

# People power

## City seeks committee members to pitch pathway ideas

BY PAUL R. PACE  
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Are you interested in other forms of travel besides jumping in your car or truck?

If so, the city of Farmington Hills is looking for members of the community willing to pitch ideas to the city manager about developing non-motorized travel ways in the city.

The concept includes people who enjoy walking, bicycling, jogging, roller skating or skateboarding.

So, kids, be not afraid to apply. The Non-Motorized Advisory Committee will be made up of a cross-section of residents and members of the business community, said Dana Whinnery, assistant city manager.

"The committee may include bicycle enthusiasts, joggers, youth interested in roller skating, skateboarding, school personnel interested in safe, non-motorized commuting to schools or members of the business community with an interest in increasing pedestrian traffic," he said.

The committee will include up to 15 members who will serve staggered, three-year terms. For more information, contact Whinnery at 473-9502.

### Promoting concept

Farmington Hills resident Fred Dore has been promoting the concept for the past three years.

A bicyclist for the last 25 years, Dore serves on the board of the League of Michigan Bicyclists. He researched federal and state non-motorized travel grants that communities can capture to promote pathways.

"One thing a committee can do is look at and develop ideas to suggest to the city that they pursue," said Dore. "It can identify sources of funding. And it can even lead to letting people know what the rightful laws are for bicyclists."

The Hills lacks a network of pathways to get to different sections, said Dore, who usually takes his bicycle when he goes shopping.

"We need an actual plan where people can know there is a non-

motorized network they can take to a store or a center — places where people will know bicyclists have a right to be there — a shoulder or a pathway designated for them."

Another concept is moving one energy-efficient mode of travel to another, such as using a bicycle to get to a bus stop.

Dore said the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments already is working with the regional bus system to have buses equipped with bike racks. "People could ride (their bikes) to the bus and take it from there."

He is working on a SEMCOG task force to develop a region-wide, non-motorized plan for the bus system.

Having the Hills make a non-motorized transportation plan would tie in with that concept, he said.

Dore said it's important that people of the community, schools, and the police have a say in the proposal that will eventually go before the city council.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRENNER

New paths: Fred Dore hopes Farmington Hills officials will improve paths for bikes, inline skaters and people on foot.

## Cat rescue gets a holiday treat

BY SUB BUCK  
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If a human could purr, Anne Breneman might come close to doing just that.

Breneman, who owns Backdoor Friends Purebred Cat Rescue at 35562 Grand River at Drake in Farmington Hills, is delighted to have received a \$4,000 grant from the Ahimsa Foundation in Boston.

"A hundred percent must be used for veterinary care only," Breneman said.

About \$3,000 went to pay off a balance at Plaza Veterinary Hospital in Farmington.

"This leaves us with a cushion," Breneman said. "A lot of money goes for medical care for cats."

A minimum of \$100 is spent for each rescued animal, she said.

Every time Breneman receives a rescue cat, it is sent directly for a checkup and shots with Dr. David Carron of Plaza Veterinary Hospital, Breneman's consulting veterinarian.

"He gives us a good discount, but it doesn't cover the cost," Breneman said. "Dr. Carron is wonderful. He's been a saint. I can call him and say, 'I have a cat,' or 'I have a mother and six babies.'"

Carron, who recently diagnosed a five-year-old Siamese rescue cat with untreatable breast cancer, decided to adopt her and add her to his two other office cats. "He offered to keep the cat and have her live there," Breneman said. "That gives you an idea of his heart."

About 100 cats were rescued this year, 72 in 2000. The rescue program is almost three years old.

Breneman also operates a store at the same location called Backdoor Friends Cat Shoppe. The store offers clothing, giftware, stationary, jewelry, timed bolts and catnip toys, among other things.

Both Breneman and Dee Walsh, an employee, mentioned that the boarding business dropped off when customers started thinking twice about plane travel. "It's getting better," Breneman said.

In the meantime, volunteers can come in and pet the kitties if they want, a real pick-me-up for the person and the cat.

"The elves in the store work extra hard at Christmas for our cat rescue," Walsh quipped. "It's our motto that no cat goes without the comforts of holidays, or any other time of the year."

For more information call (248) 442-0840.

## Attacks from page A1

court to try the boy as an adult. Bob Zivian, assistant prosecutor in the Oakland County Juvenile Justice Division, said his office plans to investigate the boy's past to see whether the office will take that option.

In the event the boy is tried

and convicted as a juvenile, no maximum penalties for conviction are set.

The judge could order any punishment from probation or being incarcerated in Children's Village to making the boy a ward of state, where he could be held

until he reaches age 21, said Zivian.

The youth's pre-trial hearing is scheduled before Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Rae Lee Chabot at 8:30 a.m. on Jan. 10.

## Fire from page A1

ion chief, said the fire department received the call about 1:20 p.m.

"We got a report that there was a fire in the rear bay area," Bartsch said. "When we arrived

we found that they were working on a van putting in a gas tank. We were told by the mechanic that gas was spilled out of the gas tank and came into contact with an extension cord light, a trouble light. It ignited the fire."

"There was very minor damage to the vehicle. The workers kept the fire from getting out of control."

The van suffered about \$600 damage, Bartsch said.

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