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AT HOME

What's the buzz?: Plug into some gift ideas for the electronics lover on your holiday list. /D8

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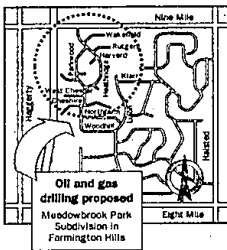
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Neighbors sniff at oil, gas drilling

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills residents neighboring an oil and gas drilling site are worried about what else might be unearthed during the process - namely hydrogen sulfide.

An official from the exploration company and a geologist from the state Department of Environmental Quality say they have nothing to worry about.



Hydrogen sulfide - or H₂S as it's known - is a natural byproduct of oil and gas drilling. H₂S produces a rotten egg smell and, in higher doses, can attack the central nervous system and aggravate respiratory problems.

In its most lethal form, hydrogen sulfide can be explosive. Eleven people were hospitalized after H₂S was released from a natural gas well in Man-

Please see DRILLING, A10

District bans class soliciting

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

A new Farmington Public Schools policy prohibits students from taking part in fund-raising activities during class time.

But school board Vice President Cathy Webb emphasized that the policy, adopted recently, is not intended to curtail student enthusiasm for helping charities or performing community service.

"I'm sure we're still going to provide fund-raising opportunities for kids," said Webb, who chairs the school board's policy committee. "... One of our key goals is to create responsible citizens."

School board President Linda Enberg said the policy was needed. "All of us have had the experience of hav-

Please see FUND-RAISING, A5

Eager for school



Ribbon cutting: Students vie for position to be first into their fourth-grade classroom during the first day of school at the new Meadowbrook Elementary, as teacher Renee Valentine performs the ceremonial snipping of the ribbon. For more on the new school and how Farmington Hills students will fit in, please turn to page A8.

Sorrows gets easy OK for new fence

Church hears neighbors, city

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

This time it was different for Our Lady of Sorrows Parish.

At the Oct. 20 Farmington City Council meeting, the Catholic school and church was thwarted in its request for a variance it needed to install a 6-foot black, decorative rail aluminum fence around proposed new athletic fields.

Residents were upset their input wasn't sought during the planning stages and city officials thought the plan was incomplete and raised too many questions.

Our Lady of Sorrows and its architectural firm then spent several weeks refining the proposal - incorporating suggestions from the public and Farmington City Council. On Monday, the revised plan was again presented to the council, by Phyllis Flanagan of architects Giffels, Hoyem, Basco Inc. It was unanimously approved.

The picket-type fence will extend between the sidewalk and fields along Power Road, 10 Mile and a portion of Raphael, to enclose the now-open end of the campus. Softening the look of the fence to residents will be the planting of 65 evergreen and deciduous trees and more than 100 low-growing shrubs. The fence will be located behind an existing fire hydrant on 10 Mile.

Our Lady of Sorrows' the Rev. Walter Hurley, who was upset with the council following the Oct. 20 decision to indefinitely table the request, said Monday's decision was greatly welcomed and appreciated. He was not in attendance at the meeting.

"It's certainly something that will provide well for the young people here," Hurley said Tuesday. "And it will provide reasonable protection for them."

One of the main concerns at Our Lady of Sorrows was that too many students were chaining loose baseballs, softball and footballs into the busy streets that surround the athletic area.

On the other hand, neighbors didn't like the idea of a "stockade-like" fence going up, possibly keeping their children from enjoying a community resource.

A compromise was worked into the final plan, with unlocked entry gates to be located on each side of the fence. Still to be looked at is whether a net can be put up on

Please see FENCE, A4



Helping hands: Evan Meili, 9, stacks personal hygiene kits put together by other volunteers at Salem United Church of Christ in Farmington Friday. The kits will be put into care bags for homeless veterans.

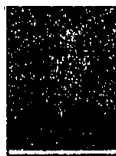
Putting in her 2 cents

An O.E. Dunckel Middle School student offered more than her 2 cent's worth to help other children.

Jamie Anderson, 11, helped raise \$400 for UNICEF by getting other students and children to trick or treat for the world service organization. She is the daughter of Doug and Kathy Anderson of Farmington Hills.

It all started with a homework assignment when the sixth-grader happened to be reading a magazine article, which explained UNICEF and suggested children ask for donations when going out this past Halloween. Jamie phoned the 800-number and asked for 100 boxes.

Once she received the boxes, Jamie wrote a letter that was read over the school's public address system to ask other students to help other children who



Jamie Anderson

Salem United makes mission of homeless

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A Farmington couple went to Washington D.C. for a peace march and came back with an image they can't shake - not even nine years later.

The number of people who were homeless provided a lasting jolt.

"Here would be the White House and across the street all these people sleeping on grates," said Jackie Murphy who went with husband Robin in 1988. "We came home and thought, 'What can we do about it?'"

The Murphys responded by putting care packages together. The couple went to the board members at Salem United Church of Christ and asked for their help. The mission project has grown to become an annual activity at the downtown Farmington place of worship.

The Murphys and volunteers put together nearly 100 care packages in the church basement Nov. 28. The kits included shampoo, soap, toothbrush and other essentials for those people who have to stay in shelters.

Blankets donated by the Church World Service as well as pairs of socks, hats, gloves and scarves were also included in the delivery to a Detroit agency that helps homeless veterans.

Volunteers have sent packages to the Salvation Army, Detroit Rescue Mission, COTS and missions run by Fort Street Presbyterian Church and Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church in the past.

This year's recipients are grateful.

"Given the fact it's winter and the pack contains a blanket and a pillow, it's a great help," said Gail McGhee, a

Please see VETS, A10

FARMINGTON FOCUS

wouldn't be having fun on Halloween. She also requested the aid of fellow dance students at Annette & Company.

All 100 boxes were used by children to collect donations. O.E. Dunckel selected Jamie as its "Widest of the Week" for her efforts.

Order in the school

Judge Marla Parker will bring her courtroom to North Farmington High Friday, as the 47th District Court judge continues her pledge to take a day of the court docket to each public high school to show the reality and consequences of court proceedings.

This is Parker's fourth year of bringing hearings to the schools.

"It gives the students a down-to-earth view of

what occurs in court," said Don Cowan, executive director of instruction and student services.

It's Santa time

Saturday is the big day for Santa sightings in downtown Farmington.

First, the jolly fat man will arrive via fire engine to the Downtown Center Mall at 11 a.m. on Dec. 6, followed by caroling, treats, free trolley rides around town, a holiday treasure hunt around downtown stores, crafts at the library, free screenings of "Scooby" at 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. at the Civic Theatre and much more. The events are sponsored by the Farmington DDA.

Later that day, a Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony hosted by the Farmington Jaycees at the Warner Mansion begins at 6 p.m., with holiday songs, hot cocoa and visits with the Claus couple in the Carriage House.