

ABDUCTION

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The free hour-long sessions take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"It's a very important issue right now," said Womack, who has been practicing martial arts for 20 years. "Through knowledge, a lot of things can be avoided."

Meanwhile, Livonia police continue to search for a man involved in the attempted abduction of a 14-year-old

Livonia boy and an 18-year-old Redford female.

In the first incident shortly after 7:45 p.m. Saturday, a boy said he was approached by a man on foot who grabbed him on Norfolk Street, between Antago and St. Francis.

The teen swung his skateboard and knocked down the assailant, who fled. His shirt was torn during the struggle. About 45 minutes later, the teenage woman said a man driving a vintage gray-colored Ford Thunderbird with blue fog lights tried to grab her by the arm in the area of St.

Francis and Bridge. The woman pulled away from the man and phoned police. The victim told police she approached the vehicle on her bike since her boyfriend owns a similar car and thought it might be him.

Both gave similar descriptions of the attacker, who she said to be dark-complected male - possibly bi-racial or Hispanic - in his 20s with a small goatee.

The man was also described wearing a long-sleeved dark shirt and a Detroit Tigers baseball cap. The hat bore the

team's newer logo with a tiger emerging from the Old English "D" police said.

In the spring, police had a report of an attempted child abduction on Angling and Bridge. The incidents are not believed to be related, police said.

"We have nothing to believe this matches anything else that has occurred recently," Livonia police Lt. Ben McDermott said. As part of the hour-long

When confronted by an attacker, though, Womack shows children basic self-defense techniques to fend off kidnappers. Womack has been a martial arts instructor for 18 years and regularly gives demonstrations to preschool-aged children.

She'll be joined by Livonia police Lt. Jeff Perkins, who also holds a martial arts black belt. Livonia police fingerprinting kits will also be available along with free pizza at the seminars. The school is at 33606 Seven Mile, west of Farmington Road. Phone (248) 427-8250

for information. Saturday's program was planned prior to the most recent Livonia incidents, Womack said. Highly publicized child kidnapping cases in California and Oregon have already heightened concerns.

"That has driven us even to do more," Womack said. "I've felt this has been a problem for a long time. The problem of child kidnapping and violence needs to be pushed out to the forefront."

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DEBATE

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running against Democrat Jim Nash in the 15th District, said he had told the club long ago that he had a deposition scheduled that night and would not be able to attend.

"Doctors only do those at the end of the day," said Moffitt, an attorney. "I don't have a problem with debating. As it happens, I didn't make the Republican (Club) debate, either. I do have to practice law occasionally."

Republican Valerie Knol, who is up against Aldo Vagnozzi in the hotly contested and much watched race for the House District 37 seat, said her campaign has had her running to four or five places every night.

"I had four other commitments last night that I had to partake in," she said. "I have been doing my best to get to as many debates as possible."

Knol had been committed to a lecture series through a local civic group, which was canceled. However, she said, she still had four other places to be

the night of the Democrats' event.

Rogers said work commitments with the Road Commission of Oakland County kept him from the Democrats' debate and the one hosted by the AARP, which was held during the day.

"These things happen for me, because of the nature of my position," he said. "I would not try to skirt the opportunity to attend these types of events. It's interesting people point fingers, but I've got to feed my family."

The Farmington Area Republican Club elected to feature only the 47th District judicial candidates and the Mike Rogers/Ryan Gesund county commission race in their debate. Gesund, a Democrat, attended.

Democrats weren't impressed by the claim of prior commitments. Taking a page from Republican gubernatorial candidate Dick Posthumus' much-ballyhoosed scolding of Democratic challenger Jennifer Groholm, Goldberg chided the challengers.

"Mikey, Mikey, Mikey... Davey, Davey... Val, Val, Val... You're three bad children and I hope you reform," he said.

ON VOTING

As he didn't have a challenger, Vagnozzi chose to read a statement about the importance of voting. He talked about living under a dictatorship in the first seven years of his life, that of Italy's Benito Mussolini.

"You didn't have the choice of voting or not voting," he said. "There were no elections. You didn't have the luxury of picking candidates of your party in a primary. There were no opposition parties allowed."

Citizens weren't free to criticize their government or practice anything other than the state religion. Free speech was forbidden, freedom of the press non-existent and freedom of assembly was not allowed, unless it was to "glorify the Fascist dictatorship," he said.

Vagnozzi returned to Italy just as the country was having its first free elections.

"I still remember how proud my crippled aunt was as she exclaimed: 'Aldo we are going to vote next week.' That first postwar election in Italy saw about 95 percent of the people turn out to vote. What a contrast to our meager 50 percent in presidential elections."

As the U.S. faces economic hardship, he said, "now is the time to march to the polls and to cast an intelligent vote. Study the issues and inform yourself about the candidates and then go to polls and exercise a right that people of many countries do not have - the right to vote."

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