair-

Please see LIBRARY, A3

Burning down the house



STAFF PHOTO BY BRIAN MITCHELL

Finished job: Farmington Hills firefighters keep an eye on the house on Grand River west of Drake which was purposely burned to the ground Tuesday night in the final training session for firefighters at the donated residence. A crowd of onlookers stopped to check out the scene as flames lit up the Tuesday night sky.

Dueling cop quips

Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer, intentionally or not, put a humorous charge into Wednesday night's "Call to Action Summit," hosted by Farmington Families in Action at the Farmington Training Center.

Dwyer and other community leaders summarized to an audience of more than 100 about what their roles are in the battle against teenage substance abuse. Before Dwyer got down to serious business, he made a tongue-in-cheek reference to the Super Bowl Sunday gambling raid, a major news story covered by all metro television stations. "I don't have any jokes tonight, other than the fact I miss the TV

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lights and the cameras."

Dwyer's Farmington counterpart, Public Safety Director Gary Goss, also brought a lighter moment to an otherwise serious evening. Referring to the keynote speech by Farmington schools' Estralee Michaelson, Goss said "I haven't felt that impassioned since I met my drill instructor at the Marine Corps. I knew then, as I know now ... change is coming."

On frozen ground

What does a school district do if it's early February and the ground is too frozen to conduct a traditional ground-breaking ceremony? Head indoors.

To commence Farmington Public Schools construction projects that were included in the \$93.1 million bond issue approved last September, an indoor ground-breaking is scheduled for 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas St.

The "ground-breaking" will be followed by a short program, a way for the district to thank those who made it possible to "build the foundation today, with foresight for tomorrow."