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SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Break boredom: We've got a few ideas for keeping the kids busy when the schools begin their winter break starting this week. /A7

COMMUNITY LIFE

Write for their age: A Farmington girl is a contributing author of an advice book for teenage girls by teen-age girls. /B1

ENTERTAINMENT

Family fun: From visiting the new otter exhibit at the Detroit Zoo to viewing the first American race car to win an international competition, visitors enjoy an educational adventure. /E1

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Hills denies oil drill plan

West Bay firm eyes courtroom remedy

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Residents opposing oil drilling near their neighborhood were jovial, if not downright giddy, as the Farmington Hills City Council denied a permit as expected.

West Bay Exploration officials were not smiling, though. They might be seeing their stickers for the courtroom after council members voted 7-0 to reject their request at Monday's meeting.

The Traverse City company owns the three-acre site off Hoggerty, north of First Church of the Nazarene. By turning down the permit, West Bay officials contend the city is denying the right to an estimated \$20 million in potential gross revenue in oil and gas that the two proposed wells would produce.

"We're going to talk to our attorneys and we'll look at the basis for this denial," said Gary Gottschalk, West Bay vice president.

"We meet all the ordinance requirements." Council members base their denial on many reasons, namely health and safety concerns over the possible release of the toxin hydrogen sulfide. No more than a trace of the gas is likely to be expelled and is not a threat to nearby residents, West Bay and state Department of Environmental Quality officials have said.

The exact amount of H₂S will not be

Please see DRILLING, A9

A very happy holiday



STAFF PHOTOS BY JEFF KILBEE



Home delivery: Farmington Area Goodfellows volunteers distributed holiday gifts and care packages of food to hundreds of less fortunate families and senior citizens around the community. Above, Nicole Sexton, 3, gets excited as she unwraps an early gift. At left, Tiffany Sexton, 11, gets a surprise when she opens the door to Goodfellows volunteers Kyle Baldwin, 14, of Farmington Hills, left, and Ryan Stigleman, 13.

Pupils mix their way through 'mystery powders'

Editor's note: This is an installment of Today's Lesson, which chronicles classroom activities in the Farmington School District.

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

"Did anybody make a mixture this morning?" asked Highmeadow Common Campus fifth-grade teacher Karen Fleish of her students during a science lesson last Thursday. "I did. I had my favorite coffee this morning... latte. It's a mixture of espresso and milk."

Soon, three students answered that they mixed various cereals with milk. A fourth student, Lisa, talked about a rather gross concoction her sister came up with at the breakfast table. "The milk I didn't finish from my cereal, my sister put orange juice in it."

After all of the groans subsided, the class continued discussing what they had just learned when completing prediction sheets about mixtures. Some of the questions: Was Kool-Aid and water considered a bona fide mixture? Could materials in a mixture be physically separated?

During discussion of the latter, Fleish asked that a fruit cup is a mixture of fruit and syrup. "Can you separate a fruit cup? Yes you can, by using a strainer or a spoon."

The banter about breakfast was leading to the next important step. Groups of four students would soon gather

around "learning clubs" and take on the role of part chemist, part detective.

Tasks to do

The task at hand: to identify successfully seven "Mystery Powders" via experimentation and deduction. Prior knowledge also didn't hurt, having an idea how certain powders would react to water, vinegar and iodine. That's why students needed to get an orientation about mixtures at the beginning of the session.

Each table began with the same supplies and the same directions. There were seven vials of powder - sugar, salt, plaster of Paris, flour, baking soda, baking powder and, yes, an unknown mixture!

Students had plenty of materials for the experiment at hand. They had eye goggles, single containers of water, vinegar and iodine, a trusty blue spoon, plus paper plates and wax paper for mixing purposes.

The first step was for students to eyeball the seven vials and predict which "Mystery Powder" each was. On the right-hand column of a yellow recording chart, they wrote what their prediction was.

After that, things got chemist-lab busy.

Fleish instructed each group to take individual vials and tap out four small powdery piles onto wax paper (one sheet per powder, to avoid "mix-ups").



STAFF PHOTO BY BRYAN MITCHELL

Group work: Fifth-graders Lisa Matten (left) and Rachelle Lalonde work with classmates at their table on a science project to identify mysterious powders at Highmeadow Common Campus.

The sheets were placed atop paper plates, for physical support.

One of those piles would be for students to test for texture and odor. The other piles would be for the testing of water, vinegar and iodine. The process would be repeated for every powder. Students wrote down their observations for each powder, for every step of

the experiment, and debated and collaborated about what they thought each one might be.

"Remember," Fleish said at the beginning of the experiment. "If you don't agree with others at your table, (write) it down anyway. Just be able to

Please see LESSON, A9

Mom finds prior record of suspect

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The mother of a Farmington Hills teen who was severely beaten by another teen wants her son's attacker locked up. Her frustration over her son's case underscores the need for a national system to track juvenile offenders, a state legislator said.

Pam Radzinski will ask that the Oak Park teen be jailed at a sentencing hearing 1 p.m. today, Thursday, before Judge Sandra Silver in Oakland County Probate Court. The teen, 16, pleaded guilty under a Cobbs agreement, where a defendant admits responsibility in exchange for a pre-arranged sentence - probation in this case.

Radzinski's son, Jay, 16, was punched and kicked in the face after he'd fallen to the cement while outside the 7-Eleven on Orchard Lake and 13 Mile around 10:30 p.m. Aug. 13. The North Farmington student suffered a concussion and cut lip requiring six stitches after receiving several football-style kicks to the head, police reports said.

Farmington Hills police and the victim's mother wanted the accused tried as an adult. He was charged as a juvenile since he had no previous criminal record, an Oakland County prosecutor said at the time.

Radzinski wasn't convinced, since the viciousness of the unprovoked attack didn't bear the hallmarks of a first-time offender.

Radzinski hired a private investigator, who found the teen has prior convictions for vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated and petty theft and possession of a knife on school grounds in El Cajon, Calif., where he reportedly lived with his father.

The first and last names and birth dates are the same for the defendant and the person in El Cajon probation department records, a clerk said.

He was on probation for those crimes at the time of the assault in Farmington Hills, but few outside California would know since no national tracking system exists for juvenile felons. Radzinski made the prosecution

Please see BEATING, A4

Sliver celebration souvenirs

The city of Farmington Hills, in celebration of its 25th anniversary, has a few items on sale to call attention to the grand event. Artist John Click designed a 6-inch commemorative plate with brass indicating Farmington Hills' anniversary. The plate is \$60 with an optional stand an additional \$5.

"It's a nice way to commemorate the birthday of our city," said Councilwoman Nancy Bates.

Undecided? Flip a coin. The city is also selling commemorative 2-inch coins with the city logo on 1972 on the back. Bronze coins go for \$10 each; silver coins are \$20; and silver coins with gold insert are \$30. Pewabic commemorative 6-inch tiles suitable for hanging and come in blue or green. Those are \$40 each.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Call 473-9600 for information.

Scream debuts at car wash

A sequel to the current hit movie "Scream 2" - or the real thing?

Farmington police weren't quite sure what they'd find as they sped to answer a 12:20 a.m. call Saturday at a car wash on Grand River.

The caller, who lives around the corner on Mooney, said he'd heard screaming coming from the place.

But what they found was a man who said he was singing. Maybe the water was cold.

A McGreat service

Highmeadow Common Campus Student Council members visited Ronald McDonald House in Detroit as a holiday service project this week.

Highmeadow Principal Barbara Beams, 14 classroom representatives and several student council officers will take food, books, toys and miscellaneous household items collected during recent weeks to families at Ronald McDonald House.

Student council officers taking the trip will be president Kevin Thiel, vice president Stephen Simowski, treasurer Ryan Patton and secretary Chelsea Carbury.