



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLER

Talking it out: Mark Rutledge addresses fellow Farmington High School students about possible solutions for teens in crisis. Their discussion was designed to elicit one solid action plan students could take back to their school.

Summit from page A1

than a lot of people, even with a disability," said Chris Gabriel, an 11th grader at North Farmington High School. "He turns it around from a disadvantage to an advantage."

Tuesday was Gabriel's first youth summit; he was among the guests of a core group who had been asked to reach out and bring new students into the mix, Michaelson said.

"Each kid was told to bring two or three other kids who were not seniors, because we want to carry on this legacy," she commented.

The teens were also charged with creating at least one action plan that will be implemented in their schools this year.

Brian Doughy, a student at Harrison, said his group talked about getting more involved in school activities that don't get as much hype as sports. Scores of kids turn out for football games; they thought the same should apply to other activities.

"People don't always go to those things, because they don't know about them," he said.

According to Michaelson, seniors will create a video that deals with the issue of tolerance in the schools and the work they've done so far.

"It's going to be their legacy," she said.

■ For more information about the Call to Action or Youth Summits, contact Estralee Michaelson, 248-499-3408.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLER

Words of Inspiration: Erin Held has a hug for motivational speaker Ron Bachman.

Board from page A2

overruns.

Professional event organizer Mike Watts of Watts Up, Inc. was then hired and implemented some almost-shocking changes, which were not well-received. At the top of the list was changing the focus of the event, in hopes of turning it into more of a

regional draw. The name and date also were changed.

Even more changes followed the 2000 event, which prompted a town hall meeting in August.

Enter Bruce Lilley as festival administrator in October 2000 (Lilley quit in January); enter Lichtman, who had to step down

from her role as executive director of the Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation.

"I certainly don't see myself as the person coming in to save the day," she said. "But I am happy to be part of it."

Telethon from page A1

a dance element, Chris Hane is the only non-musical act. He performs card tricks 8:55 a.m. Saturday.

Some 28 students from Farmington's three high schools will work behind the scenes to see that the telethon is actually

broadcast.

The students are taking Dean Cobb's "TV Intern" class, in which they produce and deliver a weekly news program, cablecast district football games and tackle special projects like last year's OGC campaign stop by George W. Bush.

For the telethon, some of them will work all 24 hours, while others work one of three eight-hour shifts. "The adults make it 24 hours," said Cobb. "The children always fall asleep." About 10 of the children are also performing in the telethon.

Although it was uncertain whether the school district would grant the young technicians' wishes, Cobb polled his students Tuesday to ask what sustenance they'd like spread before them the day and night of the telethon.

The wish list included Blimpies, Greek salads, mashed potatoes, bagels, fruit, brownies, cereal, tacos and mostaccioli. Last year, Cobb said, the fare was limited to cold cuts and cold pizza.

The telethon begins 3 p.m. Friday, March 16, on TV-10 with the East Middle School Jazz Band and ends 24 hours later with a vocal duet by Brandon Leopold.

Proceeds benefit the Farmington Hills Youth and Family Services Program, which provides an after-school destination and activities for people ages 11-15 at the Costick Center, YMCA, ice arena and Warner Middle School.

"We give them a place to enjoy each other's company," said Youth Counselor Tom Hefey.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLER

Practice makes perfect: Dean Cobb directs students (front row, left) Chrissy Baker, Elida Ticula, Brad Hall and Ala Kashat and (back row, left) Sally Boitkus, Allan Wertheimer, Paul Hofman and Brian Gaughan as they prepared for Friday's telethon, a fund-raiser for after-school programs.

Test drive takes tragic turn

BY DAN WEST
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Taking a test drive in the sports car of an acquaintance turned deadly for an Ontario woman early Monday morning.

The single-car accident took place at 2:10 a.m., but police said a complex traffic investigation was needed that forced a quarter-mile closure of both southbound lanes of Orchard Lake Road.

Lengthy back-ups and delays were the result for many West Bloomfield motorists Monday morning.

Wing Chung, 20, of Scarborough, Ontario, was driving a 1999 Mitsubishi Eclipse at a high rate of speed south on Orchard Lake Road when she lost control of the car at a traffic

island near Northwestern Highway, police said.

The car swerved wildly, hit the median, crashed into some traffic signs and came to rest on the left southbound lane of Orchard Lake Road in front of a gas station. Chung, who police said was not wearing a seat belt, was flung throughout the interior of the car, then thrown from the vehicle.

"She was pronounced dead at the scene," said Lt. Carl Fuhs. "She suffered serious head, neck and body trauma. She might have been dead before she was thrown from the car."

The pavement was dry at the time of the accident. Investigators are still trying to determine why she lost control of the car.

An 18-year-old Auburn Hills woman was a passenger in the Eclipse. She was wearing a seat belt and suffered unspecified

injuries in the crash. She was transported to North Oakland Medical Center in Pontiac where she was treated and released.

"The seat belt probably saved her life," Fuhs said.

The women, investigators said, were test driving the car that belonged to a 37-year-old Farmington Hills man. The man followed behind in Chung's 2000 Honda Civic and witnessed the fatal accident.

When police arrived at the accident scene, he was found in the running Honda. Tests showed he had a blood-alcohol content of .15 percent. He was arrested for drunken driving and taken to jail.

Police will not know if Chung was drinking that night until toxicology reports are completed in several weeks. Police said the Auburn Hills woman was not drinking.

Hills Board of Review meetings begin

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW
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The Farmington Hills Board of Review has been hearing property tax appeals this week with about as much fanfare and hoopla as a dog sleeping on the porch.

"It's board of review season, and you don't notice it in this office from any other day," said City Assessor Dean Babb. "It's nothing."

Babb's experience goes back to

the '80s and early '90s when property assessments, and consequently taxes, were rising 10 percent a year or more in some Michigan cities.

The 1993 board of review was actually two boards, Babb said, working three and a half weeks to hear more than 800 appeals. This week it's one board hearing 50-60 appeals, comparable with 48 last year.

Most of the complaints nowadays, Babb said, emanate from people who just bought a house

and were unpleasantly surprised when the assessment, suddenly freed from the Proposal A restraints approved by voters in 1993, lurched upward.

The board can offer no relief to these homeowners, Babb said. Assessment increases are capped at the rate of inflation (or 5 percent, whichever is less) until the property is sold. Then the assessment can rise dramatically, particularly if the previous owner had the house for five years or more.

Mural from page A1

would adorn the wall. Kalisky, a student of art, looked at the soft pinks, blues and purples of the media center's fresh carpeting. She thought of Monet's "Water Lilies."

It didn't take much longer, then, that to realize one of the school's parents (O'Connor) is a professional, exhibiting artist. There was a telephone call to be made and a question asked. The artist's answer was a positive one, even agreeing to do the work at a significant discount. O'Connor spent most of the recent winter break to create the mural, which has dimensions of 40 feet long by almost five feet high.

"I took the whole week, including setup and cleanup," O'Connor said. "There were three days of heavy-duty painting."

She didn't sketch first, paint

later, either.

"I eyeballed it," said O'Connor, who used acrylics to replicate Monet's flowers-in-a-lily-pod masterpiece. "It fit the dimensions of the wall perfectly."

She said the greatest challenge of the project was overcoming the scratchy, cinder block surface. That turned out to be a minor inconvenience, because the painting did not require pinpoint detail work.

Then, to protect the artistic blue-and-green blanket, the artist added a clear acrylic sealant.

Kalisky said the finished version is turning heads, too. "Kids come in and their jaws drop. Parents come in at the end of the day for pickup and say their kids told them they had to see it."

Extravaganza

Her mural won't be the only feature attraction of the "Literature Extravaganza." Sure to rouse attention will be classrooms highlighting literary favorites such as Harry Potter, Arthur the Aardvark and Miss Frizzle and the Magic School Bus. The latter will feature an "erupting" volcano.

Sharing the spotlight in the media center during the innovative program will be activities surrounding the 2001 Caldecott Medal Book, *So You Want to be President*. The book was written by Judith St. George and illustrated by David Small.

Farmington Board of Education Secretary Gary Sharp will dress up as George Washington and read the story. Meanwhile, youngsters will work on their own versions of the book's cover, explained Kalisky.

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