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THE WEEK AHEAD

SUNDAY

Sound advice: The Farmington Community Band will perform its Spring Symphony at 3 p.m. in the Harrison High Auditorium on 12 Mile Road, east of Orchard Lake.

MONDAY

Rep's rap: U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg will speak to Oakland Community College students 6:15-7:30 p.m. March 30 in The Wallace Smith Theater.

TUESDAY

Diamond gems: Farmington High hosts Walled Lake Western in a baseball game at 4 p.m. March 31 at the school on Shiawassee.

WEDNESDAY

Slick presentation: A demonstration on aromatherapy, which uses oils for relaxation and stimulation, takes place 6:30-8 p.m. April 1 at the Longacre House, on Farmington Road.

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State bill would curb oil drilling

■ A proposed law in the state House of Representatives could forbid oil companies from drilling within 1,000 feet of housing in bigger cities.



A state bill in the works could prevent oil companies from drilling in densely populated areas like Farmington Hills.

If the bill does get out of committee, though, "It's going to have a tough ride," admitted Vicki Barnett, Farmington Hills City Councilwoman who has spoken in favor of the proposed legislation.

The bill is being drafted in the state House Forestry and Mineral Rights Committee. It would require the residential setback from a oil drilling site to be at least 1,000 feet in cities with populations of 60,000 or more.

The current state setback — established in the 1930s — is 300 feet. The city of Farmington Hills requires a 500-foot setback.

West Bay Oil Exploration is suing the city of Farmington Hills over its intent to drill two well heads in the Haggerty and Nine Mile area.

The city council denied the oil company's request

Please see DRILLING, A8

Towns call for precinct workers

If municipal elections run the engine of American democracy, then volunteers are the oil to keep it motoring smoothly.

"It would be impossible to run an election without a sufficient number of election inspectors," said Farmington City Clerk Patay Cantrell. "If we weren't able to recruit them, lines would be longer. There would be a longer period before getting results completed at the end of the day."

That's why efforts are under way by the Farmington and Farmington Hills city clerks to recruit election workers — of all ages — for the August primary and November general election.

Please see ELECTION, A4

To apply ...

— Contact the city of Farmington at (248) 474-5500, Ext. 224, or the city of Farmington Hills at (248) 473-9561.



Rights view: Botsford Hospital Board of Directors Chairman Edward Hodges brings a lifelong perspective to race relations in Detroit and the suburbs.

Pushing change

Botsford's Hodges sets firsts along the way

Edward Hodges dispenses anecdotes like samples at a wine-tasting fest: Individual sips are insightful, but their overall effect is potent.

The Farmington Hills resident and Botsford Hospital board chairman recalls how he grew up in Saginaw where the only black professionals were a lawyer and two doctors. He remembers being told to his face he wouldn't be hired into the administration at an auto plant because he was black.

Hodges, 78, mentions how black students weren't allowed to stay in Michigan State University dormitories in the 1930s.

Instead, they had to sleep in the basement. His parents refused to allow him to be treated as an inferior. They rented a room for him in Lansing where

he traveled to East Lansing on public transit. "I was an early busing student," he said with a chuckle as the afternoon sun beams through a picture window in Botsford's administration building.

Embittered? No, said Hodges. "I've been mad as hell, though," he added.

He elaborated. "This is why I think blacks or other minorities cannot afford to be bitter or angry. If you become bitter and angry, you cannot appreciate the changes that have taken place," Hodges said. "I'd like to believe I've played some small part in those changes."

Job opportunities

Those changes have come

through opening employment avenues, which Hodges fought for through a multitude of memberships, degrees and distinctions he's held.

As assistant vice president of public relations at Michigan Bell, he was the area's highest-ranking black executive at the time in 1969. He also became the company's first African-American assistant vice president.

"I think it's an accident of history when you're the first of anything," he said.

One the firsts he's most proud of came during the throes of the 1967 Detroit riots. Hodges prefers to use the term civil disturbances instead of riots, which conjures up an image of discord between blacks and whites.

"There was a lot of looting

Please see HODGES, A4

Students help each other control anger

There is no guarantee that horrific shooting sprees such as the one taking place Tuesday outside an Arkansas middle school will never occur in the Farmington district.

■ "I think most kids are good. But some kids choose to be bad."

In Farmington as much as anywhere else, some kids "can't control their anger," Power Middle School eighth grader Brandon Connolly said.

"They can't bring out their feelings."

But students here can air grievances and talk about problems that might be festering, thanks to peer mediation and conflict resolution programs. The programs help them get their angry, negative feelings out into the open before an argument turns deadly.

Brandon and sixth grader Amanda Merger are among 24 Power students trained to handle peer mediation sessions, which usually occur at least once a week; many times between mild friends.

Brandon Connolly
—eighth grader,
Power Middle School

Please see PEERS, A3

Strummer follows spring



Tuned in: Robert Stauffer, who works in Farmington, enjoys the welcome warmup in Shiawassee Park Thursday, as spring hit with a Mercury surge into the 70s.

Y's honor time

The Farmington Family YMCA's annual meeting Thursday morning was devoted to several honors and a warning.

Honors went out to four special individuals who were cited for a series of Spirit Awards.

The light-hearted warning came from Sue Brooks, who introduced one of those winners, Employee of the Year Neustor.

Nestor, who is pregnant, serves as director for the Y's growing First Step Child Care program, where four of the nine employees are also expecting. "If any of you are still capable, you might want to stay home for a while, because it's in the water," Brooks said.

Quality service to the Y must be also in the water, based on comments supporting the other winners.

Beth Killian, a senior at Mercy High School, was

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celebrated as the Volunteer of the Year for her work as president of the Leader's Club, which doubled in size under her leadership and was involved with many fund-raisers.

Courtney Carson, a seventh grader at Dunkle Middle School, was honored with the Christian Leadership Award, after being nominated by her pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Farmington.

Bob Taylor, a 25-year member of the YMCA Board of Directors, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Follow board member Gary Jonna noted that Taylor's quiet leadership and Christian strength

touched many people. "He has shown that the secret of leadership is serving others," Donna said.

Taylor, who is celebrating his 50th anniversary with his wife, Nancy, this year, told the audience that he's always followed the motto that "I'm third ... It says God is first, the other fellow's second."

First Impressions

The new Starbucks Coffee in the Downtown Farmington Center was doing "steady" business on opening day Friday, according to an employee.

Sophistication was evident throughout the store, with poetry books on tables and jazz music being played. As usual, customers could buy mugs of coffee, latte, espresso and cappuccino as well as rich, sweet baked goods. And, to welcome customers on the first day, complimentary copies of USA Today were available to read at the tables.



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