



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRIDLER

Suiling up: Greg Fyffe helps Matt Abrahamson into an airtank as Abrahamson prepared for testing.



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Tug: Lonnie Chiappelli lifts the extension ladder.



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Uniformity: Hills firefighter candidates suit up for a series of agility tests.

## New recruits

### FHFD applicants take gruelling aptitude test

Aspiring Farmington Hills firefighters got a taste of what the work is like during aptitude testing at the Department of Public Works training tower Thursday.

According to Hills training officer Thomas Shurtleff, the applicants are all seeking jobs as paid, on-call firefighters. Following their successful completion, they'll begin formal training.

The department could hire as many as 12 new recruits in the near future, based on the city's move toward providing more advanced life-support transports.

"We invited more than 40," Shurtleff said of the aptitude testing, which took place over three days. "It's a screening process."

Men and women alike dragged heavy fire hoses and

were asked to demonstrate their dexterity in coupling hoses. In addition, they were required to hoist a heavy extension ladder, climb the ladder, carry a bundle of hose up two flights of stairs, then come down, pick up a 175-pound dummy and drag it 75 feet.

"This was not for the faint of heart, but Shurtleff emphasized it wasn't an attempt to discriminate, either."

"We're not here to run people out," he said. "We're here to find out whether they have the ability to train."

About 10 percent will wash out of the process, Shurtleff estimated.

Aptitude testing is done about once a year, as new recruits are needed.



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Heavy: Randy Forth hauls a weighted dummy.

## Students learn about law, meet sentences in Teen Court

By SUE BUCK  
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For the first time Wednesday in 47th District Court, Farmington teens helped set a sentence in a real life case involving a teen who lives outside of the Farmington area.

He agreed to have his case heard by a jury of his peers in Teen Court, a diversionary method which allows teens to avoid a record. They can't have any previous court record or involvement in gang activity.

Specially trained teens from Farmington High School assumed the roles of prosecutor, defense attorney, jurors and bailiff in Judge Maria Parker's courtroom. The judge metes out sentences in a traditional courtroom. In Teen Court, the student jury decides punishment.

"Law is interesting," said Jon Buck afterwards. He served as the student prosecutor.

Annette Abour, student defense attorney, also called the process interesting. "It shows you how the court runs," she said.

"I'm happy to have helped to decide a fair sentence," added Britany Dudson, jury foreman.

The defendant fell into trouble with the law when he drove off from a gas station without paying for \$13 in gas. He also wasn't carrying his driver's license.

The teen jury set a sentence consisting of written apologies to both his parents and the gas station owner, as well as paying back the \$13 he owed. His parents had already

grounded him by setting a midnight curfew and not letting him drive for two weeks.

Oakland County Prosecutor David Goreycn advocates Teen Court for first-time offenders.

"This is the sixth high school in Oakland County trained to do this," said Amy Allen, a coordinator and social worker from the prosecutor's office.

Her office prefers that Teen Court be held in a jurisdiction outside of the area where the teen committed the crime.

Teen Court is used throughout the United States. Those programs are considered successful, with a repeat rate in some cases as low as 5 percent.

Lisa Sievert, a civics and economics teacher at Farmington High School, assisted with the arrangements. "Amy Allen approached us in November," Sievert said. "There was a training session in February."

The hope is to run this once a month, she said.

Robert Giles, an assistant Oakland County prosecutor, mentored the students.

Numerous ways to dispose of the cases include community service, written or oral apologies to the victim and essays.

Other students who participated were Kristel Stricker, bailiff, jurors Melissa Miracle, Mike Deskins, Joel Rosen and Marian Fortuna.

Other students who were trained and will participate at a later time are: Stephen Beierschmitt, Sarah Bender, Mallory Brown, Timothy Glass, Andy Luxon, Katy Murphy, Eric

Pierce, Jerry Shinkonis, Julie Skwiercz, Hemanth Srinivas, Nicolette Stallworth, Jessica Tolson and Colin Wasiloff.

## Drug card could help reduce health costs

Michigan health care costs will be reduced under legislation unveiled today by state Rep. Andrew Raczowski that combines the power of technology with the state's ever-growing population.

The legislation would provide citizens with a uniform prescription drug information card that could be used at pharmacies.

According to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, which insures more than 4.75 million Michigan residents, the cost of prescription drugs exceeds the cost of inpatient hospitalization.

"With Michigan's population, booming, more people will require health-related services, including prescription drugs," said Raczowski, R-Farmington Hills.

The cards will contain essential drug history information for use by physicians and pharmacists while protecting the privacy of the individual.

The legislation now goes to a House committee for review.

## Furniture Designer Tom Myers personal appearance



Opening Reception  
Thursday, May 3  
6 to 9 pm

Collection Show  
Friday, May 4  
through Sunday, May 6  
Noon to 4 pm

In Home  
Birmingham

Oakland County artist Tom Myers designs steel furniture and interior decorative pieces that are sleek, clean and modern. His work is featured at local galleries and art fairs, including Birmingham's "Art in the Park." Join us in welcoming him and view his intriguing collection. Mr. Myers will be happy to help you select a piece that will complement your personal style.

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