

AGENDAS

Farmington City Council Meeting
23600 Liberty St.
8 p.m. Monday, May 4

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 5

- Agenda items include:
- Approve appointing Farmington High School assistant principal.
 - Approve 1998-99 first day of school for students.
 - Approve curriculum/textbook recommendations.
 - Discuss proposed 1997-98 budget revisions and proposed 1998-99 budget.
 - Review election inspector list.
 - Review sale/donation of used buses.
 - Award elementary bids.

Farmington-Farmington Hills City Councils Joint Meeting
7 p.m. Wednesday, May 6
Farmington Hills City Hall
11 Mile-Orchard Lake

- Jointly funded agencies budget meeting.

Agenda items include:

- Presentation by Mobil Oil Inc. at Grand River and Drake Road manager Jack Slaszak, re: Historical Museum.
- Consider request from David Cornwell Trust, 33104 Grand River, re: ground sign in central business district.
- Approve public hearing notice for proposed FY 1998-99 budget and property tax rate.
- Consider to increase Historical Commission from seven to nine members.
- Consider SDM Liquor License at 33185 Grand River, Cigar Emporium.

Farmington Public Schools Study Session
of the Board of Education
at the Lewis Schulman Administration Building
32500 Shiawassee

Pair's commitment runs near and far

A span of 26 miles might separate other couples, but the distance only brings Petra and Ralf Thomas closer together.

The Farmington Hills couple shares the expanse as part of their love of running. Together, the natives of Cologne, Germany, have tackled marathons from Berlin to Boston.

The Thomases were part of a sizable Farmington contingent in the Boston Marathon. The pair isn't bragging about their times, just the experience.

"It's great to be involved with such a crowd of people who all have a common goal to finish the marathon and to have fun," said Petra, 33, who has been running with her husband for 11 years. "It's a common spirit."

Added Ralf, an engineer at Ford Motor Co.: "In Germany, the marathons you hear about are New York and Boston. You have to be in the Boston Marathon just once.

"We didn't run it for a goal; we ran it because of the spectators and it's a fun event."

People line the street and cheer runners on. Such vocal

support helps carry weary harriers past the threshold known in runner's circles as "the wall," which is usually around the 20-mile mark.

Petra jokes that she hit the barrier much earlier. Students at Wellesley College, which is across the halfway mark on the Boston route, provided the needed push.

"They're out there lining the course and crying at the top of their lungs," Petra said. "If you've seen old footage of the Beatles concerts where all the girls are crying, it's about the same."

In terms of comparison, only the Berlin Marathon comes close, they said. They've run in the annual race before and after the Berlin Wall came down.

More than 25,000 showed up for marathon after the wall separating West and East came down, allowing runners to race freely through East Berlin.

Aside from enjoying those noisy crowded affairs, the Thomases are invigorated by the solitude running provides.

When they arrived in Farm-



Fun run: Petra (far left) and Ralf Thomas of Farmington Hills, who recently competed in the Boston Marathon, already have a leg up on next year's race, jogging near their 12 Mile-Drake area home.

ington Hills a year ago, they didn't find any informal runner's groups. They also missed the hilly topography the German country side provides.

After finding a group of people to run with, the Thomases are enjoying the universal benefits of the sport.

They like to sprint through their Farm Green subdivision off 12 Mile and Drake or run in nearby parks. As part of their training for marathons, they take part in area events as the Race for the Cure April 25 and the upcoming Ankle Biter 10-kilometer race May 17.

The difficult part is running after a day's work. That's when supporting each other is key, they said.

"Normally, only one person is not motivated," said Ralf, who was transferred from Germany

on a three-year work assignment. "Then you can convince them or they can convince you."

Lately, Petra has been the one giving her husband the push.

"He has a lot of stress at work. Sometimes, he comes home exhausted," she said. "Sometimes, it also works the other way: One of us will not want to run and the other one will say, 'Let's stay home.'"

Both agree running enhances their marriage.

"It helps us because each of us understands the involvement that the other one has in the hobby," Petra said. "I think it can put a lot of stress on a marriage, especially if one is really a fanatic runner who runs in every race and the other one doesn't understand."

"We are lucky we have this hobby together."

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