

# Farmington Observer

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IN THE PAPER

**TODAY**

**Goods to go:** Some Farmington Goodfellows show off gifts and food provided by a generous community. /3A

**City policy:** The Farmington Hills City Council has adopted a liquor license policy for those Class C licenses it issues within the city. /3A

**Holiday Scrooges:** Farmington Hills police remind residents that the holidays are not only a busy time for shoppers, they're also a busy time for thieves. /3A

**One more time:** Officials in the Walled Lake School District again will ask voters to approve a bond issue. /6A

**'Read 'n' Feed':** There was food for the mind as well as the body last week at Wooddale Elementary School. /10A

**TASTE**



**Family traditions:** Christmas Eve is a time for sharing good food with those we love. /1B

**Wine column:** Champagne — pop a cork, let the celebration begin. /1B

**MALLS & MAINSTREETS**

**Hear Music:** Step into a new concept music store at the Somerset Collection, slip on a pair of headphones, and let the vibes send you. /8A

**Gifts with Heart:** Linda Bachrach shops for last-minute gifts that show you care. /8A

**SPORTS**

**Sprited spikers:** Enthusiasm and talent mark the volleyball teams at the four Farmington-area high schools. /1C

**Falcon loss:** Farmington High went ice cold in a basketball game against Bloomfield Hills Andover. /1C

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## Gifted program blasted



BY SUE BUICK  
STAFF WRITER

The parent of a gifted student at Wooddale Elementary School has taken to the streets anonymously to pass out literature, in an effort to point out what he sees as the inadequacies of gifted education.

Eric Borregard, an Odyssey of the Mind coach for Farmington Public

Schools and a graphic illustrator in Livonia, has been distributing newsletters critical of gifted education in Farmington schools.

Borregard had not included his name in the newsletters. He responded to a Dec. 12 Farmington Observer article, saying he was "the mystery writer."

"The reason why I didn't sign my

name to it, is because this stuff is syndicated and copyrighted," Borregard said. "I distributed to every area of Farmington Hills at one time or another."

Eric and Alice Borregard's son James is a Wooddale third-grader. Here's Eric Borregard's story:

In kindergarten, according to his father, James underwent abilities testing and was shown to be advanced with high ability in math.

"He basically finished the (second-grade math book) in first grade,"

See GIFTED, 2A



Eric Borregard



Present day: A Farmington Hills girl is a recipient of Secret Santa's work. Santa is accompanied by clues, Farrell Hein, 9; and her sisters, Megan, 5, and Erika, 11.

## Santa's secret: yule joy

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

They don't ask his name. They just say thank you.

When Secret Santa visits, children know they've had a Christmas. That's what matters to the guy with the white beard.

Secret Santa is already making his rounds this year delivering gifts to underprivileged children in the Farmington area.

Names of families are supplied by the Salvation Army and the Farmington Emergency Fund.

Like the combination for a Brink's safe and a recipe for Big Mac sauce, Secret Santa's identity is guarded.

"I think he's just a kind, warm-hearted person," said Farmington Community School's Phyllis Howard, who keeps in contact with the anonymous gift-giver.

"I think it breaks his heart with the thought of a child getting up in the morning to an empty Christmas tree because Santa wasn't able to visit."

Secret Santa began his clandestine mission five years ago.

With \$500, he was able to buy toys for 20 children. This year, \$2,500 was raised so he could deliver gifts to 120 kids.

"I want this thing to go to \$10,000," said Terry Hein, a Farmington businessman who coordinates Secret Santa's fund-raising activities.

"A lot of people enjoy giving to our cause because we have no administration costs, like somebody getting paid somewhere down the road. Not one iota goes to pay anyone."

At least \$25 is spent on each child. Sometimes, though, requests go beyond budget constraints.

Secret Santa has his ways.

For instance, a girl dearly wanted a bike last year. Turns out a businessman owned another business a favor, which Secret Santa called in on.

He visited with the girl for awhile,

See SANTA, 4A

## Chief wants cops to hang up phone fund-raiser

BY BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Phone solicitations have police administrators and union leaders divided, and a representative from the company doing the work steamed.

Farmington Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer said he's had complaints about telephone callers soliciting for the Police Officers Association of Michigan.

"Every year at this time we have some complaints," he said. "Some people feel like they're being harassed or intimidated."

But the POA's local representative, Hills officer Wayne Beerbower, said

that other than an occasional complaint about a solicitor "who won't take no for an answer," there have been few problems.

And Ed Jacques, manager at Mid-west Publishing's Farmington Hills office, said he doubts that the chief's concern about complaints is really at the heart of the problem.

"The chief has sat down and listened to tapes (of calls that brought complaints)," Jacques said. "It seems like he's just trying to put a cloud over this."

Jacques said his company had joined with police and other organizations in pushing for legislation to

prohibit "boiler rooms" and other practices that have brought complaints in the past.

A law, passed in 1992, regulates soliciting and requires those doing the calling to keep tapes of their calls for review.

"If the chief has something, it's time to put up or shut up," Jacques said.

POA member officers do not have time to solicit money for their union's activities, Beerbower said. And although a portion of the money they receive goes toward political contributions, the vast majority goes for service organizations and charity, Beer-

bower said.

"In the past four years there have been 12-15 complaints out of 50,000 calls a year," Beerbower said. "As often as not people don't like to be bothered at home."

The list of organizations the Hills POA chapter supports includes the American Heart Association, Farmington Soccer Association, South Farmington Baseball, Epilepsy Center of Michigan and several other organizations.

The union has also supported the Goodfellows, Pontiac Rescue Mission

See PHONE, 2A

## Mail mauled: How the grinch stole Christmas cards

BY SUE BUICK  
AND LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITERS

Some Farmington Hills residents near Eight Mile and Haggerty may be missing some mail.

About 80 items of mail, mostly greeting card envelopes were tossed into the street where Rhonswood Road ends into I-575, according to postal inspector Fred Van de Putte. They were found Wednesday afternoon.

Two pieces were from Rhonswood addresses. The

majority were from Cheshire addresses.

It's a federal offense to tamper with or steal mail.

"I thought it was garbage at first, and I went out to clean it up," said Elaine Hicks, who discovered the pile of opened mail. "They were primarily Christmas cards and there was some business mail."

"There was one package from the Danbury Mint and the contents were removed."

Hicks called the Northville post office, which handles delivery for the Redwoodbrook Square subdivision. She also phoned Farmington Hills police.

Some of the pieces were outgoing mail, for the carrier to pick up, Van de Putte said.

"They were from rural mail route areas, Christmas greeting-card looking things," Van de Putte said.

An investigation is continuing. Police have no leads, said Farmington Hills detective Lt. Gordon Ross.

"Somebody is going through rural mailboxes looking for money," said postal inspector Tim Jan-sante.