

## Funny smell?

### Risks too high for oil drilling

If there's really black gold flowing in Farmington Hills, many neighbors say leave it alone. It's hard to argue with their fears.

Farmington Hills residents might have nothing to worry about when it comes to drilling for oil and gas hundreds of feet below their houses and back yards. In fact, educated guesses say there probably isn't a problem with this proposal by West Bay Exploration to tap into natural gas and oil reserves under the Meadowbrook subdivisions south of Nine Mile at I-275. The target is a portion of a Niagaran Reef Shelf that cuts a swath across and deep beneath this part of Oakland County.

Geological experts like Ray Vugrinovich of the state's Department of Environmental Quality don't expect a release of massive amounts of hydrogen sulfide, which is what neighbors and environmental groups fear most. "I would say the chance that they are going to encounter hydrogen sulfide in any reefs they find in Novi and Farmington is very, very small," Vugrinovich told our reporter.

Unfortunately, that doesn't sound like a promise or a guarantee.

And that's really the bottom line. Residents who didn't sell their mineral rights and don't want the drilling see this as an issue where they've got little to win and plenty to lose.

If they're lucky, they see sellers getting a windfall of \$200 per acre of cash on a monthly basis while the well is tapped. But that isn't really expected. The average is much less, lessees are told. One man from Novi told residents he gets less than \$10 a month from a well 300 yards away from his house. He urged the city to stand up to the oil company.

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On the losing side, residents opposed to this drilling see the potential release of hydrogen sulfide as a nightmare for their neighborhoods. They hear about the dozen people hospitalized after H<sub>2</sub>S was released from a natural gas well in Manistee a year ago and they're bound to be worried.

After all, these houses are worth at least a quarter of a million dollars or more and property values are an important consideration. Since most of us have our biggest cash investment in our houses, there's a lot to lose if things go sour. Worries about smell, noise or the affect on wildlife from H<sub>2</sub>S are also worth considering.

Fortunately, the city has an ordinance on which to hang its expected rejection. The city law allows health and safety issues to be used to reject drilling operations in the city. There is also the important issue of how the solicitation of drilling rights was handled, meaning the company could have been going door-to-door without a permit.

There certainly seems to be enough concern and uncertainty about the safety and health of residents in this highly populated area for the city council to legitimately reject this claim for oil drilling in this neighborhood.

## Plenty of need for gift of life

It's certainly a busy time of year, what with the demands of work, family and holiday preparation. It's all too easy to forget those who need our help, such as patients scheduled for surgery and others who need blood.

The American Red Cross experiences a decline in blood donations this time of year, but it's not due to lack of opportunity to give blood.

By rolling up your sleeve and giving just a few minutes of your time, you could be saving a life. Those who benefit from your gift will thank you in their hearts, even though you will likely never meet.

In addition to permanent Red Cross facilities, a number of blood drives are scheduled, throughout the area. Red Cross officials encourage you to get out and give blood, to help fight the traditional holiday blood shortage.

Wayne County sites include:

■ 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14, at Newburg United Methodist Church-Fellowship Hall, 36500 Ann Arbor Trail, Livonia, (313) 422-0149.

■ 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14, at St. Robert Bellarmine Church-gym, 27101 W. Chicago, Redford, (313) 937-1600.

■ 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20, at Redford Baptist Church-Fellowship Hall, 26295 Grand River, Redford, (248) 277-4061.

■ 1-7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 23, at Century 21-Chalet's conference room, 37290 Five Mile, Livonia, (313) 432-7600.

Oakland County sites include:

■ 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12, at Cran-



brook High School-auditorium, 550 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills, (248) 775-7086.

■ 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 16, at EDS Tower-Small Cafeteria, 25633 Evergreen, Southfield, (248) 363-7157.

■ 2-8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 19, at St. John Lutheran Church-Fellowship Hall, 23225 Gill Farmington, (248) 615-9191.

■ 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Dec. 19, at the Safety Council for Southeastern Michigan-Tower 14, 21700 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, (248) 557-7010.

■ 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 19, at Henry Ford Medical Center-conference room, 6777 W. Maple, West Bloomfield, (248) 661-4100.

■ 2-8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 23, at the Jewish War Memorial, 16990 W. 12 Mile, Southfield, (248) 968-7239.

■ 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 29, at Providence Hospital-Doctor's Dining Room, 16001 W. Nine Mile, Southfield, (248) 424-3180.

■ 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 30, at Providence Hospital-Doctor's Dining Room, 16001 W. Nine Mile, Southfield, (248) 424-3180.

Blood donors must be at least 17, weigh 110 pounds or more and be in general good health," said Ann-Marie Morris, public relations specialist for the American Red Cross.

For those who can't make it to one of the holiday season blood drives, there's a permanent donor center in the Bell Creek Office Plaza, 29691 Six Mile, Livonia, as well as other sites throughout the metropolitan area. Appointments to give blood can be made by calling 1-800-GIVE-LIFE.

to the school board. Smith resigned Nov. 21 after he was notified that four members of the board desired his resignation. Those members were Kenneth Perrin, Ron Emmitt, Elizabeth Brennan and Kathryn Stirling.

#### 2 YEARS AGO - DECEMBER 11, 1995

A fire that quickly engulfed an older mobile home at the Flamingo Trailer Park on Middlebelt north of Nine Mile in Farmington Hills claimed the life of a Farmington Hills man.

The Oakland County medical examiner, awaiting toxicology results, had not yet determined the cause of death. James Arthur Trelor, 57, died in the fire despite efforts of other park residents, police officers and firefighters to save him.

### COMMUNITY VOICE

#### QUESTION:

If you could have anything, what would you want Santa to bring you?



'Health and love and peace.'  
Helen Stulock  
Farmington



'There's a lot of brokenness in my family, so I'd ask that there would be reconciliation.'  
Patricia Fekety  
Farmington



'Whenever my daughters ask... (I tell them) the love, peace and happiness thing. That's the same every year.'  
Fran Kendall  
Oak Park



'I wish that the family, that we can all be together for Christmas.'  
Mary Morrison  
Farmington Hills

We asked this question at the Big Apple Bagels store in Farmington.

### LETTERS

#### Unfair coverage

My son, Mark Nebus, age 15, was critically injured in a minivan/school bus accident after an ice storm on Nov. 25, 1997, at 7 a.m. The accident occurred on Six Mile and Wayne Road. My disappointment that even though the Livonia Police were quoted that the cause of the accident was under investigation, reporter Marie Chestney chose to quote Stevenson High School counselor Douglas Forbes, who said "these are youngsters who have not been driving very long and even in the best of weather they can make poor judgments."

Days later, police traffic investigators are still sorting out the facts and conflicting witness statements. Regardless of the final determination, it was irresponsible to quote Mr. Forbes' premature speculation. I also noted that my name and all the names of the three minors appeared in the article. The only name missing was of the adult Livonia school bus driver. It was deemed important to print that "no drugs and alcohol were involved." Does this imply that this possibility was actually considered during a 7 a.m. accident after an ice storm?

There were no specific details written about my son Mark's condition or specific information about his background and life. Marie Chestney verbally informed me that she intends to pursue and print who is at fault in this accident and asked me what else she should have written about. I'll bet that classmates, neighbors and relatives would like to have read more about Mark in just one of the Observer articles.

Mark was a happy boy who smiled a lot and traveled North America playing AAA hockey, including playing in a world championship as seen on ESPN. Today, he frowns with pain and fights to live another day with a serious closed-head injury at the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor. Meanwhile, insensitive, irresponsible journalism has basically ignored Mark, the person, in all articles and crushed his brother who was driving the minivan.

Chuck Nebus  
Livonia

#### Upset with coverage

We're appalled at the lack of integrity you have shown in your coverage of the accident that occurred with the school bus and a van on Nov. 25, 1997 at Six Mile and Wayne.

You have stated both times in your articles Nov. 27 and Nov. 30 that the cause of the accident is still being investigated however, Marie Chestney in her report continues her article with false innuendoes by quoting Stevenson counselor Douglas Forbes as saying "these are youngsters who have not been driving very long," and "even in the best weather, they can make poor judgments." She has led the community to conclude that Mike (Nebus) was at fault.

To add insult to injury, the Nov. 30 article by Matt Jachman again states the investigation of this accident should be wrapped up this week after a few more interviews. However, he inferred to Mike's guilt in this accident by stating the minivan collided with the west-bound bus, not that the bus collided into him.

You have violated the Nebus family's privacy by giving a lot of factual information about them. However, you neglected to state the female bus driver's name, or any other factual information about her.

This good Christian family is living its worst nightmare and you have caused more pain to them all, especially Mike Nebus who knows he was the driver of the van his brother was severely hurt in and he has to watch his brother suffer each day as well as watch his parents live this uncertain nightmare. You owe this family, especially Mike, an apology and you owe the community a report of the facts only, not innuendoes or statements inferring to facts.

This family, especially Mike, needs to pick up and move forward, however, you have made this impossible for Mike because of your innuendoes. You must do the right thing, report the facts and apologize so Mike too can begin to heal.

Alicia Wludyka  
Anna Paterra  
Livonia

(Editor's note: Livonia police have not yet determined the cause of the crash or who, if anyone, was at fault.)

#### A classical mistake

I am writing to express my sadness over the recent decision to move away from the classical music format. Last Friday night I was astounded, shocked, surprised, and otherwise amazed to find my beloved music gone.

I moved to the Detroit metro area in 1977. Though I grew up listening to rock, I quickly grew to enjoy, and prefer, the classical music played on WQRS. I believe that my music interests changed due to exposure to the fine music played on WQRS as well as the outstanding radio hosts that worked at the station (i.e. Dave Wagoner, etc.). Over the past 20 years I listened to WQRS morning, day and night... and now there is a void. At the risk of sounding "corny," I feel like I have lost a friend.

It has been suggested that advertisers were not benefiting from running their ads at the station. I can attest to the fact that when I shopped, I frequented those businesses that advertised on WQRS, and I believe that I was not alone.

Your decision has left Detroit without a classical radio station! I simply do not understand. There is no question in my mind that you have made a terrible mistake. I only wish that it could be reversed.

Norman D. Hoag  
Farmington Hills

### TURNING BACK THE PAGES

This week in history as reported in past editions of the Farmington Observer and the Farmington Enterprise.

#### 40 YEARS AGO - DECEMBER 12, 1957

Work was already well under way on the construction of an addition to the 10 Mile elementary school, architect John Allen informed the school board. He said the contractors were making plans to begin remodeling work on the west unit of the site around Feb. 1, 1958.

#### 25 YEARS AGO - DECEMBER 9, 1972

The resignation of Dr. Roderick Smith as superintendent of the Farmington School District elicited protest in the form of a letter signed by 550 residents and presented Dec. 5

## Farmington Observer

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— Philip Power