



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON VINCENT



Stories: Jane Willard, a Native American storyteller, also known as Laughing Cloud Woman, displays an ownership stick. She had kids pledge to do their best, love and respect others, never litter and never touch things that don't belong to them.

Listeners: Sherri Pedroncelli and her twins, Cristina and Angela, of the Hills listen to Elaine Jordan tell a story from the perspective of one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s children. Jordan is from the Detroit Association of Black Story Tellers.

Library's Carousel of Cultures draws stories of pride

By JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
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the Farmington Community Library Monday are happy for the sharing.

"The evening provides an informal, warm atmosphere to investigate the differences between us," said Sharon Vincent, the library's youth services coordinator.

The annual event stemmed out

of a statewide summer reading program three years ago in which the theme was the "Colorful World of Library Kids." The Farmington libraries went with a multicultural angle. And it stuck.

"We asked kids how their families came here," Vincent said. "It was met with great enthusiasm."

The reading program turned into an annual event that draws residents and volunteers - anyone who wishes to share their culture through foods, costumes, customs, art, clothing and stories.

Though the Farmington branch was scheduled to have

their Carousel of Cultures a week earlier, it was cancelled due to inclement weather. But the Farmington Hills branch event Monday drew some 90 guests and participants, including Jane Willard, also known as Laughing Cloud Woman, a Native American storyteller, as well as Palestinian native Sue

Odeh of Farmington Hills who spoke about Ramadan.

"We've got a lot of volunteers in the community who bring things in about their cultures," Vincent said. "It's really whatever anyone wants to share. I think people enjoy sharing their pride."

Snowfall problems have Farmington schools staff hopping

By TIM SMITH
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Farmington school district maintenance crews and bus drivers are fighting their way through the relentless snow, fielding complaints about snow-covered sidewalks and late buses.

Cheryl Cannon, the district's assistant superintendent of business and finance, assures residents that everything possible is being done. Because of

the size of the district, oversights can happen.

For example, if someone sees that a school sidewalk isn't cleared right after a snowfall, they are urged to call the district, said Cannon. Someone will address the problem.

Cannon emphasized that the district does make it a point to clear snow from parking lots and sidewalks on actual school sites, but that it is not responsible for adjacent sidewalks and streets.

"We clear them," Cannon said, about

on-site sidewalks. "All a principal has to do is call us if it needs to be done. We plow our sites."

Concerning parent complaints about snow-covered sidewalks around North, Cannon said those near the high school on Farmington near 13 Mile Road weren't cleared, but those aren't the district's responsibility.

Impassable sidewalks near East Middle School also prevented sixth graders from walking across Middlebelt to the Kinder Care center last Thursday morn-

ing. Students were to have read picture books they created to preschoolers. That activity will be rescheduled.

Cannon blamed the problem on a Farmington Hills city ordinance that gives property owners the option to clear sidewalks.

The heavy snow also is slowing down school bus drivers, as might be expected, with students arriving as much as 60-to-90 minutes late on more-treacherous mornings.

"We've had a lot of late buses daily,"

Cannon said. "Our bus drivers have had a real difficult time. But everybody's gotten to and from school safely."

She added that, for the most part, parents have been "very patient" with the bus drivers. "They've experienced the same kind of gridlock going to work."

However, last weekend's thaw and rain created a different kind of problem - that of ice-covered roads and sidewalks.

Raid from page A1



Meet: Royal Oak Police Chief Mel Johnson meets with Hills Chief Bill Dwyer and Lt. Mike Struble of Royal Oak.

South Oakland Narcotics Intelligence Consortium - which includes Hills and Novi police officers - tracked information that revealed a gambling operation under the ruse of an investment seminar would take place at the theater. The "seminar" coincided with the NFL and AFC championship games Sunday.

"It was really just a front," Dwyer said. "These packages that we were given out said TW Investments and it even had the date."

A task force of nearly 50 law enforcement officers planned the raid last week.

"The information was accurate information," Dwyer said. "It was our responsibility to work with Royal Oak, the FBI and the sheriff department."

Those ticketed were cited for frequenting a place of illegal gambling. If convicted, the misdemeanor carries a \$500 fine and/or 90 days in jail.

The investigation continues and could lead to felony charges against the party organizers for violating state gaming laws. The theater could also lose its Class C liquor license as a result of hosting the gambling party, Dwyer said.

■ 'It was our responsibility to work with Royal Oak, the FBI and the sheriff department.'

Bill Dwyer
—Hills police chief

Squalor from page A1

Police contacted Adult Protective Services. An attorney is assigned to be the man's legal guardian.

"They were working on finding him a place to stay," said Farmington Hills police Sgt. Tim Swanson. "Apparently, it's hard to do because there is no family involved."

"When you have someone who doesn't want to leave their home, it's difficult to force somebody to go into a facility they don't want to go into."

Stephen Albery, an Oakland County public administrator, knows the frustration all too well.

A month ago, a social worker went to Oakland County Probate Court to have the man declared legally incapacitated. Albery said.

"Since there wasn't a family member or anyone else, the court appointed Albery as guardian and conservator. He has 540 cases."

"I've probably got too many, but you do the best you can," he said.

Before Monday's incident, Albery managed to talk to the man, whom he described as extremely short of memory. All

the man talked about was getting trucks back that were impounded, he said.

The attorney described the man's home as an "absolute shack."

"We hadn't figured out a strategy yet," Albery said. "The law doesn't enable me as guardian to bring in a telephone pole and smash his door down and go in and drag him out of there."

After being released from a hospital, the problem is finding a place for the person to stay.

An adult foster care home is an option, but Albery said in some cases people simply leave and return home.

Neighbors described the man as an avid walker, who would trek to Eight Mile and Haggerty - well beyond his home in the Orchard Lake and M-5 area.

"It's not a lockup. The Clinton Valley days and those things are over," Albery said. "They shouldn't be, but they are."

Neighbors said the man had lived with his brother in the same house for at least 25 years. After his brother died about eight years ago, his mental capacity began to deteriorate, they said.

Another man who lives next

door said neighbors would occasionally bring food to the man. "We had no idea he was without heat. That surprised us," said Al Firmin.

"We felt helpless for quite awhile because you could see the deterioration. He came over the other day and asked my wife where she lived."

Before he went to Henderson Glass on Monday, the man walked into Danboise Plumbing and Heating. He turned up there last week, too, an employee said.

They offered him coffee as he kept repeating the same questions, Cathy McAleer said.

"You could tell something was wrong," McAleer said. "When he went outside, he went to every pane of glass and looked in. It was sad."

In November, an 82-year-old wheelchair-bound Hills woman was admitted into a nursing home after she was found living in squalor. In that case, police found \$30,000 cash and gold jewelry concealed in the woman's belongings.

"At least we know he is getting the proper care now," Firmin said.

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