

# Ice storm cuts power to 6,000 in Farmington area

## Downed trees, power lines keep city workers hopping

By WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

By Monday night, all but about 150 Detroit Edison customers in Farmington and Farmington Hills had power after Friday's ice storm.

"This was the worst ice storm of the decade," said Farmington Hills City Manager Dan Hobbs. "We had 6,000 residences without power in Farmington and Farmington Hills."

Tom Bissell, Farmington Hills' director of public services, said there were 28 trees down in Farmington Hills that were blocking roadways and another 50 that were partially blocking streets.

The city's department of public works realized Thursday night that there would be problems and was ready Friday morning with stop signs to replace non-functioning traffic lights and three chipping crews to clear limbs.

The DPW as a group responded "fantastically," Bissell said. "By the time morning came, between 4-5 a.m., we were having a lot of power outages."

But the timing hurt as DPW workers were not yet in their new building, making operations difficult, he said. The DPW was itself without power, and the communications tower at the site was out until Saturday.

Milo from Drake to Farmington; north of I-696 and east of Drake; between 12 and 13 Mile from Drake to Farmington; and on both sides of 12 Mile between Orchard Lake and Farmington Road.

In Farmington, the ice storm wreaked havoc throughout the weekend.

Department of public services didn't have an exact number of trees that fell, but director Kevin Gushman said it was, "A whole bunch."

"We didn't make a count," Gushman said. "We're just trying to get it cleaned up."

DPS workers will be removing branches through Tuesday, March 25. The city hired a private contractor with a chipper to speed up the process.

Farmington Public Safety officers and Edison workers were called to Loomis Court where two primary electrical wires had fallen. One ignited a small brush fire behind a garage while the other wire landed on a fence and sent a strong electrical charge through several hundred feet of fence line.

"(The fence) turned a bright red," said Jim Madigan, Farmington Public Safety officer. "I've never seen anything like it."

Staff writer Larry O'Connor contributed to this story.



Family work: Susan, left, Herman, Cloreice and Christine Meinke of Farmington Hills subscribe to the organic way of living.

## Fresh start

### Family's new organic store finds nature's way

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Walk into the Tree House for Earth's Children and find the mouth of babes the sales pitch is stridently clear.

"The trees talk to each other and the animals talk to each other," said Cloreice Meinke, 7, granddaughter of the owner. "And we won't know what they're saying until we know it in our hearts."

This is not the place to seek steak house recommendations or sing the praises of polyester. Rather than merely selling products, The Tree House for Earth's Children on Mooney Street, off Grand River and west of Orchard Lake, specializes in a lifestyle philosophy. The store is something of a spiritual magnet for nature's most ardent dwellers.

Classes in Tai Chi and alchemy are offered as well as workshops in raw live food presentation and biodynamic gardening. A petting farm featuring bunnies, goats, llamas, birds and ferrets will be part of a children's day 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday and Saturday, March 28-29.

And that's the genesis for going into business selling organic products in the first

place — the children.

"The Indians have seventh generational thinking, which is realizing everything they do will affect their children and grandchildren," said Susan Meinke, a Farmington Hills resident and obstetrics nurse at Betsford Hospital. "They don't want to harm the ecosystem because they don't want to harm the children."

"It's a belief in the web of life in that we're all interconnected."

Susan operates the store with daughter Christine, who besides being mother to Cloreice, is an alchemist, certified myomassologist and instructor for diet and environment.

Cloreice's grandfather, Herman Meinke, is also an alchemist and research scientist.

The business plan is not likely to be featured in any entrepreneurial publication. Revenue will go to protect the ecosystems and promote planetary peace and earth stewardship, Susan said.

"We're not looking at profit margins, believe me," she said.

The store features a cosmetic line — where no animal testing is done — sea sponges, wooden tooth brushes with all natural

bristles, moccasins and 100 percent, organically grown cotton and hemp clothing.

"We're not promoting marijuana," Herman said. "The people who grow this stuff can't smoke it."

Organic health food supplements are sold in the form of herbs and vitamins. Once the U.S. Agricultural Department gives its blessing, the Tree House will sell organically grown vegetables.

Nature's way even factors into the store's decor. Walls are done up in sky blue with specks of white. Both were applied with non-toxic paint, Susan said.

In an alcove, children can play with wooden blocks or musical instruments.

"Music is important to children," Susan said. "It's just the peace in my heart when I hear children play music."

Susan embraced the lifestyle when her granddaughter was born. She's said there's a seriousness involved in protecting the future for children.

That urgency about mother nature has undoubtedly filtered down to grandchildren.

"Up there she is crying," said Cloreice, who is home schooled. "They're killing all the animals and cutting down all the trees."

### "Home Selling Profits Surprise Publisher Of Free Report!"

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**EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA**  
Join Parkey the Panda on March 22 at the Heritage Park Day Camp for a program of arts, crafts, games and an egg hunt. Children ages 3-5 will meet at 10:11 a.m.; children ages 6-10 will meet from noon to 1:30 p.m. Pre-registration fee is \$3.

**OPEN SKATE**  
The Ice Arena invites you to join them for open skating. Fee is \$3 for Farmington Hills residents and \$5 for non-residents. Skate rental is \$2 per person. For details, call 478-8800.

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Children ages 6-8 and 8-12 can register for a week of sports, nature study, crafts and more for the week of March 31-April 4. Camp runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Children should pack a lunch.

## St. Patrick's from page A1

Patrick's Day parade in Detroit Sunday.

"I haven't missed one in 25 years," he said.

Keano, his wife, Linda, and daughter, Jennifer, were resplendent in green, though the tavern couldn't get its Budweiser to match.

Dunleavy's Pub and Grub, just a mile west on Grand River, had another good year, said owner Anthony Domol.

With John Goodloe performing on mandolin and Maralee Ash accompanying him on keyboards,

there were plenty of Irish songs washed down with green beer.

"We had some regulars and a lot of (bar) hoppers," he said. "The vast majority were strangers. But we all had a good time."

O'Shucks owner Larry Sheehan said the crowds were "excellent" all day at the tavern at Grand River and Drake. But there was a difference this year.

"At about midnight, we still had a full house," he said. "But most everybody had stopped drinking by 1 a.m."

Sheehan said tougher drunk driving laws and better enforcement are having an effect.

"I remember years ago when you had to throw 'em out at 2:30 a.m.," he said. "This year it was almost as if you shut off a faucet."

Sheehan said by 1 a.m., black coffee had replaced green beer.

"We offer rides if they don't want to drive," he said.

While they were there, the mostly familiar crowd of regulars enjoyed corned beef and cabbage, singing Irish songs and drinking.

"We used to bring in entertainment, but it became a problem because they took up so much room," he said. "We have taped Irish music that people can sing along with if they want. A lot of people just want to talk and enjoy the day."

Sheehan gave away green hats and corsages to many patrons on the unusually busy Monday.

"It's better for us to have St. Pat's on a Monday," he said. "When it's on a Friday or Saturday it's only a little bit better (business) than normal. Monday is usually a bad day."

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