

Farmington Observer

Volume 91 Number 32 Monday, February 4, 1980 Farmington, Michigan 50 Pages Twenty-five cents

Hills family says 'thanks'

By MARY GNIEWEK

The Mehalls think Farmington Hills is a great place to live, even though they're back in Redford Township temporarily.

Donald and Sandy Mehall and their daughter, Jennifer, 3, were a new family on the block last Oct. 27 when a gas heater exploded and caused a fire which totally destroyed their three-bedroom ranch house in the Forest Park subdivision.

Grabbing her pajama-clad daughter, Mrs. Mehall remembers running to a neighbor's home on S. Brandon without a spare minute to collect any valuables.

"Gas fire spreads faster than any other kind. I didn't grab anything. It

happened so fast. Everything was gone," she said.

The result: property loss of \$40,000 and another \$10,000 lost in furniture and goods.

The house the family had lived in for just three months is being remodeled now and the Mehalls hope to move back in April.

In the meantime, they are living with Mehall's parents in Redford Township, where Don is a police officer. He was on duty the Saturday morning his house went up in flames.

Touched by the concern the community has shown them, Mrs. Mehall contacted the Farmington Observer recently to express the family's gratitude.

"WE WERE so impressed with our neighbors," she said. "And the fire department was just great."

"I didn't get their names. I have no way of thanking these people and they were so good to us."

One neighbor, Mrs. Carla Rosenblum, initiated a collection for them and presented Mrs. Mehall with a \$700 check just before Christmas. The money will be used to replace furniture and other things, according to Mrs. Mehall.

The firefighters, some living in the same Nine Mile-Inkster Road neighborhood as the Mehalls, had their wives muster up clothing for Jennifer.

"They responded so quickly," Mrs. Mehall said. "And they confined the fire to our home. It could've spread be-

cause some trees caught fire."

Youths in the neighborhood also pitched in with the cleanup effort.

According to Fire Chief John VanDeVoort, 21 firefighters from fire station No. 3 assisted by fire station No. 2 were on the scene that day.

"Our people did what they're required to do," VanDeVoort said. "They worked on the average of four hours at the scene."

He blamed the fire on a loose fitting going into the baseboard heater, which caused natural gas to escape from the heater into the family room.

The Mehalls moved to Farmington Hills after the Redford Township police department lifted a residency requirement for police officers.



Mrs. Sandy Mehall and Jennifer, 3, won't forget the good neighbors and firefighters who helped them after their Farmington Hills home was devastated by fire. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Pair arraigned in armed robbery

Two Farmington Hills men have been arraigned on charges stemming from the armed robbery of a local party store Jan. 23.

Police said the duo were also connected with the robbery of a Bloomfield Township Big Boy the same day and four breaking and entering which occurred during the first three weeks in January in Farmington Hills and Franklin Village.

The two were arrested when they were stopped for speeding shortly after the robbery of the Big Boy on Maple and Telegraph in Bloomfield Township. One of the men, Richard Crowell, 22, told Farmington Hills Police that he

was responsible for the Christmas Eve fire which destroyed the historic Nichols schoolhouse, a Farmington Hills landmark, police said. The schoolhouse had long been eyed as a site for a Farmington Hills historical museum.

However, Crowell won't be charged with arson in connection with the school fire, according to Detective James St. Louis of the Farmington Hills police. Police won't press further charges because the pair could be sentenced for up to life imprisonment for the two armed robberies.

Crowell and Robert Hargrove, 18, were arraigned before Judge Margaret Schaeffer of 47th District Court in

Farmington Hills Jan. 25 on two charges each of armed robbery.

The two have also been charged with possessing a gun while committing a felony. That charge carries a mandatory two-year sentence.

INNOCENT PLEASES were entered for both men at their arraignment. Cash bond was set at \$35,000 for Crowell and \$25,000 for Hargrove, according to St. Louis.

Their case has been bound over to Oakland County Circuit Court. A trial date has not been set. Neither man will be charged with the breaking and entering which netted about \$4,000 in Farmington Hills.

The Grapevine Party Store, 29970 12 Mile in Farmington Hills, was robbed of between \$300 and \$400 on Jan. 23 by two men wearing masks. One of the men carried a sawed-off shot gun which was fired in the direction of the store's owner, Foad Barbad, during the robbery.

The shot hit a liquor display case. No one was injured. Customers in the store were asked to lay down on the floor during the robbery.

On the way out, one of the men took a wallet belonging to customer Robert Beauchamp containing \$12, according to St. Louis.

Up to 19 percent higher

State assessment tests show 4th, 7th graders improving

By MARY GNIEWEK

Students in the Farmington Public Schools scored up to 19 percent higher than their counterparts across the state in the 1979 Michigan Assessment Testing program for reading and math.

Results of the MAT, a mandatory state test taken last September, were released Thursday by James Nuttall, district coordinator of elementary testing.

The state historically has tested just fourth and seventh graders, but this year 10th graders were added.

Farmington students showed the biggest improvement of 8 percent over last year on the seventh grade math exam. Seventy percent of the 950 seventh graders tested answered correctly on 75 to 100 percent of the questions.

"That's 15 percent more than the state average score recorded at 52 percent."

"The increases are an indication building principals are working with administrators and teachers to make sure we're improving rather than decreasing," Nuttall said.

On the reading test, seventh graders in Farmington collectively scored 79

percent, 10 points higher than the state average.

Farmington's 900 fourth graders netted increases of a half of one percent over last year's class in both reading and math. Compared to the state averages, they were 12 percent higher in reading and 8 percent higher in math.

"FOURTH GRADERS are still having problems identifying temperature on a Celsius thermometer," Nuttall said.

Each test has several objectives, or subject areas, with about five related questions.

In reading, Nuttall reported that fourth graders attained less than 70

percent comprehension on just two of 19 objectives: matching a quote from a story to a speaker, and choosing the summary to a story.

"Anything below 70 percent attainment we believe is too low, we have to go back and find out why they're having trouble," Nuttall said. "We have to make sure they have mastery of the objective."

In the past five years, the Farmington School District has scored consecutively higher than statewide averages for both fourth and seventh grade reading and math tests, as much as 21 percent higher.

"Farmington has always done well on state assessment tests," Nuttall said. "As long as we have more kids in

the highest attaining category, we'll be satisfied."

This was the first year the test was administered to 10th graders. In Farmington, 1,145 10th graders were tested.

In math, 68 percent answered between 75 and 100 percent of the questions correctly. That's almost 20 percent higher than the state average of 49 percent.

In reading, Farmington students scored 76 percent compared to the state average of 61 percent. There were 15 reading objectives.

IN READING, Farmington students scored 76 percent compared to the state average of 61 percent. There were 15 reading objectives.

School Superintendent Lewis Schumann declined comment on the test results.

"I'd like to wait until the board of education has a chance to review them first," he said. "But of course I'm pleased with the results."

Nuttall will present the Farmington Board of Education with the test results at its Feb. 19 meeting.

	Grade 4		Math	
	Local	State	Local	State
1975	69.4	51.4	89.4	77.2
1976	74.5	55.4	90.9	79.3
1977	74.7	60.4	88.4	76.8
1978	76.6	62.4	89.8	79.1
1979	77.0	65.5	90.2	82.8

	Grade 7		Math	
	Local	State	Local	State
1975	77.2	56.6	75.0	55.7
1976	73.5	55.6	71.2	53.0
1977	78.2	65.7	61.4	46.6
1978	77.6	67.3	64.2	49.2
1979	79.5	69.3	70.7	52.2

	Grade 10		Math	
	Local	State	Local	State
1979	76.3	61.0	68.7	49.8

The chart above lists the results of the Michigan Assessment Tests for the past five years. It shows how Farmington students did compared with their counterparts statewide. The first year the test was administered to 10th-graders was 1979.

Mission: Make 20,000 Republicans feel at home

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

In July, Carol Gies will be running the second biggest, busiest show in town next to the Republican National Convention.

The Troy resident is in charge of making sure 20,000 visiting Republicans are properly welcomed, chauffeured, wined, dined and housed.

It will be the culmination of planning by the Civic Host Committee which began last August after the city became the Republican's choice for a convention center. Different subcommittees devote their energies to each aspect of Republican comfort. Detroit's host committees aren't affiliated with the party nor are they a part of Detroit city government.

As executive director of the Host Committee, Mrs. Gies has acquired a reputation as the Motor City's biggest booster since Mayor Coleman Young.

It's a comparison that brings a mixed reaction from Mrs. Gies, who says she doesn't want to look as if she's begging out the mayor for the title.

But she's proud and nervous of the effort which she helped nurse since last

year when she left her public relations post for the Detroit Convention Bureau to work on packaging the city for Republican consumption.

LAST APRIL she went to Kansas City, Mo., to study their host operation which is a civic organization similar to the chamber of commerce.

After being involved in the presentation of the city to the Republicans, she went on to open the Civic Host Committee headquarters in Detroit's Veterans Memorial Building last August, five months ahead of schedule.

The corporation's first task was to raise the money for its operating budget by soliciting donations from businesses and groups.

Mrs. Gies' attitude toward fund raising is straightforward. "You work your little tail off finding money."

Her mission is to raise the money needed to host the Republicans, process 3,000 volunteers to guide the welcoming effort, and make sure all of the committee's bills are paid. The committee must dissolve by August without a deficit.

But most worrisome of all is the fact

that she's putting on a one-time event.

"There will be no test runs. We have to get it right the first time."

"If anything keeps me up at night, that's it," she said.

She ends up taking work back to her home overlooking the Sylvan Lake Golf Course.

"IT'S LIKE having your own estate," said Mrs. Gies, who was born in Detroit and attended St. Augustine High School.

After eight years of night classes, she graduated from Wayne State University with a bachelor's degree in English.

Her husband, Craig, is a vice-president of Powell Photo Studios. They have two children, Jeffrey, 12, and Maureen, 4.

The drive from Troy to downtown Detroit offers her a chance to collect her thoughts and jot down notes to herself. She does her writing on a pad propped up on the steering wheel when the car is stopped at a light.

As a city resident turned suburbanite, she sees the tension between those two segments of the Detroit area slowly easing. Since she began working for

the Detroit convention bureau in 1973, she has seen the mood of the city and its suburbs change from fear to pride.

"It's that pride she hopes to capitalize on when the Republicans begin filtering into town before the convention begins on July 14."

She encourages volunteers vowing to use just about everyone who has the time to make the effort. And a large part of the effort will come from the suburbs.

Only 20 percent of the convention delegates will be housed in downtown Detroit hotels.

HALF OF THE ROOMS committed to the official voting delegates, state dignitaries and press are in the suburbs. About 175 hotels will have Republican guests.

While there will be entertainment in the downtown area for the visitors, the Host Committee hopes the suburbs put on events for the Republicans staying in their area.

The success of the host operation will have some bearing on future convention business in the city and its surrounding suburbs, she added. In addition

to the Republican convention, the committee has an eye toward return business.

For that reason, Mrs. Gies isn't too unhappy about the Democrats' decision business.

(Continued on Page 2A)

what's inside

Agendas	6A
At Your Leisure	5B
Business	6B
Community Calendar	2B
The Inside Angle	3A
Obituaries	2A
Shopping Cart	1-4C
Sports	1-2D
Suburban Life	1-5B
NEWSLINE	477-5450
CLASSIFIED LINE	591-0900

SWEDE DEED

Construction of the Swedish Cultural Center is the goal of 350 Swedes who live throughout the metropolitan area. They've chosen Farmington Hills to build their new meeting place. The story of the club and its building plans may be found on the Suburban Life front page.