

Coming July 18th!



THE WEEK AHEAD

TODAY

Homecoming: Alumni of the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center will gather on the grounds Sunday, July 14 to reminisce and celebrate the center's 150th anniversary. A high point will be the opening of a cornerstone originally filled and sealed in 1929, at approximately 1:15 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Backpacking 101: The Benchmark will be hosting a series of outdoor clinics during the Farmington Area Founders Festival, kicking off Wednesday, July 17 at 6 p.m. with Backpacking 101. For more information about times and topics, call (248) 477-8116.

THURSDAY

Founders Festival: Festivities for this year's Farmington Area Founders Festival begin Thursday, July 18 with food vendors, rides, local merchants displays, commercial booths, a craft show and artists in the Downtown Farmington Center Parking lot (Grand River and Farmington Roads), beginning at 9 a.m. Art on the Grand opens at the same time in Memorial Park, on Grand River just west of Farmington Road. For more information, log onto the festival Web site: www.foundersfestival.com

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Burning lessons



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL DREISLER

Training day: Farmington Hills Fire Department held a training fire on Fendt Road west of Gill on Thursday evening. The thick smoke went nearly straight up, creating a beacon for local folks who spotted the dark column and went to see what it was all about.

DDA to interview finalists

■ Farmington Downtown Development Authority officials will decide August 8 whether to have the full board interview finalists for the executive director post, or whether to have a subcommittee handle the work. Either way, they'd prefer to keep the interviews closed to the public.

BY SUE BUCK
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Farmington Downtown Development Authority officials expect to interview three to five candidates for executive director, a position that will be open with the retirement of Judy Downey.

The application period closes July 22. The DDA director will plan and coordinate activities in the downtown area. Downey, who retired at the end of the year, has held her position for 10 years.

"We want somebody before the end of the year," said DDA president Ron Oglesby. This will allow time for the new person to acclimate.

The position will pay \$47,000-\$53,000. Oglesby isn't involved with the selection process. DDA members Bob Heinrich, Suzanne Paul and Joyce Cornwell serve on the search/selection committee.

The DDA at its regular 8 a.m. Aug. 6 meeting will decide whether the interviews with the three finalists will be before the full board or just the search/selection committee, Heinrich said.

"This is not an appointed position," Heinrich said. "It's an employee position. It's an issue of confidentiality. A number of people don't want their applications disclosed."

Please see DDA, A7

ELECTION



Meet the 47th District Court candidates

Kraizman has unique practice

BY PAUL PACE
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Sidney Kraizman, 56, is running for judge in the 47th District Court race.

The attorney, who has lived in Farmington Hills for 17 years has been in practice for 31 years, said he has handled hundreds of civil and criminal cases.

"I have a unique law practice where one-third of my clients are deaf or hard of hearing. I have judicial experience as a special education hearing officer," he said of the state-appointed position he has held since 1995.

Kraizman said he has a passion for helping the deaf and hard of hearing, as one of his two daughters suffers from a hearing impairment. He is married to Helen.

The attorney also spearheaded a summer camp for the deaf and hard of hearing where up to 40 children enjoy a camping experience each summer.

He said he was instrumental in encouraging hospitals to perform hearing tests on newborns and initiated the advocacy movement that helped establish the procedure.

Kraizman feels his leadership in this area demonstrates his ability to sit on the 47th District Court bench.

"I can take the leadership role to Please see KRAIZMAN, A8

Leib says age isn't an issue

BY PAUL PACE
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Larry Leib is a third generation attorney and a shareholder in a practice he shares with his father and another relative.

"I've been involved in law all my life," he said.

The 34-year-old, who is married to Dori and has a newborn daughter, wants to fill the 47th District judgeship vacated when Judge Fred Harris retires this year.

Leib grew up in West Bloomfield and has spent the last nine years living in Farmington Hills.

He was an adjunct professor at the University of Michigan and Concordia where he taught law classes. And he has been appointed as an arbitrator during his 10-year career.

His firm's clients include private corporations, businesses, organizations, families and individuals. And he has represented clients as plaintiff and defense in civil cases and defended criminal cases.

Leib suggests an aggressive approach to improving the 47th District Court, including making its hours more accommodating to the public by holding routine court proceedings in the evening or early morning hours several times a month.

He said as judge he would create an Please see LEIB, A8

Rackowski's goal: fairness

BY JONI HUBRED
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People recognize Annette Rackowski's name — her brother-in-law, Andrew, is a long-time Farmington area state representative now running for U.S. Senate.

Her goal is to make sure they know she's the candidate for 47th District court judge.

While her brother-in-law has lent his support and political advice, "I am my own person," the 39-year-old Farmington Hills resident said.

A member of the Women's Economic Club, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, NFIB (National Federation of Independent Business), Farmington Area Jaycees and the Polish American Congress, she has also volunteered to give pro bono legal advice on Law Day, May 1.

"I've gotten very comfortable with the practice of law," she said, adding she believes she has the right temperament for a judicial post.

"I think I have a personality that allows people to approach me." Rackowski sees a great opportunity to streamline operations in the new courthouse, under construction at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Roads.

"We need to make sure we're using Please see RACKOWSKI, A8

Vosko banks on trial experience

BY PAUL PACE
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Alan Vosko prides himself on being non-political and won't commit himself to any party.

The 67-year-old is taking his first run at political office in the race for 47th District Court judge. He said his experience in law shows he knows how the legal system works and can be an effective judge.

"Of the other people running I am the only one who has had trial experience for 30 years," he said. "I know both sides of the fence as far as plaintiff and defense... I know the laws and how to render an informed, well-rounded opinion," he said.

Vosko, who is married to Sue and has two adult children, has lived in the Farmington area for 28 years.

He works as house counsel for AAA of Michigan and has spent 17 years with that company and worked another 13 years as a plaintiff attorney for two different law firms.

"I defend people so they don't lose their homes," he said of AAA clients being sued.

He has also done pro bono work.

The attorney said he's been active in multicultural organizations and has talked with students about what they can expect in a courtroom.

Please see VOSKO, A6

