

YMCA issues call

The Farmington Family YMCA is trying to locate all former board members for a special celebration this spring.

On Thursday, April 3 Kevin Bush and Gary Unruh will be honored at the annual Community Breakfast. Bush and Unruh both served as executive director at the present YMCA.

Plans for a past chairman's plaque will also be awarded. If you are a former board member please contact Jenny Ward at (248) 553-1908 and leave your current address so a formal invitation can be mailed to you.

Vagnozzi available

State Rep. Aldo Vagnozzi (D-Farmington/Farmington Hills) has announced that he will hold a series of monthly coffees to meet with residents of the two communities on legislative issues.

The first coffee will be held 9:30-11 a.m. Saturday, March 1, at Anna's Café and Baskets in

downtown Farmington. Vagnozzi will also be holding town forums starting with one in the next few weeks on the cost of prescription drugs. He is sponsoring a bill that will allow Michigan to join other Great Lakes states in a purchasing compact that would bring down the price of medicines.

Baptists, atheists debate creationism

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills was the scene this past weekend of another round in a long-running debate: evolution vs. creationism and which should be taught in schools?

Members of the Michigan Atheists attended a seminar Feb. 15 at the Northwest Baptist Church in Farmington Hills where Arv Edgeworth, director of Truth and Science Ministries and pastor at Trinity Baptist Church in Flushing, Mich., spoke about creationism.

Arlene-Marie of Allen Park, state director of Michigan chapter of American Atheists, said she and other members attended to debate the speaker.

Arlene-Marie said organizations like Edgeworth's spawn legislation such as a

House bill in 2001 that would mandate a disclaimer for the teaching of evolution. She said members did listen to the debate for 10 minutes, then interrupted the speaker to clarify his beliefs.

"He was getting his sciences totally mixed up," she said. Arlene-Marie said the group discovered the seminar through fliers promoting the event.

Members meet in the Farmington Hills or Livonia area once a month. "We're getting to be a large group and we want our voices to be heard," she said, adding the group's mission is to defend the separation of church and state.

"We have no argument with what people want to worship, but the first amendment guarantees freedom of religion and elected officials must respect the first amendment."

Carl E. Swanberg, pastor at Northwest

Baptist Church, said the debate got vocal near the end, but he welcomed the atheists as his guests.

He said he spoke with a representative of the group and has agreed to set up a speaker to debate the issue.

"We're planning it," he said. "I'm not sure who will speak but I have some in mind."

Swanberg said creationists have evidence of their beliefs. "Evolution is a belief, not a science," he said. "They bring their beliefs to the school system but there are no facts stating them as true."

He supports schools not excluding creationism from study.

"I think that should be presented in the schools," he said. "Not just putting a stamp of approval on one or the other."

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Rep. Stewart requests investigation of barn fire at Maybury

State Rep. John Stewart (R-Plymouth) has called on the state fire marshal's office to begin an investigation of the Feb. 12 fire at Northville's Maybury State Park Historic Farm and Petting Zoo that killed more than 50 farm animals.

"We need to support our local fire department and make sure they have the assistance needed to find the cause of this devastating fire," Stewart said.

Maybury, at Eight Mile and Beck roads, is the only farm owned by the Department of Natural Resources and the only state park in Wayne County. Stewart also contacted the DNR to discuss increased funding for rebuilding the farm.

Stewart told the Northville Record that he had been approached by constituents weeks prior to the fire about rumors that a portion of the park could be sold as a cost-

savings measure. "I don't like the sequence of events in this situation," Stewart said.

Rebuilding the barn will be a task far easier said than done. Since assuming office on New Year's Day, Gov. Jennifer Granholm, a Northville Township resident, has warned state residents about budget cuts to meet a deficit crisis. Still, Stewart said he would stump for a restoration of the barn.

"We've punished Wayne County enough," Stewart said. "There's still more population in Wayne County alone than there is in 17 states."

Stewart said he had already written a \$100 check to the Northville Community Foundation, which was gathering contributions for a restoration, and planned on speaking with representatives from the Department of Natural

Resources in the near future.

For more information, call (248) 374-0200. To donate state checks payable to the Northville Community Foundation - Maybury Farm, 321 N. Center, Ste. 130, Northville, MI 48167.

"My position is the state restore it," Stewart said. "We like our Maybury State Park and the way it was, and the way it is. It's an idyllic setting."

ENGULFED IN FLAMES

Northville Township firefighters arrived at the park at 9:43 p.m. Feb. 12 to find the barn engulfed in flames.

"By that, I mean that fire was already going through the roof," said Northville township fire chief William Zhemdak. "It was already a skeleton of a barn."

The cities of Novi and Northville responded to the call

for additional manpower.

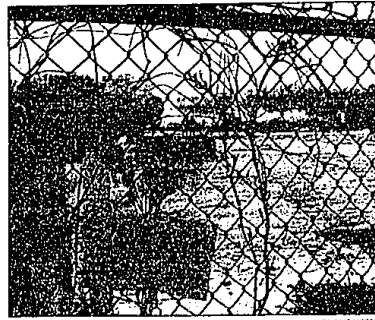
"We knew that we didn't have enough water to put the barn out so what we did was try to protect the surrounding buildings by wetting them down," said Zhemdak. "The fire was not deemed under control until 2 a.m."

At that point, firefighter began to spray foam over the remains of the 100-year-old barn in order to prevent the flames from spreading.

Those efforts were successful, saving the chickens housed in one of the surrounding buildings. But the loss of animals was extensive, including geese, rabbits, and three work horses.

A pig was found with burns over the majority of its body. Efforts to save it were unsuccessful and it was euthanized at the scene by local veterinarians who had responded to calls for help.

A sheep was found about 50 feet from the flames. Heavily burned, it had somehow escaped the barn fire and was deemed "the last little ray of hope" by Janet Thibot, practice manager at Northville Township's Hidden Springs Veterinary Clinic, who had assisted in saving it. The sheep had to be euthanized later at Michigan State University's veterinary hospital.



A bouquet of roses and handwritten message express sorrow over the animals' death.

Investigators are examining all possibilities that could have led to the fire, including arson. But the actual cause remains unknown and the township department is working closely with the state to determine what sparked the flames.

Investigations may be ongoing, but the residents made their strong feelings regarding the fire known. Within 12 hours

after the fire had been called in, a makeshift memorial had been created alongside a chainlink fence at the park, which included a sign and six yellow roses. "Oh, how we loved you," the sign read.

Pauline Luparcio, Northville Record staff writer, and Chris C. Davis, Northville editor, contributed to this report.

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