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THE WEEK AHEAD

SUNDAY

Spice it up: The third annual Chili Cookoff for charity takes place 1-4 p.m. today at Page's Bar on Farmington Road, south of Grand River.

MONDAY

Cat in a hat: The Farmington Branch Community Library kicks off its "Read Across America" campaign with a Dr. Seuss birthday party at 4:15 p.m. March 2. Mayors Aldo Vagnozzi and Mary Bush serve as celebrity readers.

TUESDAY

Ballot buzz: The Committee to Increase Voter Participation meets 7:30 p.m. March 3 in the Farmington Hills City Hall lower level conference room.

WEDNESDAY

Lunden calling: Former Good Morning America host Joan Lunden speaks to the annual fund-raising luncheon of the Allied Jewish Campaign at Adat Shalom Synagogue on Middlebelt at 11 a.m. March 4.

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Board focuses on football lights Tuesday

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The age-old question whether to add football field lights next season in Farmington Public Schools might come down to three answers: all, nothing or somewhere in between.

School board Vice President Cathy Webb likes the first answer the best. But she'll have to wait, along with everybody else, until Tuesday's 7:30 p.m. meeting at the Lewis Schulman Administration Building to hear the recommendations of a community ad hoc committee on the subject.

"If we're going to do it at all," Webb said, "it would be my hope that we'd do all three simultaneously. I'd have to see a lot of great information" to change her mind.

One reason for supporting the lights going up so that night games could be played in 1998-99 at Farmington, Harrison and North high schools would be consistent scheduling for the teams and their coaches. Currently, the squads play Saturday afternoon games, which give coaches one fewer day to prepare for the following week's contest.

The Farmington district is the only one in Oakland County without nighttime football, Webb said.

Committee recommendations also will

Please see LIGHTS, A6

Showing and telling



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LEMMON

Showing her style: Betty Smith of Southfield brings alive the stories from African American history through the dolls that she has made. In her hand is a doll designed to show the African style of dress and culture.



Dolls depict real tales of black history

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Wooddale Elementary School pupils learned Monday that there are unique, amazing and sometimes shocking stories about black history behind every one of Betty Smith's handmade dolls.

George Washington Carver's laboratory for many of his scientific discoveries was the land. He made more than 300 products from peanuts and taught many the significance of crop rotation.

Carter G. Woodson wanted to honor Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, and hence was born what is now called Black History Month. Frederick Douglass was a "big man, with a deep voice," against the inhumanity of slavery.

And Dr. Charles Drew, who invented the concept of freezing blood plasma for emergency transfusions, ironically died following a car accident because the hospital only had an adequate supply of blood from white people, and not enough from

Paying attention: Above, fifth-graders Nick Liebowitz (left) and Charles Banks listen to the presentation. Above left, some of the dolls include scientist George Washington Carver, at the far right of photograph.

blacks.

"There was black blood for black folks and white blood for white folks," said Smith, a Southfield resident dressed in yellow-and-black authentic African garb, to the assemblage of spellbound students seated on the floor.

"Nowadays, if (blood) is the right match, you get the blood."

The long table behind Smith, owner of Dolls by ArtChee, featured handmade figures of some

Please see DOLLS, A4

Cigarette stings end in a date with police



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Store operators are fast becoming aware that selling cigarettes to minors doesn't add up as good business sense.

"You have to be smart. It's not worth it," said Ed Jirjis of BJ's Party Store in Farmington Hills.

If those buying cigarettes don't look old enough or he doesn't know them, there's no sale. He always asks for identification.

Which is likely why BJ's Party Store wasn't among the 20 retailers ticketed during a recent sting for selling cigarettes to minors. Farmington Hills City Council members want the police chief and themselves to meet with retailers to talk about the need to crackdown on cigarette sales to minors.

It's against state law to sell tobacco products to anyone under 18.

A similar meeting took place with merchants to explain beefed up enforcement on the sale of alcohol to minors several years ago.

Two decoys ages 15 and 17 went into 62 places in

Please see STING, A6

Ruling keeps 7 teachers out of union

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Alternative Academy teachers suffered another legal setback in attempts to join the Farmington Education Association - membership that would bring them improved benefits and higher wages.

The state appeals court Feb. 13 upheld an earlier decision by the Michigan Employment Relations Commission, which found that Alternative Academy teachers were part of Farmington Public Schools Adult Education program and, therefore, not eligible for the collective bargaining unit. The union, in early 1996, unsuccessfully petitioned the school district in order to automatically include the seven academy teachers.

"Litigation doesn't produce a win-win environment," said Susan Zurvalet, assistant superintendent of staff and community services. "But we still feel our (Alternative Academy) program needs to run in a certain fashion."

"It's unfortunate," said FEA President Tom Chranowski. "We sought justice."

Please see RULING, A6

Police officer's heroism earns him Hills honors

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

His heroic efforts were anything but ordinary.

Farmington Hills Police Officer William Maffesoli was named the city's Police Officer of the Year mainly due to his actions during an early morning fire at Echo Valley Apartments in July.

By anyone's standard, he'd earned a badge of courage by carrying an elderly woman who couldn't walk to safety. But when the woman asked him to retrieve her artificial leg, the 16-year veteran didn't hesitate. He went back

into the building.

A few moments later, he emerged from the smoke and flames with the woman's custom-made prosthesis.

"I just felt fortunate I was able to give someone the opportunity to spend more time with their family and loved ones," Maffesoli said later.

Such alertness and quick action are

'I just felt fortunate I was able to give someone the opportunity to spend more time with their family and loved ones.'

Officer William Maffesoli
—Farmington Hills police

the hallmarks of Maffesoli's police work, Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer said.

His initial investigative work was a key in the police solving a double homicide arson in 1995, which led to the conviction of the murderer and his accomplice.

"It's just indicative of his performance in all areas," Dwyer said.

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Maffesoli reacted on previous training. He'd worked as a firefighter for four years in Highland Park where his father, Joe Maffesoli, was police chief for 29 years.

He joined the Farmington Hills department 16 years ago and mainly patrols the midnight shift, where he thrives on the nocturnal pace where those breaking the law are easier to spot.

Please see HERO, A3

Summer harvest thoughts

It may be too early to really think about buying ripe, vine-fresh tomatoes and peppers, but not for Judy Downey.

Downey, director of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, told a gathering of downtown business people Tuesday that the town's Farmer's Market in the Village Commons parking lot was shaping up better for this summer than last.

Some farmers dropped out last summer and our region suffered through a lousy growing season. So far, the city's request for farmers to bring their produce to town for the Saturday morning sales from May 9 to Oct. 31 brought in 25 responses, with 10 of those farmers committed to be here. "I'm very excited about that," Downey said.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

As for the growing season this summer, well, tomato-lovers around town are hopeful.

Watch your parking

Downtown business owners in Farmington will be getting a letter from Judy Downey of the DDA about parking.

Even though the city has 2,000 spaces, businesses will be urged to try to get their employees to park in farther-away spaces to save the closest space for customers. Downey noted that maps would be

included showing parking spaces in town.

Locking up the bunks

The 32 local residents and business people who took part in the Muscular Dystrophy Association Lock Up Tuesday at Marco's restaurant in Farmington Hills really came through for the charity.

They raised \$20,343 in donations.

Flying high

Officials at William Tyndale College in Farmington Hills will be presented a 4-foot-by-6-foot state of Michigan flag Monday by state Rep. Andrew Raczowski, R-Farmington Hills.

