

Commission's job is to help

Lark Samouelian wants Farmington-area residents to remember that the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission (SWOCC) is intended to help cable television subscribers.

"In general, if they have questions that are not being addressed, they should contact us," said Samouelian, SWOCC executive director. "I never hear from them. We won't think it's a silly question. That's what we are here for."

Samouelian's office is in Farmington City Hall, 23600 Liberty. She and her representatives can be reached by calling 473-7266 or 473-7267.

SWOCC is a consortium comprised of representatives from Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi — the three cities involved in a 15-year franchise with MetroVision Cable Co. of Oakland County. The cities are heading into the fourth year of the franchise.

Consumers should call the cable company directly for problems with service. But if questions and concerns are not addressed or problems solved, consumers should contact Samouelian's office. The same goes if service representatives don't keep appointments, or if

consumers have trouble reaching the cable company.

ALTHOUGH SAMOUELIAN wants to hear from consumers, some things should be kept in mind regarding cable industry.

Frequently, Samouelian gets calls about MetroVision's monthly billing, programming, trouble in getting through to the cable company and cable service for apartments.

"At the first of the month, MetroVision's phones are always busy. People are asking why is the price on the bill different than was quoted," Samouelian said.

If cable service began in the middle of the month, the consumer's bill will reflect the rate for the coming month plus the two or more weeks in the previous month. "The bill is retroactive," Samouelian said.

Busy phones, she said, doesn't mean MetroVision has taken them off the hook. Although problems existed with the company's phone system more than a year ago, company officials have since changed the phone system, "and worked out the bugs," Samouelian said.

PROGRAMMING IS an "interesting dilemma," Samouelian said. Consumers often complain about the selection of programs especially on the movie channels because of the number

of repeats. "But the cable company has no jurisdiction over the scheduling of programming over HBO or anything like that. But we (SWOCC) do have the addresses (for HBO and other movie channels) so people can write and complain," Samouelian said.

As far as cable service in apartments, residents should contact MetroVision to determine whether a contract has been negotiated with MetroVision, Samouelian said. "Cable is to be available to everyone who is within the density requirements — 30 homes to a strand mile," she added.

Although other problems arise with service — poor reception and sprinkler lines cut during cable line installation, for example — frustration can be reduced if consumers read the information the cable company provides when they first subscribe, Samouelian said.

PROBLEMS, THOUGH aren't the only thing consumers can contact Samouelian about. She'd like to hear from consumers who are interested in understanding the cable industry or interested in producing shows.

Approximately 500 people in the tri-city area have been trained and certified to produce cable access programs, Samouelian said. Workshops are available through SWOCC and MetroVision. "It really is educating them (residents) to (cable industry) terms and, a

way of communicating that is going to be standard. And it's free education. It is the only spectrum on TV that you can see and address your neighbor. We want to encourage people to share their talents," she said.

SWOCC and MetroVision also have internships available for students. SWOCC offers 4- to 6-month internships that provide students with an opportunity to produce a show in the community.

"They are actual producers, directors. They learn how to use the video equipment," Samouelian said.

MOST OF the interned college students are majoring in telecommunications, public relations or journalism.

MetroVision's internships are designed to interest students in working with the cable equipment by helping residents who are producing their own shows. Students have a chance to do actual cable casting and now and then can produce a show, Samouelian said. Beginning in January, residents can tour MetroVision production facilities to see how the system operates, Samouelian said.

Interested residents should call the SWOCC office. Residents also are encouraged to attend the quarterly SWOCC meetings at Farmington City Hall. The next meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Jan. 21.

Eye care is targeted

Gov. Blanchard has proclaimed January as Eye Health Care Month in support of a nationwide effort by ophthalmologists (eye physicians and surgeons) to encourage Americans to take action to reduce the high incidence of unnecessary blindness.

The governor issued the proclamation in response to requests from medical and osteopathic eye physicians throughout the state, and from comedian Bob Hope, whose recent successful eye surgery prompted him to espouse the cause as Chairman of National Eye Health Care Month.

According to Dr. Raymond Margherio, president, Michigan Ophthalmological Society, statistics provided by the National Society to Prevent Blindness point up the scope of the problem, and the opportunity to do something about it.



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New year brings new cable shows

Lark Samouelian is executive director of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission.

By Lark Samouelian special writer

Happy New Year! We are celebrating the growth of local television programming resulting from a joint effort of the staff of Metrovision and SWOCC.

We welcome two new shows to Channel 12.

"Serendipity" is a preschool weekly series. This is produced by a husband and wife team, Thomas and Donna Miller. The show will include 5-7 children in story telling, music and project participation. Each program will have a theme such as let's pretend, animals, seasons/weather, transportation. Look for the show in our schedule for January.

"Toastmasters" is a service group which helps perfect one's public speaking effectiveness. Watch its program and learn more of its enthusiastic approach to improving comfort and techniques while speaking in front of a group.

Metrovision of Oakland County's public-access programming on Channel 12 for the week of Dec. 30.

COMMUNITY ACCESS PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

- Monday, Jan. 7**
- 12 noon — Life Style. Repeat at 6 p.m.
 - 12:30 p.m. — The Artist in You. Drawing the Contour. Repeat at 8:30 p.m.
 - 1 p.m. — Alcohol Enforcement Team. Repeat at 7 p.m.
 - 1:30 p.m. — Financial Aid Seminar. Repeat at 7:30 p.m.
 - 3:15 p.m. — Misconceptions About Social Security. Repeat at 9:15 p.m.
 - 3:30 p.m. — Oakland County Parks & Recreation — All Seasons Nature Show. Repeat at 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 8

- 12 noon — Church of Today "God

cable connection

- Speed.** Repeat at 6 p.m.
- 1 p.m. — Fitness Fever. Repeat at 7 p.m.
 - 1:40 p.m. — Who Will Sound the Alarm. IRS issues. Repeat at 7:40 p.m.
 - 2 p.m. — Insight. Repeat at 8 p.m.
 - 2:30 p.m. — Community Upeat. Repeat at 8:30 p.m.
 - 3:30 p.m. — Back Porch Video. Repeat at 9:30 p.m.

- Wednesday, Jan. 9**
- 12 noon — Health Talks. Repeat at 6 p.m.
 - 12:30 p.m. — On Our Own. Issues of the Handicapped. Repeat at 6:30 p.m.
 - 1 p.m. — News Center 12. Repeat at 7 p.m.
 - 1:30 p.m. — Oakland County Parks & Recreation, Oaklowns. Repeat at 7:30 p.m.
 - 2 p.m. — Toastmasters. Repeat at 8 p.m.
 - 3 p.m. — Livonia Junior League Football — Eagles vs. Vikings. Repeat at 9 p.m. ¼ Thursday, Jan. 9

- 12 noon — Perceptions. Repeat at 6 p.m.
- 12:30 p.m. — Cranbrook Hospice. Repeat at 6:30 p.m.
- 1 p.m. — Novi Middle School Science Projects. Repeat at 7:00 p.m.
- 1:30 p.m. — Viewpoint. Repeat at 6:30 p.m.
- 2 p.m. — Insight. Repeat at 8 p.m.
- 2:30 p.m. — Community Upeat. Repeat at 8:30 p.m.
- 3 p.m. — In One Ear. Repeat at 9 p.m.
- 3:30 p.m. — Life Style and Health. Repeat at 9:30 p.m. ¼ Friday, Jan. 10

Please call and request a repeat of your favorite Channel 12 show (553-7303).

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