

Purchases from page A1

daughter Kristine Balow of Livonia and said the economy hasn't drastically changed their shopping habits.

"It did cut my spending down maybe 10 percent," said James.

Linda McCann of Detroit said her income was the same, so her shopping for the holiday didn't change. Things were a little different for Farmington Hills resident Ray Jensen, who was recently laid off from his maintenance job at a local hotel.

He said he was still shopping for gifts, but was being cautious because of losing his job and concerns about the economy.

Local businesses reported holiday sales were even or up from last year.

Larry Sallen, owner of the Clothes Encounters on the Grand River, said sales at his unique

clothing store for women did well.

"We were very satisfied," he said. "We were on key from last year."

He said the store's cruise wear business dropped by half after the terrorist attacks.

"We still found a lot of people were not going out of town like they were before," he said. "Our sales were pretty blessed, though. We have a nice customer base and do our annual mailings to customers during the holiday. We offer some really good bargains. If you run a sale it adds more interest to what you're doing."

Sales were also very good for the Target Store on Grand River.

"(Sales) were turning up before the holiday," said store manager Tanya Simson. "We were expect-

ing a good holiday. The community really supports this store."

Sales were about even compared to last year for the Bon Ton Shoppe in Farmington.

General Manager Connie Staley said the company's four stores, including Brighton, Livonia and Milford, did about the same business this holiday compared to the year before.

Danny Marshall of Detroit said his shopping habit this holiday has been the same as in the past: wait until the last two days to do it.

"I just don't know what I am going to get people until the last day," he said outside of Target on Christmas Eve.

The economy hasn't changed his shopping habits, he said, as he casually rolled his full shopping cart to his parked car.

Woodcreek aids hospital

A new program that unites senior volunteers with children in need at Detroit Receiving Hospital may not have a name yet, but it has the support of students at Woodcreek Elementary School in Farmington Hills.

On Dec. 20, students made a donation of books and card games to the hospital's children's unit. The drive started after third grader Maya Monle asked the Student Council for help. Her mother, Etta, is a doctor at Detroit Receiving.

"They're trying to put together a program to bring elderly people into the hospital to play with the children," said teacher Barry Nofzinger, who coordinated the presentation. "This is a new program. We're just getting up and running."

More than 400 students brought in new and used books and card games from Dec. 10



STAFF PHOTO BY JILL BRESLER

Book drive: Woodcreek Elementary students donated 380 books in two weeks. Teacher Barry Nofzinger and parent Etta Menlo helped coordinate the project.

through Dec. 20. Student Council members made speeches in classrooms and at weekly school programs to encourage donations.

Nofzinger said the drive fulfills the goal of responsible citizenship, which is part of the Farmington Public School District's student profile.

For more information about the hospital's volunteer project, contact Etta Menlo, 248-357-4160.

Finances from page A1

3.7 percent from \$3.21 billion to \$3.336 billion. About 1.9 percent of this increase was due to economic adjustments to existing properties. Of that, \$66.5 million of the increase was from new construction, which amounted to 1.9 percent of the tax roll.

■ The city's bond rating

remains in excellent standing from Moody's and receives an AA- from Standard & Poors for unlimited tax general obligation bonds.

■ The city's property tax rate continues at 10.1649 mills. A mill is \$1 for every \$1,000 of a home's taxable value.

Attacks from page A1

In both cases, the woman escaped after being grabbed from behind and told not to scream.

The boy is being held in Oakland County Children's Village and is expected to be charged in the Friday night incident in Oakland County Probate Court today. Dwyer said the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office decided there was not enough evidence to charge the youth as an adult.

Calls to the assistant prosecutor handling the case were not returned Wednesday.

Dwyer said police records show the boy's family has had run-ins with police.

In the last two years, each parent filed an assault charge against the other. The boy faced three assault investigations and on three occasions he was listed as a runaway. In each assault investigation against the boy, the victim refused to cooperate with police, Dwyer said.

The chief said twice the boy's mother was offered a way to work out the problems with the boy through counseling in the

Farmington Youth Assistance program, but that both times the mother never carried out process to get the program initiated.

The chief noted residents in the complexes made many a concerted effort to find the person responsible for the abduction attempts by the many tips the department received.

"I want to compliment the officers and the detectives and the citizens," he said. "This was a community team effort to get this violent person off the streets."

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Letters from page A3

what I'd like:

Top ten list (1 being the most favorite) 1. Survivor C.D. (Destiny's Child), 2. art set, 3. set of markers, 4. fifth Harry Potter book, 5. The Peter Pan movie, 6. The movie Atlantis: The Lost Empire, 7. mechanical pencils, 8. toe socks, 9. a pair of shoes, 10. some book marks.

I know it's a lot. But try your best. You don't have to get me all

of them.

I go to Dunckel Middle School. My friend Murphy said she might write to you too. Her full name is Murphy Thiel so expect a letter from her too.

Well, that's about it. Have a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Sincerely,
Shrutu Konda

Dear Santa,
For Christmas I would like a snowboard and peace on earth. Merry Christmas!
Love,
Natalie Petrella

Dear Santa,
I was a good girl. My mommy said so. Hope you think so.
Alex Frsh

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