

HomeTown news philosophy follows five precepts

BY TONY BRUSCATO
STAFF WRITER

HomeTown Communications Network, Inc., founder, owner and chairman Phil Power said his group of 70 hometown newspapers is successful because they stick to the theory of community journalism.

"We want to make community newspapers the essential tool for people ... for the readers and their families to live the good life in their own hometowns," Power told members of the Plymouth Noon Rotary Club on Friday. "That means we have an obligation to make the Observer (and Eccentric) useful, relevant, and an essential tool of the conduct of daily lives of adults and kids."

"And, it also means our journalistic focus is different from the New York Times, the dailies (Detroit News and Detroit Free Press) and the Ann Arbor News."

Power went on to emphasize that community journalism digs into the issues of the community, and is accomplished by putting the reporter in the shoes of the reader.

"There is a difference between reporting generalities without having thought about what they mean to people in their daily lives," he said. "What does the news mean for the ordinary divinity of

daily life for the people who live in their own hometown?"

"What does the story mean to the reader? How does the reader take the information and use it in the ordinary conduct of their life?"

For Power, who began his bi-weekly chain of newspapers in 1965, that means his basic philosophy to community journalism can be achieved by following five fundamental propositions.

"We are in business to enhance the lives of our readers; to nurture the communities that we serve; to contribute to the business success of our advertisers; to provide fulfilling careers for our

staffers; and to earn a fair profit," he said. "At the end of the day, that's what we are all about."

"We think those words get to the heart of what we spend a great deal of time and passion doing."

Power began HomeTown Communications by publishing six newspapers in western Wayne County with a staff of about 20 employees. His network now includes 70 hometown newspapers throughout Michigan, near Cincinnati, Ohio, and in the upper midwest, and employs about 1,000 people.

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PHOTO BY USA TODAY

Phil Power addresses the Plymouth Rotary Thursday.

RECREATION NEWS

For more information on the following programs contact the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services at (248) 473-1800.

Parkey's Halloween Programs

Kids ages 3-5 can have fun with Parkey's Pumpkin Painting 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 26 and kids ages 6-10 can enjoy Parkey's Pumpkin Carve 12:30-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26. The cost is \$10 per child. Pre-registration is required.

Haunted Hike Stations

The Recreation Division is looking for groups that would be interested in creating a station for the annual Halloween Haunted Hike. The event will be held 7:00-9:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 25 and 26 in Heritage Park. Interested parties should contact Cathy at (248) 473-1802. Participating groups will be paid a stipend of \$150 for participating both days.

Open Gym

Get your exercise at the Costick Activities Center Gym (11 Mile between Middlebelt and Inkster).

Adult basketball, 9-11 a.m. Sundays; adult volleyball, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Sundays; teen basketball, 1-3 p.m. Sundays; ping pong, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sundays.

The cost to participate for residents 17 and under is \$2; non-residents at \$4. Eighteen and over is \$4 for residents and \$5 for non-residents.

SENIOR EVENTS

The Farmington Hills Senior Center, located within the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills, offers a host of programs for area adults ages 50 and better. Here are just a few of the many educational, cultural and social programs available at the Senior Center in October:

■ **Living With Arthritis**
10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 1. Gain practical tips and coping techniques on living successfully with different forms of arthritis through this uplifting presentation by Ginger Barrons. The program is free.

■ **Lighthouses of Lake Michigan**
10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 15. This special program by the West Michigan Tourist Association spotlights lighthouses in the Lake Michigan Circle Tour. The lively anecdotes about the historic beacons, their keepers, and their ghosts are sure to be dramatic and entertaining. There is a \$2 fee.

■ **Ten Time**
10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 22. The Farmington Hills Senior Division teams with the Oakland County Health Division Nutrition Division Program for a presentation on the benefits of drinking tea as well as the importance of fluid intake. Participants will taste a variety of different teas and learn how tea can enhance health. No charge.

■ **Senior Police Academy**
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Wednesdays, beginning Oct. 23. Learn how a police department functions behind the scenes. This comprehensive five-week Farmington Hills Police Academy includes a look at police operations, investigations, detective work, crime scene processing, collecting evidence and a fascinating tour of the Police Department. No charge.

Call (248) 473-1830 for more information.

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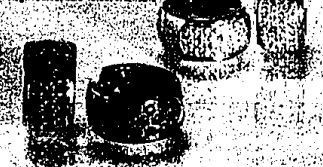
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