

Connected from page A1

also got digital cameras, which allow them to share pictures.

"The four of us can talk at the same time, if you will," David said. "We can e-mail and include all of us on it from our offices. We can communicate a lot easier than trying to set up a conference call."

Technology is not only a part of the Haron family's life—it's part of David's wardrobe.

"On the left side of my belt, I've got a cell phone, on the right side of my belt, I've got the Blackberry," he said, the latter a wireless device that allows him to retrieve and send e-mail messages, wherever he is.

As independent professionals—Pamela owns an insurance agency—the couple sees business advantages in constant connectivity. Not missing a contact is a real boon, but can also be a burden.

**You don't get a break**

David admits to taking his laptop computer along on vacations. It has wireless capability, so he can use it anywhere. And therein lies the rub.

"You don't really get a break from it," he said. "People can reach us all the time, and they expect a response immediately. With a fax, you could at least have the time to walk to the machine, pick it up and read it. E-mail you have to respond within seconds."

As with any innovation, the world of technology is ever-expanding. David remembers buying the family's first computer, and Apple IIe Plus, in 1982. "Back then, I was a genius. It was a very simple computer, and I knew everything about it," he said.

Paula earned a master's degree in computer science from Wayne State, and the couple had a special line installed to connect their computer with Wayne's, so she could complete her coursework.

The Harons helped teach kids at Forest Elementary how to work with early Commodore 64 computers, when Eric and Andrea were students there. Eric's teachers were taken aback when he submitted work he'd typed on the family's computer, so his parents had to sign his papers, attesting that he'd done the work on his own.

"And we had to swear he didn't use spell-check," David laughed.

Now, the family's technology inventory includes Time Warner's Road Runner high-speed Internet service and direct satellite television. David's always looking for a newer, better cell phone. It may be possible in the future to completely replace home phone service with cellular, as his service provider is now offering 2,000 regular minutes, all over the country, and 3,000 night and weekend minutes, for one fee.

"I think that's why AT&T just dropped their rates," he said of the new competitive atmosphere.

David believes his Blackberry may go by the wayside as well, as cell phones become more and more versatile. In some European countries, it's already possible to use a cell phone like a debit card.

"I think we're all going to be connected all the time," he said. "But that'll eliminate the downtime."

Time from page A1

actual implementation.

The four subcommittees studying the issue will meet again at 7 p.m. March 4 at the Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas Street to talk about the forum and other information. Supporters say the plan will help teens who get insufficient sleep, which is linked to, among other things, low grades and poor school performance, negative moods such as anger, sadness and fear and increased likelihood of stimulant use, including caffeine and nicotine.

Negative reaction has included concern over costs involved in purchasing additional buses and implementing the plan. The district has attempted to gauge public opinion through a variety of sources. An employee survey was attached to an internal newsletter, but some district staff members said they didn't receive it. The forum attendees filled out surveys which are also available to anyone in the community by calling Diane Bauman, director of school community relations at (248)489-3349.

English classes in grades 9-11 were also polled. "We did not ask seniors because it did not affect them," Harris said.

Tom Shurtleff, a parent and district graduate, said he's a "natural cynic." "I resist vagaries of fad and fancy," Shurtleff said. "The committee needs

to understand that there needs to be a minority present on committees. I hope what you take away tonight is not an overwhelming negative but what you hear is much more balance, more conversation and more deliberate thinking. Anecdotal evidence and opinion is not a way to send people with a brand new thought process."

He recalled other things like inventive spelling that have gone by the wayside.

Daniel Chomet, a North Farmington teacher, faulted the timing of the project. "I've had great first hour classes," Chomet said. "Their test scores are no different."

Chomet has a problem with hiring more bus drivers and cutting teaching positions. Linda Stalberg was interested in class size. "I thought there was a commitment by the district of maintaining class size of one teacher to 23 students," Stalberg said. "As a parent it's important to maintain that front-line of educational excellence."

Michael Leads applauded the efforts of the committee but cited the axiom he lives by, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," he said. "I'm concerned that of the studies done, we didn't hear opposing studies, so the community could discern the information and make a valid decision."

Body biorhythms fall into place with a consistent schedule, Leads said. His

plan is far less than the up to \$600,000 in initial transportation costs up to \$250,000 annually that officials have estimated.

"That plan is called parenting," Leads said. "Shame on those people who let their kids stay up to 12 o'clock at night. Shame on them for not feeding their kids breakfast."

Denise Albrecht, an active "booster" parent at Farmington High, made several points including considerations about scheduling athletic practices. She said that the approximately 80:100 students she spoke to didn't have enough information about the late start plan. "Kids haven't been surveyed, or properly informed about this," she said. "When my son has a late start, he goes to bed later."

There's also possibility that elementary students could arrive home before high school students, she said.

A woman identified as B. Quain asked how many of the district's students are sleep deprived. Farmington Superintendent Bob Maxfield didn't have an answer.

"We've heard lots of good suggestions," Maxfield said. "We don't take any of this personally. Just because it's worked effectively in other communities, and just because research says it makes sense, maybe it's not right in this community."

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Art from page A1

Robert is well known in the artistic community as a ceramic and design instructor at Oakland Ridge Community College's Orchard Ridge campus in Farmington Hills. A teacher for about 30 years, he has one of his ceramic pieces on display at the Smithsonian and another at the Detroit Institute of Art.

Gail is an art instructor at Farmington High School.

The husband and wife favor ceramics to express their art, and Robert is particular well known for his raku ceramics.

"He's written a number of books. He wrote the first raku book," Gail said as she and Leah were putting up pieces in order.

The raku technique involves taking the ceramic piece out of the kiln while hot and letting it burn in an air-tight container. The result gives the pieces a metallic, weathered appearance.

One wall piece that Gail will display looks like metal, but in fact is ceramic.

"Clay is such a wonderful medium," she said, adding that she is teaching jewelry and ceramics at Farmington High School.

Artistic expression in the family has obviously always been around, Gail pointed out, but she said she never pushed her girls into it. Instead, she said, they adopted the fun of making art on their own.

"They developed an eye for design and artwork," Gail said.

Jessica, 20, is a graphic design student at the University of Michigan, where she is staff photographer for the Michigan Daily. Her photographs will be displayed at the Coastick.

Gail and Leah are taking jewelry making class together, and Leah has her photographs and some jewelry on display. Leah has already won awards for her photography.

Not surprisingly, there is a kiln at the Piepenburg home where art is always in progress.

"He's a well-loved instructor," Gail said of her husband. "He's a good spirit in that studio."

Robert said when Gail suggested displaying their artwork as a family, he thought it was a great idea.

"We do a lot of things together," Robert said of his wife. "We do a lot of workshops."

But this is the first time the family is displaying pieces together.

"I'm just grateful to be a part of it," Robert said.

He said he enjoys teaching art because it allows people to find their true selves.

Robert doesn't favor any particular piece he will be displaying.

"I'm pretty proud of all them," he said. "Each is unique and special in its own right. I don't just whip them out."

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