

Officials calm and concerned

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Community leaders in the Farmington area are taking a calm but concerned approach to events in the Middle East, as they may affect this area and the dozens of different cultural groups in the area.

Police agencies say few incidents have been reported, but they are gearing up for possible problems nonetheless.

Both Farmington and Farmington Hills police met this week with the FBI to support regional efforts to handle potential threats of terrorism.

"If something is sparked, it won't be easy to diffuse," said Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer. Although only one incident of a telephone threat to an Arab-American businessman was reported in the Hills as of Tuesday, Dwyer said he expects such incidents "will pick up" over the next few days.

Leaders are reacting to recent developments in the Middle East. Over the weekend, the Congress gave President George Bush permission to use force in the Persian Gulf, in lieu of economic sanctions used since Iraq invaded neighboring Kuwait last August. Tuesday was the deadline Bush gave to Iraq to leave Kuwait before taking military action. More than 400,000 U.S. soldiers and sailors are deployed to the area.

Dwyer said his department has put extra patrols on all public buildings, utilities and city hall and police

buildings because of concerns. Consumer's Power in Royal Oak also reported receiving a bomb threat to the Farmington area Monday and in Farmington Hills, but no problems occurred.

In Farmington, Department of Public Safety director Frank Laubhoff said his department is also on alert.

"Our concern is that there isn't any retaliation against any group — that nobody's civil rights are violated," he said.

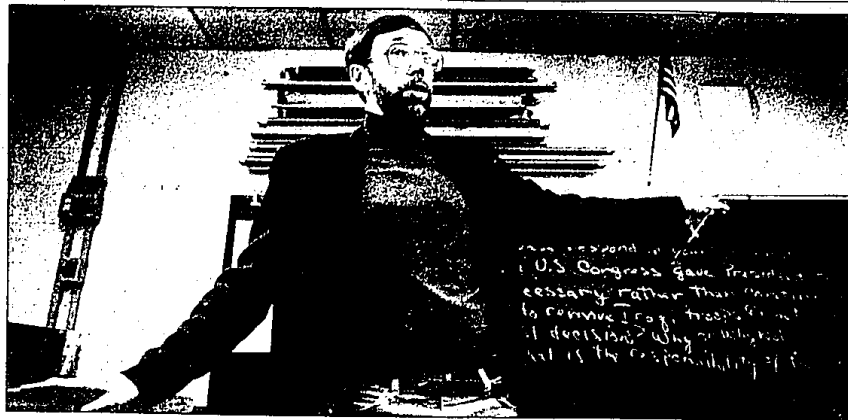
In the Farmington Public Schools, bilingual coordinator Haroone Alameddine visited each of the high schools both Tuesday and Wednesday, along with other members of his staff, to help deal with student concerns in case of a war in the Persian Gulf, according to school officials. The Student Round Table, a group of students representing all three public high schools, discussed the issue Tuesday morning.

Harrison High School principal Clayton Graham said his school was dealing with the situation by using a team approach with social workers, cultural counselors and teachers.

"Our best bet is to treat other people the way we would want them to treat us," he said.

North Farmington principal Deborah Clarke said staff members are answering questions "in a factual and non-judgemental manner."

"We're doing everything we can to support them," she said. "A real strength we have in this school is that the kids get along well."



Teacher Bruce Brown talks about the possibility of fighting in the Middle East with his U.S. and World Power class Tuesday.

Students had just spent a few moments writing in their class journals about the situation.

Residents discuss gulf war

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As the lot was pondering the meaning of war, Lyons said the youngster said, "That means a lot of people die and they don't know why."

Hendrick Burke, a student at Oakland Community College, said the U.S. should have waited before start-

ing the war. "We should have waited six months more and let the sanctions do their job."

"We have no right to be over there," she said. "Israel would have taken care of it. I don't want to see a bunch of 19-year-olds come back home with chemical burns."

Don Gurdan, owner of the Har-

lee Steak House, said an eerie stillness came over his patrons when news of the war came over the television. This is the first time I've seen this place so quiet since John F. Kennedy's body was brought back from Dallas to Washington.

Theresa Tringali, a Bloomfield Township resident behind the coun-

ter at the Detroit Ingle Factory, said war was inevitable. "It had to be done. I backed the president 100 percent."

"IT'S A TERRIBLE thing, but we would have lost all credibility if we would have let that man get away with it," she said.

Josephine Sarafa, a Chaldean who lives in Southfield and teaches in Birmingham, said she was dismayed and disheartened about bombs falling. "But we gave him (Hussein) plenty of warning. He had ample time to pull out of Kuwait."

"But I guess it was going to come to this sooner or later. Maybe sooner is better."

Sarafa said it's too bad that now Americans will now get bad news out of Iraq and a dim view of the people. "They won't see how loved the country is or how friendly the people are."

Bruce Brown's fourth-hour U.S. and World Power class at Farmington High School was one of many that were discussing events in the Persian Gulf area this week.



Christian May said he thinks Iraqi leaders are "looking for a fight" and that war in the Persian Gulf "is inevitable."



Join peace rally

Mersey High School students Elisha Mazzola (left), Charla Ewing, Colleen O'Connor and Virginia Miller joined a peace rally Tuesday at

the University of Michigan-Dearborn. More than 300 students attended the event.

Ill-mannered parking can bring fine

Failing to properly park your car in a marked parking space in the city of Farmington may soon cost you.

An amendment to the city's Traffic Control Ordinance has been introduced giving police the right to ticket such drivers with a civil infraction which would fine the car's owner if the vehicle is blocking or impeding traffic.

Previously, Farmington's public safety officers could only warn drivers or tow their cars.

"The plan is to give us the option to ticket, and public safety director Frank Laubhoff. If these problems occur for extended periods and they (drivers) ignore warnings, all we

Police can now issue a civil infraction to vehicle owners if their vehicle is blocking or impeding traffic.

could do was tow. Now we will be able to ticket."

PROBLEMS CAN include parking in an undesignated area, like taking up two spaces, or drivers who park in a non-parking area making it difficult for traffic to pass by. Fines

would be consistent with schedules for other civil infractions, Laubhoff said.

The issue was raised recently when the city's Downtown Development Authority was told a problem had arisen in the city's downtown parking lot where the DDA recently installed islands for trees. Cars parked in the perimeter lanes apparently were causing a hazard. Eighteen warnings have already been issued in the lot, city manager Robert Davidson said.

Laubhoff warns drivers that parking in a properly posted, unoccupied parking spaces will automatically earn them a \$100 ticket in the city without warning.

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