

Court rules in favor of cable access group

BY PAUL R. PACE
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Local attorney Todd Levitt plans to appeal the recent Oakland Circuit Court ruling that Southwest Oakland Cable Commission did not violate his first amendment rights.

Levitt's attorney, Steven Taylor, filed a summary motion in March that asked the Commission's rules be stripped, because they violated the constitutional guarantee of free speech. This month, Judge Deborah Tyner ruled in SWOCC's favor.

In the judge's opinion, the cable operator may not determine the content of the programming, but the organization may require rules and procedures for use of the channel.

Taylor said his client will likely take the case to the Michigan Court of Appeals.

"We fully anticipate that we

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expect to win," Taylor said. "That's what the higher courts are for."

SWOCC officials said they are pleased with the ruling.

Cable commissioner Jerry Ellis said, "This is what we anticipated all along, knowing that we hadn't done anything in violation of anyone's rights."

Suspension

Levitt broadcasts "The Todd L. Levitt" show on channel 12 and

produced a wine tasting show in March 2000, said Taylor. He said Levitt was suspended by SWOCC director Karen Collins for one year for violating the rules that no alcohol was allowed on SWOCC premises.

Levitt appealed the decision to the SWOCC Commission and received a lighter sentence, only a two-month probation.

Then in April 2001, Taylor said a show Levitt produced had technical difficulties and he wanted to redo the show. Taylor said Collins insisted the original show be broadcasted nonetheless and that's when Levitt decided to tape his show at other studios outside SWOCC.

Taylor claims Collins has unlimited authority at the studio and his client wants it stopped.

Collins contends she does not pre-screen or pre-censor any show.

Crime Story



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BRENDEL



Murder, they played: About 30 local mystery fans spent the evening of April 13 attempting to discern who attacked Nathan Power, publisher and editor of the Farmington Observer & Eccentric, in a 1940s-era play staged by the Blue Circle and written by current Observer editor Joni Hubred. Among the unusual suspects: The slightly crazed Marie Sheffield (Julie Devine), her banker brother Hank Sheffield (Tim Devine), and town historian Estelle Amundson (Valeri Knol) searched for clues at Page's Food and Spirits, which along with the Farmington Bakery served as one of the story's settings; the rumped but trusted Dr. James Moore (Brian Golden) who discretely nipped from his hip flask; and Ellen Savage, a poised but bad-tempered woman, (Sam Richeson) who frequently worked herself up into a rant, watched by Lefty Lewis (Margaret Cowley) a hapless and occasionally unemployed waitress.

Benchmark to host Banff festival at FHS

The Benchmark in Farmington will host the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour as it hits Farmington at 6 p.m. Friday, April 26, at Farmington High School.

The show's wide variety of mountain stories - from mountain sports, to mountain culture and the environment - will amaze, inspire and captivate

audiences. Included in this year's lineup are films from around the world including Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Slovakia, Denmark, Switzerland and South Africa.

Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre produces the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour. The tour kicks off immediately following the Banff Film

Festival, an annual event held in November in Banff, Alberta, Canada.

Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. All proceeds will go to the Babu Chiri Sherpa Trust Fund to build schools in Nepal. Food and refreshments will be provided. Call (248) 477-8116.

East Wax Museum brings history to life

BY SUE DUCK
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East Middle School teacher Jennifer Franklin doesn't know how the school's annual Wax Museum got its name, but the event continues.

About 250 sixth grade students selected and researched a historical character living or dead and have been working on a presentation since the start of the school year. They'll show off what they've learned to parents, friends and other guests, tonight (April 25).

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"A lot of research has been done on their own," Franklin said. "Presentations will be made by all members of the sixth grade student body. Each pres-

entation will be a biography about a key historical person and will feature speeches, poems, pictures and assorted visual aids."

Guests will hear the stories of people like Shirley Temple Black, Thomas Edison and Alexander the Great. Students selected a gamut of personalities - inventors, celebrities, sports stars. Some have even found period costumes to wear.

The free event is open to the public from 6:30-7:30 p.m. For more information, call Franklin, at (248) 489-3801.



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