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THE WEEK AHEAD

Performing tonight



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRISLER

Stars: Dean Cobb, Farmington Public Schools telecommunication director, directs the younger members of the "Oliver" cast. The production continues tonight at 7:30 at North Farmington High School.

MONDAY

Agenda: The Farmington Hills City Council meets at 7:30 p.m. in city hall, 31555 11 Mile.

TUESDAY

Schools: The Farmington Board of Education will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the board offices.

WEDNESDAY

Hearing: The library board will meet at 7 p.m. in the Hills library for a hearing on the millage.

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Grand River hits stride



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Grand River corridor improvements have stepped into third gear and are in the home stretch.

The city of Farmington Hills has started work on what will likely be the last of the four-year and multi-phased project to improve the stretch of state road. The city is using \$300,000 in community block grant money to pay for Phase III.

The overall purpose is to make Grand River from Eight Mile to Orchard Lake more pedestrian-friendly and inviting.

"If you look between the sidewalks and the road, there is just a hodgepodge of stuff," said Rick Lampi, Hills Community Development coordinator. "This is a process of recapturing the right of way and greenbelt area between the sidewalk and street."

Sidewalk extensions and pedestrian lighting are part of the plan as well as

curb repairs on the half-mile stretch. The Grand River Corridor study committee - which included business owners, residents, planning commission, city council and Economic Development Corporation members - developed the rehabilitation plan in 1994.

Phase I covered both sides of Grand River from Middlebelt to Eight Mile. Phase II involved work from Middlebelt to Tuck Road near the West River Center while Phase III will go westward to Orchard Lake.

Phase I and II were completed with \$700,000 of block grant money with help from the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Economic Development Corporation also contributed money for a new entrance sign at Grand River and Eight Mile while Ameritech removed several old utility poles, saving the city considerable money.

Business owners are enthused, too. "I think it will make it look really

"This is a process of recapturing the right of way and greenbelt area between the sidewalk and street."

Rick Lampi
—Hills Community development coordinator

nice," said Tom Davidson of Henderson Glass. "I think it opens up the area and, with the lighting, will make it look beautiful."

The project has already garnered statewide attention, winning the Michigan Society of Planning Officials' planning project award in 1996. Members of the Michigan Community Development Association will tour the site in October.

More importantly, the work has inspired property owners and others to get involved, Lampi said.

"We had three vacant auto dealerships on that corridor when we started this project; now, we have none," Lampi said.



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CARNOGIE

Touching up: Cement workers put the finishing touches on the curb in front of the U Haul building on Grand River.

EDUCATION UNDER FIRE

BY TIM SMITH • STAFF WRITER

Schools log on to find the best

So far, school district personnel departments don't have fancy computer software that instantly signals "good hire" or "bad hire" when candidates for teaching jobs come calling.

Through technologically aided hiring practices now established in Farmington Public Schools, that day might be getting closer. A new application system enables candidates to apply online for specific jobs. Those who make it beyond the early stages then are rigorously tested and screened. And, with the system, principals and the people who ultimately make hiring decisions are better able to sift through the many applicants and ensure the best classroom fit possible.

"It really helps us look through candidates in a much more effective way than ever before," said Lloyd Lewis, in his second year as principal at Forest Elementary School. "I think it's helping us do a better job of matching quality candidates with the positions available."

What the two-way interactive system also does is allow hopefuls from all over the globe to find out about openings, right down to whether the district

Farmington Public Schools' teacher selection includes the following steps:

1. Position is posted on Farmington Public Schools' Web site, job line, colleges and universities, professional organizations and all school districts in the tri-county area.
2. Applicant submits e-mail application and screener and is automatically assigned an applicant number. Paper credentials are forwarded via regular mail.
3. Applicant information is downloaded into a database. Other information is added to district controlled data fields for use in screening. A principal's report form is produced, summarizing all applicants for position and sorted according to stated preferences.
4. First 24 questions of Gallup SRI Teacher Perceiver are given to top 15-20 qualified candidates in order to develop building interview list of 6-10 finalists. Interviews are scheduled. Electronic applications are printed and forwarded to building along with mailed-in credentials. Personnel department sends letters to non-finalists.
5. Building interview team meets to develop candidate profile, interview and other selection strategies. The building selection process measures the 20 knowledge and skills areas outlined in the appendix of the selection manual. Building administrators writing sample and sample lesson for finalists.
6. Principal conducts reference checks, completes recommendation to hire forms and forwards all materials to the personnel office.
7. Personnel director completes SRI interview, reviews all application materials, ensures compliance with district procedures and applicable laws and confers with principal.
8. Candidate is given conditional offer of employment. Notification is given to all other applicants.
9. Recommendation for employment made to the school board.

Source: Farmington Public Schools

Please see SCHOOLS, A3

Northwest couple waits to take flight

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The turbulence of being on strike subsided for one Farmington Hills family as news of a possible settlement in Northwest Airlines pilots' 14-day walkout came Thursday night.

Phil Young, a Northwest captain and pilot, and his wife Eileen, a flight attendant, are happy there appears to be a resolution. The 6,200-member pilots' union had yet to ratify the tentative deal, but the association's executive council is expected to vote on Saturday.

As of Friday, Phil didn't know when he'd be back flying. Northwest officials said full service should return in eight to 10 days.

Young's wife is on leave from her flight attendant's job but, like other 30,000 other workers, received a layoff notice as a result of the strike.

"It's too bad it went this long," said Young, who has been a Northwest pilot nearly 20 years. "I always thought we'd get back to work. I'm just sorry to see other employees get laid off."

During the past two weeks, Young has kept himself busy by catching up on house-

Please see PILOT, A6



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRISLER

Going global: Larry Lobert, executive director of personnel in Farmington Public Schools, touts a new, online method of attracting top-quality teacher candidates and finding out where their talents are best needed. The two-way, interactive database gives building principals and teachers from all over the world the opportunity to meet electronically.

Bounty

Master gardener sows involvement

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

When Carol Hyska bought her home in Farmington, the back yard was nothing but a patch of flat, green grass.

Now look at it.

The bounty that comes from Hyska's award-winning garden includes everything from thick, juicy beefsteak tomatoes and luscious verbena tea to sweetly perfumed heliotrope flowers and rows of basil. It's enough to make a full-fledged farmer jealous.

"I make the best pesto in the world," said a proud-but-not-boastful Hyska, recently recruited to the Farmington Beautification Committee. But the advanced master gardener has a lot more in her life's salad bowl than pop-in-your-mouth cherry tomatoes plucked from the perimeter of her home. Following are just a few of her

many endeavors:

■ Volunteering in the "Friends" program at Botsford General Hospital, cheering up patients.

■ Protecting her street as block captain of the neighborhood watch.

■ Entering - and winning - a blue ribbon in the recent Michigan State Fair. Hyska's entry of golden marigolds won in the organic category of the dried herbs contest. Her entry was on display throughout the two-week fair.

■ Guiding visitors as a docent through the Warner Mansion on Grand River in Farmington.

"I'm a guide that imparts historical facts," said Hyska, who always puts a light spin on things. "Actually, I always say you teach hysterical things."

Meanwhile, she'd like to see the hal-

lowed old home and "beautiful" grounds being used to greater capacity. "I'd like to see it busy. I mean busy."

And, on top of everything else, Hyska, a native of Green Bay, Wis., has time to root for her beloved football Packers. In fact, she still retains season tickets to seats at Lambeau Field, which has a 10-year waiting list and makes obtaining Red Wings hockey tickets seem like a walk in the park.

"Am I a Packer fan? Are you kidding?" joked Hyska. "I danced with (legendary coach) Vince Lombardi when I was 17."

She knew it was good

Beginning with the concrete welcome mat inscribed, "Welcome To My

Please see GARDENER, A4



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRISLER

Involved: Carol Hyska has a green thumb, not to mention a resume of community involvement.



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