

## THE WEEK AHEAD

TUESDAY

**Farmington School Board:** The report from the district start-time committee, which was to be considered Tuesday, has been postponed to the May 21 meeting. The agenda for the May 7 meeting, which begins at the Schulman Administrative Center at 7:30 p.m., includes recognition of student-athletes, an instructional report on extended learning options and reports on the Student Assistance Program and post-graduate survey, as well as acceptance of the 2001-02 graduate lists. The meeting is open to the public.

SATURDAY

**Car Wash:** Harrison High School Girl's Track and Field members will hold a car wash on Saturday, May 11 at the Super Car Wash at Grand River and Orchard Lake. The girls will also be offering a hot dog and lemonade for \$1.

**Child safety:** AAA will offer free Child I.D. Fingerprinting 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday, May 11 at AAA Michigan, 38751 W. 12 Mile Road, in Farmington Hills. Parents who bring their children to the Child I.D. booth can expect to receive a 5x7 card with their child's photo, fingerprints and personal information that can be used by law enforcement agencies for identification purposes. For more information call (248) 553-3700.

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Chat room: Places like 336 Main in Plymouth provide good spots for folks like this couple to get together for a drink and a chat.

## 'Non-families'

### Suburbs feel impact of singles population

By JONI HUBBED  
STAFF WRITER  
jhubb@ec.homecomm.net

The suburbs just ain't what they used to be. Built around core cities in the 1950s, these bastions of the American family are seeing a rise in the number of "non-family" households. That's how the U.S. Census Bureau defines a home where the householder lives alone or with non-relatives, like boarders or roommates.

While suburban communities are still dominated by families — more than 70 percent in Livonia, Canton, Garden City and Plymouth Township — a trend toward smaller households is having an impact in older suburbs.

"The biggest impact some cities like Ferndale and Royal Oak are seeing is on the school districts," said Jason Bouza, a geographic information specialist with the Center for Urban Studies at Wayne State University.

Declining enrollments have forced those districts to re-examine facilities use and tightened up budgets, he said. Cities like Farmington and Plymouth, where non-family households comprise a larger share of the population,

### Census Data

Location	NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDERS	LEWIS ALONE
CANTON	25.2%	20.5%	
FARMINGTON	42.7%	38.5%	
FARMINGTON HILLS	35.0%	29.6%	
GARDEN CITY	29.3%	24.0%	
LIVONIA	28.3%	22.2%	
PLYMOUTH	47.3%	41.5%	
PLYMOUTH TWP.	28.6%	24.7%	
ROSELAND	32.7%	27.3%	
WESTLAND	33.1%	32.6%	

Source: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

See Paul Pace's story on single home ownership, A7

haven't seen that kind of effect in their school districts, because they're linked with communities like Farmington Hills, Plymouth Township and Canton, which have growing or stabilizing populations.

Farmington city councilwoman Mary Bush was a little surprised to learn more than 40 percent of her city's households are non-family. Of the 1,857 householders who live alone, a little less than half are 65 years and older.

"About 25 percent of our population is senior citizens," she said.

Among area suburbs, only Plymouth has a larger percentage of non-family households, 47.3 percent. Of the 1,792 single householders, 674 are seniors.

Bouza said that's one of the reasons behind the single

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## County gets \$1M grant

Federal officials came to Farmington Hills Friday to announce more funding to help communities transform 'brownfields' into fields of dreams.

By PAUL R. PACE  
STAFF WRITER  
ppace@ec.homecomm.net

"It's a good day to be in Farmington Hills," said Christie Whitman, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator and former governor of New Jersey. "It's also a good day for the country."

In a ceremony on the undeveloped property known as North Orchard Plaza, between Northwestern Highway and Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills, government officials from the nation, state and county heard from U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg about the importance of Brownfield redevelopments.

At the ceremony Friday, Oakland County received a \$1 million check from the EPA to help promote brownfield restoration projects.

With the funding, "We can turn eyesores into community assets," said Whitman.

A brownfield is typically a site that has potential or real hazardous contamination. By establishing brownfield redevelopment zones, cities can make tax incentives available to land developers to have the site cleaned up and redeveloped.

The Farmington Hills site, being developed by Grand-Sakwa, is a former brownfield that will eventually have a mix of vacant land, single family homes, commercial and office properties. It was chosen because brownfield developments can be anywhere, even in the suburbs, said Barry Brickner, Hills city councilman and a member of Farmington Hills Brownfield Redevelopment Board.

He was joined at the ceremony by fellow councilman and Hills Brownfield Redevelopment board member Christopher McFate.

At the ceremony, Whitman said

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**CRUISE IN THE GRAND**

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@ec.homecomm.net

"Cruise in the Grand 2002," the popular Farmington car event, begins Monday, May 6 in the city-owned lot behind Page's Restaurant, 23621 Farmington Road.

"This is our fourth year," said Roger Ratkowski, a Livonia resident and owner of The Pasta Stop, 23631 Farmington Road.

The hours are 5-9 p.m. Mondays; the event runs for 20 weeks.

"We have the rights to use the Civic Theatre logo. This is now, really, a City of Farmington event. Using it is real important to the community to get that kind of recognition," Ratkowski said.

The 1968 Mercury Cougar pictured at the front of the logo is owned by Robert Minichelli of Detroit. Minichelli, the "2001 Cruiser of the Year" attended every Monday last year.

Ratkowski provided a map of designated parking areas, which doesn't include private parking behind

## Sure sign of summer: Cruisin'

nearby businesses.

When city officials approved plans for this year's cruise, Magic Brain computer store owner Bill Lavery asked whether some accommodation could be made for his customers. He said it was difficult for customers to carry heavy computers from a distance, because classic cars were taking up virtually all the parking spaces in the lot and State Street is blocked off Monday nights.

Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss arranged a special parking space next to the lot's handicapped parking area for Magic Brain customers.

Pylons will help reserve the area as show time approaches.

"Most of his business is by appointment," Goss said.

The car event is also co-sponsored by Dennis Page, of Page's Restaurant, Darrell's Firestone, Contemporary Awards and Sam's Detail Shop on

Please see GRAND, A5

## Guess what? Power kids win book battle

By JONI HUBBED  
STAFF WRITER  
jhubb@ec.homecomm.net

In the end, it came down to a tie-breaker. Five questions. Two teams.

And on empty box of curiously strong peppermints.

That's what it took for The Guess What, a team from Power Middle School, to become the undisputed champions in the 2002 Battle of the Books, a reading quiz competition hosted by the Farmington

Community Library. Angela Ionel, Meghan McNeil, Katie Mitchell, Swathi Sampangi, Lauren Heath and Allison Mroz decided to team up again after placing 3rd last year. For 13 years, middle school students from the Farmington/Farmington Hills area have taken on the challenge of reading 10 books, from which librarians cull 30 questions.

Please see BOOKS, A8



STAFF PHOTO BY TILL BERGER

**Battle champs:** The Guess What took first place in the Battle of the Books. Team members are Angela Ionel, Meghan McNeil, Katie Mitchell, Swathi Sampangi, Lauren Heath, Allison Mroz.