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THE WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY

At issue: The Farmington Hills council will decide on a site plan for a Planned Unit Development on 13 Mile at Orchard Lake Road at 7:30 p.m. April 13 at city hall.

TUESDAY

Rubber stamp: Learn to make your own envelopes, greeting cards and stamps in a class at 7 p.m. April 14 at the Longacre House. Cost is \$15. Call 477-8404.

WEDNESDAY

Tax talk: U.S. Rep Joe Knollenberg will host a public forum on taxes and how to reduce them at 7 p.m. today, April 15, - tax day - at OCC's Wallace Smith Theater.

Trashy talk: Today's the day to begin recycling your cereal boxes and other paperboard in your curb-side bin.

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Esposito to leave post at chamber

BY DAVE VARGA
STAFF WRITER

Maria Esposito admits she isn't a very emotional person. But since she announced last week that she's leaving her job as president of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, it has been tough. "I haven't really made that mental break yet," said Esposito, who will become director of lifelong learning at the Groesse Pointe War Memorial, a community-owned education and patriotic facility. Easing the transition is her new job, which will include working with the facility's own cable TV station and doing educational travel - with trips to Rome, Paris and other places. That opportunity, plus the pay increase and the fact that she just bought a house in Groesse Pointe, helped cement her decision, Esposito said. "It's just an opportunity I couldn't pass up," she said, noting that she was asked twice to apply for the job. Still, Esposito leaves with mixed feelings. "My whole life was out here," she said. "I'm

Please see ESPOSITO, A2



The joys of math



Measuring up: Above, fifth-grader Jessica Martin tells her mom, Karen, time is up on their project. At right, parent Laxmi Prabhu measures the circumference of her son's head, third-grader Karthik.

Gill multiplies the fun

Rubber bands, Geo boards and high-low card games were part of the night as more than 300 parents and their children at Gill Elementary School Tuesday night learned that mathematics is much broader and more interesting than a conventional school curriculum might show. The first-ever fun-and-games "Family Math Night" at Gill, created by Ann Arbor's Hands-On Museum and co-sponsored



by Gill's PTA and student council, saw families circulate among 25 tables and even had some parents making notes about how games were played, said organizer Connie Carroll, Gill PTA vice president. The program emphasizes hands-on geometry, logic and games as well as concepts and relationships and de-emphasizes arithmetic. Some 35 volunteers - many from Farmington High School's advanced placement calculus class and its National Honor Society - assisted event coordinator Fred Nassar, Gill PTA president. Also on hand were William Grace Elementary representatives, who will host the program in May.

Top teacher ignored dad's advice

A lot of people today are grateful Jim Ragland didn't listen to his father. If he had, they likely wouldn't have had the teacher, mentor and friend he's been to them. And Ragland, a veteran sixth-grade teacher, mathematics team-teacher and cross country coach at Power Middle School, wouldn't be the 1998 WDIV Farmington Public Schools Middle School Teacher of the Year. Back in the late 1940s and early '50s, the senior Ragland had told his children to get an education, but don't

become educators like him. Go into business, he'd said: You can make a much better living that way. It was good advice then; Jim earned a college business administration degree and had become a salesman. But about 32 years ago, he told his father he was quitting sales to go into teaching. And he wasn't being disrespectful. It was just that he had seen how his father had truly felt about education and children and he recognized much

of it in himself. The elder Ragland had served as president of three separate Parent-Teacher Associations and he'd even tried to make getting good grades fun by instituting a little monetary motivation in the neighborhood. "He had a wonderful way with kids. I think that's important," Ragland says. So how far has the acorn fallen from the oak? Please see TEACHER, A7

Neighbors upset by racist flier

Racist literature talking about securing "a future for white children" was dumped on Oakland and Gill Streets in Farmington last week. One neighbor said she felt "violated" by the fliers.



Residents in a Farmington neighborhood are upset after finding racist leaflets on their streets. On Wednesday morning, Oakland and Gill streets residents found fliers stating "white is beautiful," depicting a buxom woman.

There's also a phone number with a western Wayne County exchange for a joke line.

The literature says it is from The European American Education Association, which has an "exclusive mailing address." A quote promising "the future for 'white children'" is attributed to a person named David Lane.

A resident immediately filed a report with the Farmington police and phoned the Anti-Defamation League, which tracks such incidents. The Farmington Department of Public Services swept the fliers from the streets.

"It was awful," said Oakland Street resident Donna Damon. "It was all up and down the street. It was a mess. We're not talking about a few here, we're talking about hundreds."

"It looked like it snowed."

The literature is unsettling to another Oakland Street family, which is Jewish. The McVittie family

Please see RACIST, A2

'Who's the parent?' judge asks couple

A district court judge put a Farmington couple on a 12-month probation for serving alcohol to minors in their home, fined them \$500 and then gave them both a stern lecture in parental responsibility. "Who's the parent?" 47th District Court Judge Marla Parker bitingly asked Michelle Griffith who, only moments before, had told the judge she had been pressured by her teenage son to let him have a party celebrating his election as homecoming king at Farmington High School.

"Every parent, I presume, is going to get pressured by their kids to 'let me do something,'" Parker said. "Certainly, every kid is going to test the limit."

But parents must set the limits and none can give their children permission to break the law, the judge said.

According to Farmington Public Safety Department reports, the Oct. 26 party in the Chatham Hills subdivision went out of control, with more than 100 FHS teenagers paying \$5 each to drink all the beer they wanted.

The bash enraged the community, resulting in calls for increased awareness by parents of their children's activities.

Both Griffith and her husband, Kevin Alexander,

Please see SENTENCING, A7



Pointed leader: Students say Power Middle School teacher Jim Ragland has a special knack for motivating.

Put boxes in the bin

Starting Wednesday, homeowners can recycle cereal boxes, shoe boxes, tissue boxes and nearly every box in their home. "Boxboard" and "paperboard" are recycling industry terms used interchangeably to describe any material that looks and feels like cereal boxes. For example, the backing on most toy packages is boxboard. That package backing now may be recycled curbside in Farmington and Farmington Hills. However, any plastic wrapping on toys or food boxes still goes to the trash. Not included in the definition of boxboard are frozen food boxes, juice boxes and milk cartons - all of which must go in the regular garbage. Boxboard may be prepared in two ways: flattened and tightly stuffed into the largest box being recycled; or flattened and tightly packed in a brown paper bag.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Fashions and rainbows

The Farmington Neighbors Club is sponsoring a fashion show and luncheon at Glen Oaks Country Club on Wednesday, April 15, to benefit the Rainbow Connection, the organization which grants special wishes of children with life-threatening illnesses.

Fashions will be presented by Talbott Laurel Park. Social hour begins at 11 a.m. followed by lunch at noon. Cost is \$30. The Rainbow Connection is a nonprofit Michigan corporation established in 1985. Sick kids have visited grandparents in other states as well as the most requested trip of all, to Disney World. Families

are always included. It allows a break from medical bills and burdens and builds memories. For tickets, call Bea at 474-3750. Glen Oaks is on 13 Mile, east of Orchard Lake Road.

Dual-purpose breakfast

Two events will merge into one this year, when he Farmington Area Jaycees and the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce host a Community Leadership Prayer Breakfast and Citizen of the Year Breakfast at 7:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 22, at Glen Oaks Country Club on 13 Mile.

Guest speaker will be Florino Mark, president and CEO of the WW Group Inc., the largest franchise of Weight Watchers International. Tickets are \$20 per person. For information, call June Farrell at 248-851-5674.