

Offer your opinions on nursing homes

The House Democratic Task Force on Nursing Home Reform, chaired by State Representative Andy Neumann (D-Alpena) will hold a public hearing from 7-9 p.m. Friday, April 14 at the Farmington Hills City Council Chambers, 31555 W. 11 Mile Road.

"The nursing home reform

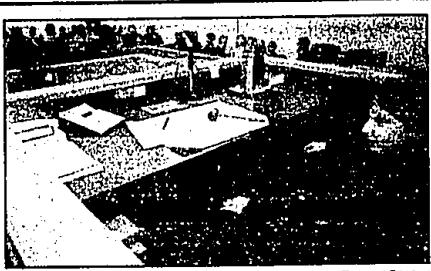
task force is traveling the state listening to the concerns of Michigan's residents who have family members in our nursing homes," said State Representative Andy Neumann. "The task force is interested in learning what we can do now to improve nursing home care, and what we can do to prepare for the next 30

years, when the senior population in our state is expected to double."

"The task force is interested in learning about good programs in nursing homes, and how we can emulate those programs in other nursing homes," Neumann said. "We have been talking to family members, staff administrators

about a host of issues and we have prepared legislation that will focus on the major issues."

The hearing is open to the public, and the task force encourages Farmington Hills residents to come share their concerns about nursing homes and the quality of care.



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CANNON

Face of justice: Fatima Abbas, who played the part of the judge in the moot court session, gets a look at her courtroom.

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Watching the action were many cameraman-clutching parents and Judge Parker, who was impressed with what she saw.

"It gives students an opportunity to see, first of all, what a court does, and see what the actual roles are in a court case," Parker said. "It's a neat opportunity to see who the players are."

Closer look

The opportunity was relished by the youngsters, who attend Walsh's and Laurie Fisher's classrooms.

"They are very excited," said Fisher before the third mock trial began. "They've been looking forward to this all day."

Students have been learning about the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills, and about how local government works, in their regular curriculum, said

Theresa Walsh, whose husband Dave Walsh is the court's administrator. The 10 Mile Road facility serves both cities.

"This is nice because they get to see the judicial side of what goes on," Theresa continued. "This is probably the highlight of the year."

Across the hall in the courtroom of 47th District Judge Fred Harris, students also listened as Dave Walsh explained the various points of interest, including the court reporter's desk and jury box.

Parker said regular court proceedings were not negatively impacted by the mock trials, because employees took an extended lunch period. "Other schools have been here before and they're (always) welcome."

What consumers can expect from their cable service

Are you wondering what is going on with cable competition? So are we! Four years ago the U.S. Congress passed the Cable Act of 1996 paving the way for competition. But it looks like they threw a party and nobody came!

There are 30,000 cable markets in the United States. But only 286 of them are served by more than one provider. (That's nine-tenths of one percent!) And it's not a second cable company. In most cases it's the phone company offering cable service.

You may not be pleased with the lack of competition, but you should know that all cable consumers have rights in a deregulated cable marketplace. Here are some things to consider:

1) Consumers should expect a fair deal from their local cable company, with reasonable rates that reflect the costs of doing business.

2) Consumers should expect an explanation from their cable company whenever rates for the programming service tier are raised due to the costs of obtaining programming.

3) Consumers are entitled to write or call their cable company whenever they have complaints about their cable services. Consumers should expect a speedy response. Time Warner's phone number is (248) 553-7300.

Residents of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi also have the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission (SWOCC) as a resource for their cable concerns. Our phone number is (248) 473-7266.

Citizens are also encouraged to write to their local, state or federal government with grievances that cannot be resolved by any of the above means.

Members from the Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi

city councils were in Washington, D.C., to speak with our representatives, Sen. Carl Levin and Rep. Joe Knollenberg. They discussed many issues including the numerous cable concerns in our cities.

You may also contact them with your concerns: Sen. Carl Levin, Russell Senate Office Building, Room 469, Washington, D.C., 20510. Sen. Spencer Abraham can be written to at the Dirksen Senate Building, Room 25, Washington, D.C., 20510. Joe Knollenberg can be reached at the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., 20515.

On another note, the weather is getting nicer. So, wouldn't you love to be outside shooting video? Take advantage of the many classes, facilities and equipment that this community has to offer. Sign up now for a free orientation workshop 7-9 p.m. Monday, April 17, at SWOCC. In one night, you'll get all the background you need to begin learning and using video right here in your own back yard.

We also have a van workshop scheduled 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, May 10, at Time Warner. Call (248) 473-7266 to register for other classes.

Caren Collins is the executive director of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission. The next SWOCC meeting is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 18, at Farmington City Hall. The next CAC meeting is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 18, at SWOCC.

COUNCIL BRIEFS

The following are brief news items from the Farmington City Council:

■ The resignation of Lester H. London from the Farmington Beautification Commission was accepted by the council.

London's letter to council members indicated he needed to resign immediately due to his health. A letter of appreciation will be sent to London, acknowledging his volunteer work over the years.

■ Donna Vogelheim, the Farmington Artist in Residence, introduced herself to the council

and talked about the nature of her work.

■ Money generated at the recent Chili Cook-Off at Pages was donated to a representative for the Warner Mansion, to help offset program costs. The check, for \$356, was presented by Ginny Morris, spokeswoman for the Miss Farmington/Oakland County pageant, to Dick Carrell.

■ The council approved a request by Ann Marie Mathews, general manager of the Huron River Hunting and Fishing Club, for permission to hold special outdoor activities.

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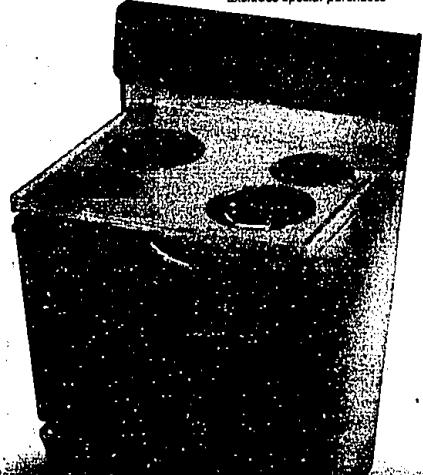
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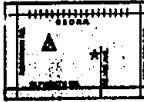
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