

Annual Flea Market is this weekend

Livonia Historical Society will hold its 5th annual Flea Market 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 8, at Greenmead Historical Museum & Village, 20501 Newburgh Road. More than 100 vendors are scheduled to attend. Admission is \$1 for adults. Children under 12 can visit free. Food and refreshments will be available. The Livonia Historical Commission is a co-sponsor of the event. All of the money raised will be donated toward the restoration of the historic Alexander Blue House, which is nearing completion. It is scheduled to open next spring. Village buildings will also be open for free tours during Flea Market hours. Greenmead is located south of Eight Mile in Livonia. Parking is free and available from the west side of Newburgh Road. The event will go on as planned, rain or shine. Call (248) 477-7375 for more information.

Ruhland brings varied background to FPS post

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Dave Ruhland, the new executive director of personnel for Farmington Public Schools has held a variety of positions in different occupations.

He's the first attorney to hold the Farmington job.

"My whole life I've been a pretty strong people person," Ruhland said. "I put my heart in it."

He's never been a K-12 teacher but said he understands teacher issues. "Teachers on the whole, give every day to their kids," Ruhland said.

Before hiring on in the Farmington School District, Ruhland, 48, was associate director of labor relations for Oakland Schools for three years. He replaces Larry Lobert, who left the Farmington position for a similar position in the Grosse Pointe School District.

Ruhland had an initial interview with a team of 10 which included central office and building representatives and a parent. He then had four interviews, a half-hour each with curriculum, special ed, and business departments and with Superintendent Bob Maxfield. "People have to feel comfortable with me to trust me," Ruhland said. "I will get out and spend time in buildings."



KATY BARDON | OBSERVER

Dave Ruhland met up with a number of Farmington Schools staffers at a welcome back picnic held last week.

Ruhland wants to build a relationship with the staff so he can be part of the team. He wants to get to know people and learn about their families.

"Then you can be what the label is — human resources," Ruhland said.

PREVIOUS ACHIEVEMENT

Ruhland worked for the Oakland Schools Intermediate School District at a time when

officials there took over the four technical centers and needed to negotiate new labor agreements.

"It was complicated because you were bringing staff in from four school districts, Pontiac, Clarkston, Royal Oak and Walled Lake, who were operating the four centers," Ruhland said. "They were employees of those respective school districts."

Each technical center serves a quadrant of Oakland County, and staff members came from under 16 different labor agreements. They wanted somebody to come on board to negotiate the labor agreements.

"I saw it a little bit as a marriage between the Hatfields and McCoys," Ruhland said.

The bargaining group became the Oakland Technical Center Education Association, which is affiliated with the Michigan Education Association. "One contract covers all the staff, teachers, para-

professionals, secretaries and custodians," Ruhland said. "It is not real common. It becomes a little muddy. When you are negotiating, teachers are approaching it by what affects their classroom. Secretaries approach it by what affects their work day. The local union wanted an umbrella contract."

Though that work is not done, Ruhland decided to leave for Farmington. When he learned about the local position, he struggled to make a decision about applying. "An opportunity like Farmington doesn't come up every day," he said. "The Farmington district is both pro-

gressive yet caring. Those things are not always together. Sometimes you can move forward but leave the kids behind. Sometimes you can be a caring school district but not pursue the initiatives to help raise the standards."

Ruhland was born and raised in Bay City. He moved from Bay City to Lake Orion a year ago. "One of the things which drew me to Oakland County was the diversity and the progress," he said.

He admits Lake Orion is not diverse and that he and his wife, Gemma, a surgical assistant in Bay City, would "move to Farmington in a heartbeat" but right now their three sons — Patrick, 16, a sophomore at Lake Orion High School, Garrett, 14, a freshman at the same school, and Ethan, 12, who attends Oakview Middle School — are competitive swimmers and Lake Orion has one of the finest swimming facilities.

Ruhland earned a bachelor of science degree in engineering from Michigan State University. He calls his law degree a resource to process information.

For instance, when a student, driving a moped, was killed in Bay City, the school staff was distraught and intimidated as they tried to understand legal processes like subpoenas, he said. He helped them stay the course.

"There was a rope across the driveway and the student was killed instantly by the rope across his throat."

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Play tryouts to be held at OCC

The Orchard Ridge Theater Company will hold open auditions for the fall production of Bram Stoker's "Dracula," at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19, at the Smith Theater of the Orchard Ridge Campus, 27055 Orchard Lake Road.

Performances will be at 8 p.m. Nov. 6, 7, 8 and 9. For information contact Carol Thomas King at (248) 522-3595.

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