



Learning: Woodale students learn about the underground railroad's Farmington connection.

Black History Month

Kids learn about freedom

A man dressed as a slave taught Woodale Elementary students about Oakland County's importance to the Underground Railroad Tuesday as part of a Black History Month presentation.

Willie Payne, a former journalist, used a multimedia presentation to teach students about the Underground Railroad. The "railroad" was actually a secret network of people helping slaves reach freedom in Canada and the Northern states from the 1830s to 1865, when the Civil War ended. Slaves attempting escape often had to travel by night and hide in cargo areas of wagons to avoid detection.

Principal Lashena Jones said the presentation combined music, drama and slide shows to show students about the Underground Railroad's importance.

History is the key to tolerance, Jones said.

"The more we learn about our history, the better understanding we have of all people," she said.

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History: Storyteller Willie Payne presents "The Underground Railroad's Michigan Connection" to students at Woodale Elementary. In the background, Mecca Roberts plays the djembe, an African drum.

Well-known business owner remembered by his friends

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

Bruce A. Strange, a Farmington business owner and mechanic known by friends for his generosity and honesty, died suddenly at his Livonia residence last week.

"He was a super guy," longtime friend Ray Nichols said. "He'd never sell you a piece for a car you didn't need. He was as honest as the day was long."

Nichols met Strange while working at the former Sinclair gas station at Cass and Grand River in the mid 1950s.

Strange, 72, died Feb. 3. Nichols said he had heart problems and had recently been diagnosed with cancer. He leaves behind children Mark of Livonia, Karen of Maryland and four grandchildren. He was born Sept. 5, 1927. He lived in Livonia about 25 years and lived previously in Redford.

Visitation was at Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington. No service was scheduled.

Strange owned Farmington businesses for 35 years. His first, the Sinclair station, he owned from 1955-59. He owned his second business, the Shell station at Power and Grand River, for 25 years. He worked at the Novi Farmington garage until retiring about seven years ago, according to Nichols.

Strange spent his retirement years just tinkering with friends' cars at his home, Nichols said. He also enjoyed camping and traveling to Canada with friends. He was a member of the Masonic lodge and was past master of the Lincoln Masonic lodge.

Marion Wallace, another of Strange's friends, said he was a pleasure to know. She had known him since the 1950s and



Bruce Strange

was also a frequent customer. "Anybody that knew Bruce was a very good friend of him," Wallace said. "If you needed anything, it didn't matter if you had a cent in your pocket - he took care of it. He was somebody that was more than generous."

Nominate your choice for Artist-in-Residence

The Farmington Area Arts Commission is now accepting applications for the "Artist-in-Residence" and "Distinguished Service to the Arts" awards for 2000.

Each year since 1976, the Farmington Area Arts Commission has recognized the achievements of individuals and groups by naming honorees from candidates in art, drama, dance, liter-

ature and music. This year will be the 25th year of recognizing excellence in the arts in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

The Artist-in-Residence award recognizes the talent and accomplishments of an individual who resides in Farmington or Farmington Hills. The Distinguished Service Award honors outstanding service to the community in the creative arts (by groups or

individuals).

Award recipients receive a cash award, plaque and reception in their honor.

Deadline for nominations is Monday, March 21, selections will be made by March 28.

For more information, contact Ginny Lundquist, Chairman, Artist-in-Residence Committee, at (248) 682-5562 or via e-mail at ec1447@aol.com.

Customers would get first dibs on good spots

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington City Council Monday passed the first reading of an ordinance that would give customers first grab at prime parking spaces in one of the city's municipal lots.

If ultimately approved, 18 parking spots in the city lot north of Grand River and east of Farmington Road would be designated "customer parking only."

The ordinance has to go through a final reading and approval before it takes effect.

The spaces affected would run from 33304 Grand River (behind Grace Insurance) to 33318 (behind Salon Legato).

"What this would do is give an opportunity for only customers to park in those spots adjacent to the businesses," Assistant City Manager Bill Richards said, adding that employees would be

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excluded from those spots.

We're doing this "upon request by merchants to make sure customers have most convenient parking," he said. "We'd like to see if the demonstration works well."

If it works, the "customer parking only" signs could expand into other municipal lots.

Violators would be ticketed by the Farmington Department of Public Safety just as any other

parking violators, Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss said.

"The signs will be enforceable by police," he said. Business owners would give police a call if they noticed vehicles parked there that didn't belong, he added.

It's not hard to tell the difference between employee vehicles and customer vehicles.

"Generally speaking, customers will turn (their vehicles) over every so often," Goss said.

City Manager Frank Laubhoff wrote in a memo to council that the parking ordinance was a positive move.

"Instead of the normal ordinance that would prohibit parking, this ordinance is a positive approach and invites customers to the area," Laubhoff wrote.

Teams needed for fund-raiser

Five person teams are still needed for Team Farmington Special Olympics' 8th Annual Bowl-A-Thon on Saturday, Feb. 26 at Drake's Lanes in Farmington.

This year Team Farmington hopes to raise \$50,000 through the Bowl-A-Thon. The first session of bowlers will start at 10 a.m. and will receive bagels, donuts and juice. Pizza and pop will be provided for the second session at 1:30 p.m. Each team will be comprised of five bowlers representing local businesses, organizations and individuals. Team Farmington is asking each team to raise a minimum of \$500. All proceeds from the Bowl-A-Thon will be used to fund Team Farmington Special Olympics.

"The community has really come together to support Team Farmington in the past, and as a result this year has a quality Special Olympics program," said Mark R. Fisher, chairman of the 2000 Bowl-A-Thon.

Teams and individual bowlers are asked to call and sign up prior to the Bowl-A-Thon. Those who can't bowl, can make a monetary contribution or in-kind gift for the silent auction. Lane sponsorships are also available for local businesses and vendors at \$250 per lane.

■ This year Team Farmington hopes to raise \$50,000 through the Bowl-A-Thon.

Team Farmington is a year-round sports training and educational program open to all athletes with mental impairments who are or have been involved in the Special Education programs run by the Farmington School District or who reside in the district. Students from many surrounding school districts are also involved in these programs.

Team Farmington currently offers 12 different sporting events, more than 175 athletes and over 50 volunteer coaches. Its growth is based on support from the community, parents and schools. Team Farmington's annual operating budget is \$50,000, and must be raised through private donations and proceeds from the Bowl-A-Thon.

To sign up to bowl, make a donation or get additional information about the 8th Annual Bowl-A-Thon, call Andrea Saylor at 888-5024.

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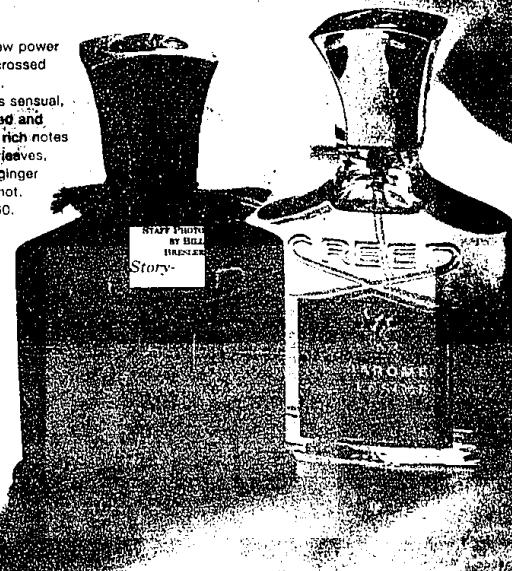
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