

Committee promotes community TV access



MELANIE YOUNG

If you are involved in community access television (or want to be), the Cable Access Committee is here for you. The committee advises the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission regarding the operation of the community access facilities and channels. The committee is composed of volunteer members from each of the three SWOCC communities and each member must be appointed by the mayor of the city in which they reside.

The committee has been working hard for all Public, Educational and Government access users during the past year. Last summer, the committee formulated the idea to create a group for access users that would meet on a regular basis, providing a place for networking and for new access users to get involved. It took a while to get rolling, but the first Monthly Access Forum took place on April 6.

If you missed the one in April, don't despair. There is a new session the first Tuesday of every month (except July). The sessions start at 7 p.m. at the SWOCC facility. Each session is open to all members of the community, whether you are an access user or not. Each session features a topic of interest to anyone considering producing his or her own videos.

Some topics include, remote production, editing tips, and talent tips.

Another committee initiated project is the Program Evaluation Team. The team is the brainchild of committee member Frank Benesh, who realized there was a need to improve Public, Educational and Government access programming on all levels, from lighting to set design; to audio and general program presentation.

Since the formal committee approval of the group in January, Frank has been hard at work gathering team partici-

pants and creating fair guidelines for program evaluation. The team is comprised of video professionals from Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi who are committed to improving access programming in the area.

The objective of the group is not to criticize, but to evaluate and offer inoffensive, constructive criticism to producers of Public, Educational and Governmental access programs that will ultimately improve their shows.

Producers are not required to have their show evaluated, but may volunteer by calling Frank at (248) 563-4784.

A practice session was held recently at the SWOCC studio to help the team participants become accustomed to the evaluation process. One of the volunteer guinea pigs was Harry Robertson, producer of the award winning show "A Culinary Adventure."

Harry said the team gave him a lot of great ideas for his show, and the comments made by the team were constructive, not offensive. Other developments from the committee this year include an update of its goals and objectives.

The committee is also striving to improve the retention rate of new access users. The problem, committee Chair Pat Isham says, "is that we get people here for orientation, beginner studio and cameraman classes, but we lose them after that."

The committee is looking at ways to combat the loss of some potential producers by instituting new programs.

These programs will include personal congratulatory calls to new graduates, follow-up reminders to access users of advanced classes and access forums and receptions for class graduates.

These are just a few of the things the committee has been working on for the past few months. Remember, just because you are not a member of the committee, you can still get involved.

Melanie Young is the community relations specialist for the SWOCC.



Talking careers: Among guests to talk about their professions during the recent Career Day at St. Fabian Elementary School in Farmington Hills were registered nurse Karen Davis and her husband, Capt. Miles Davis of the U.S. Army Reserves.



Career chat

St. Fabian kids get insight into work world

By TIM SMITH
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Name a career, any career. Chances are, it was represented at the recent Career Day at St. Fabian Elementary School.

Morning sessions featured a variety of guests, including Farmington Hills fire Lt. Mike Gurr, Hills police officer James Skrzycki, WDIV-TV reporter Roger Weber, Spirit Airlines pilot Joe Bielaska, veterinarian Dr. Kathy Morris and chef Keith Famine, among others.

"The purpose of (Career Day) is to help children look into the future and think about what they'd like to be," said St. Fabian Sr. Mary Loretelle. "And it was really exciting."

Fifth grade teacher Mary VanZandt said her class was visited

■ They were all very good. But they were really interested in the nurse (Karen Davis). She brought in some bones and they loved that.

Mary VanZandt
—St. Fabian 5th grade teacher

by a newspaper editor, pharmacist and nurse.

"They were all very good," said VanZandt. "But they were really interested in the nurse (Karen Davis). She brought in some bones and they loved that."

According to Judy Perraca, a fourth grade teacher, the big hit of the day was a visit by Karen Davis' husband, U.S. Army veteran Capt. Miles Davis. He brought a backpack, complete with essentials such as a ham-

mock, bed roll and mosquito net.

"The kids were really open to it," Perraca said. "They asked a lot of questions. We also wrote thank you notes, asking them back for next year."

Following ice cream sundaes, the 310 students attended an afternoon presentation in the gymnasium, by St. Fabian's expansion team of architects and contractors.

Representatives from architects Giffels, Hoyem and Basso

and contractor Barton Malow discussed what goes into the major addition now being built.

"They were explaining what a bulldozer is," noted Sr. Loretelle, following the session.

Sr. Loretelle said the \$7.1 million addition, raised through fundraisers and slated to open in mid-August, will enable the private Catholic school to add three grade levels over the next two years.

Currently, grades one through six attend, but that will increase to grades K-7 next year and K-8 in 2000-2001.

Other features of the expansion include a computer room, gymnasium and media center.

St. Fabian is located at 32200 West 12 Mile Road in Farmington Hills.

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