

Vocal group heads to state competition

A 30-member singing group from Farmington High School will compete at a state festival after receiving top scores in regional competition.

Led by vocal instructor Margaret Koltz, the group of ninth through 12th graders participated in the Michigan School Vocal Association District Four competition in Novi recently, competing with schools from Livingston and parts of Oakland County.

They received scores of "1" from each of the four judges. Scoring is based on a combination of factors giving a final score ranging from 1 to 4 — but receiving all ones is exceptional, according to Koltz. Only the teams receiving ones compete at the state level.

"It's a special thing," she said. "Getting a '1' is a big deal. There's a lot of stress and trying really hard. It's quite exciting because all the schools are there."

THE STATE competition will be held April 30 and May 1 at Jackson Community College, when the students will perform three songs for music professionals from around the state who judge the competition. The Farmington group is comprised of students from the school's madrigal choir — which meets each Monday evening — and from the mixed chorus and concert choir which meet during the school day.

The students performed two pieces at the regional festival — including "Weep O' Mine Eyes" and "Every Time I Feel the Spirit" — and were also required to sight read for a score. There is no sight reading involved at the state competition, Koltz said, but the group will perform an additional song. One of the songs is from a list of required songs; the other two are selected by Koltz. All must be classical-form pieces.

The group will perform a folk

piece, "Stenandoah," as their third selection at the state to contrast with the other two songs.

The district festival was not mandatory, but Koltz called it "important." Tapes are made of the songs and the judges' comments which are

used to prepare for the state. "It's important for the kids to be critical," she said. "I always play the tape back for the kids and let them hear the comments."

PLANNING FOR the regional and state festivals actually begins in late

summer, when Koltz and other teachers attend a weeklong Michigan School Vocal Association workshop at Alma. Besides meeting judges and discovering their specific concerns, teachers also get a preliminary list of the required musical pieces for the coming year.

"I don't care how long you've been in it, you can always learn," she added.

When students begin school in the fall, they immediately learn to sight read before even starting the festival pieces, Koltz said.

Intervention: topic of drug forum

Renee Gerger will speak at 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 30, in the fourth in a five-part series called "Are you concerned about drug/alcohol use and misuse?"

She will talk about the process of intervention, a way for family and friends to convince the chemically dependent person to accept help.

Gerger is a specialist on intervention on the staff of Henry Ford Hospital's Maple Grove Center for Treat-

ment of Chemical Dependency in West Bloomfield. Accompanying Gerger will be a family who participated in an intervention and the chemically dependent member of this family, for whom this was the

Storing medicine

AP — If, like most people, you store medicines and prescription drugs in the bathroom, you could be ruining their shelf life and rendering them ineffective.

"The bathroom is probably the worst storage site," says Gary Holt in Family Circle magazine. "Steamy showers and room heaters generate concentrated heat and moisture — which along with excessive sunlight — are the main environmental enemies of drugs."

first step in recovery. A movie will also be part of the program.

The program will be held at North Farmington High School (13 Mile, just east of Farmington Road).

The "Are You Concerned" series is open to everyone. Students and senior citizens are admitted free. Other are asked to pay a \$2 fee per family per session.

The series is being co-sponsored by the Farmington communities by Farmington Families in Action and Farmington Public Schools and is supported by 17 other area school and community groups.

The final program in the series will be held at the same time and place, April 6. Judy Ernst, parent peer group coordinator of the Birmingham/Bloomfield Families in Action, will speak on the "Community's response. What parents and communities can do about drug and alcohol use and misuse."



Renee Gerger guest speaker

Downtown focus — Aesthetic guidelines

Legislating the look of a city — can it be done?

Farmington's Downtown Development Authority took a step in that direction recently, but stopped short of adopting principles or forming a committee to guide the appearance of buildings renovated in the downtown area.

The DDA board agreed that all existing appearance controls, including building codes, the city's sign ordinance, zoning codes and others, be compiled into a handbook that could be distributed to local property owners.

Recommendations from the DDA's beautification sub-committee — that eight aesthetic principles be adopted, and that a standing committee be formed to deal with aesthetics questions — were tabled, according to the city's administrative assistant Robert Schultz, who has been active with the downtown rejuvenation since the project began.

"We probably will come back and try to deal with ways of implementing good design," Schultz said.

THE DDA board has not decided just how that should be done.

Things that really make a difference in a city are show windows, building walls — things individuals and merchants do with their properties, Schultz said. "It's those kinds of things that make a real difference."

The subcommittee's recommendations came in a report form, which explained the various city codes why they should be compiled, and gave the DDA board ideas for future planning.

"A number of powerful tools for influencing appearance exist," the report said. "Enforcement, however, is divided among several agencies and there is no common set of appearance criteria that could unite these agencies in pursuit of a common vision."



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