

# New Twist To Scouting

By MARGARET MILLER

A new kind of youth group will have its organizational meeting Wednesday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m. in the community room of the Westland shopping center.

It's co-ed, and that's the first unusual feature, because the sponsoring agency is the Huron Valley Council of the Girl Scouts of America.

In addition, it has the blessings and limited backing of the J.L. Hudson Co. and the enthusiasm of a young Westland couple ready to lead the venture.

"We're hoping to bring in the kids who wouldn't be involved with Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts," said Mrs. Lonnie Stevens. "We want to have a variety of activities — both the fun kind and some that will involve community service."

"Basically," added her husband, Mike, "it will be kids getting together and doing the kinds of things they enjoy."

Impetus for the new group which will meet each Wednesday from 7 to 8:30 p.m., came through the Westland center association because of the feeling that not much in the way of recreation is available to kids in the 12 to 17 age bracket, Mrs. Stevens said.

The Huron Valley Council, which includes Westland in its coverage area, agreed to undertake sponsorship.

The Stevens got into the act on the recommendation of April Terry, a member of the Huron Valley staff and Lonnie Stevens' sister.

"We've had some calls already because of a notice posted in the center," Mrs. Stevens said, "and we expect to hear from more kids."

"We also would like to hear from young adults — both single and married — who would like to help with the activities that get planned."

"We can't be sure yet just what they will be, but camping, canoeing and back-packing and the like are

pretty sure to be part of the program."

She said her nephew, Michael Huhn, a Garden City Explorer and Eagle Scout, would help with camping outings, along with his brother, Tom Huhn. Hudson's has offered to furnish resource advisers for projects and the kids may want to undertake, she added, things like sewing or photography.

One such resource person might well be Mike Stevens, who works as a metal model maker, putting together scale models for the Ford Motor Co.

Both Stevens, 24, and his 22-year-old wife felt they definitely want to involve young adults in the leadership work.

"Kids this age want to get away from the influence of Mother and Dad," Mrs. Stevens said. "We want to offer them an outlet to be fun and keep them busy."

There will be some family influence, though. The Stevens probably will have their three young children on hand



for most Wednesday meetings.

"But they'll stay with grandparents when we go on outings," their mother added.

The couple feels fundraising may be a bit of a hurdle, at least at first. There's a \$2 registration fee, payable at the first meeting, but beyond that they don't want to make a big issue of dues or funds.

"We're figuring the kids may come up with some ideas for financing our activities," Stevens said, "but in

that area we are going to need more adult help."

"If we want activities, we will have to come up with finances," his wife added.

"We can go through the Huron Valley Council for renting things like tents and camping equipment, and the cost is very reasonable, but the funds still are needed."

Mrs. Stevens said her niece had asked what would be the rules of the new group.

"The answer is very few — we mainly want it to be fun."



LONNIE AND MIKE STEVENS of Westland talk about plans for the new youth group they will lead in the Westland shopping center under sponsorship of the Huron Valley Girl Scout Council (Observer photo by Harry Mauthe)

# Holiday Spirit Shines Through Dim-out

Did dimming the Christmas lights mean dimming the Christmas spirit?

Not at all, agree a number of the Observerland residents who should know best — pastors of area churches.

Among them, the general feeling was that with little energy for flashy lights and holiday visiting, Christmas became simpler — and maybe merrier.

"I did hear people say they missed the lights decorating the homes," said Dr. Gordon Schroeder, pastor of the Redford Baptist Church.

"But then they'd say that if

the houses looked less like Christmas on the outside, there was maybe more spirit inside."

"I think I feel that way too."

Dr. Schroeder added that he can't help feeling the energy crisis a "blessing in disguise."

"We've become a wasteful nation — a throw-away society," he said. "We've forgotten how to save. I think we may slow down more and develop a more Christian life style, one that is less concerned with affluence and more ready to show consideration."

From several clergymen

came the report of increased attendance, and definitely more religious spirit in the first Christmas of the energy crunch.

"The attendance increase was fantastic — I was overwhelmed," said the Rev. Charles Fox, pastor of St. John Lutheran church in Farmington.

"In the matter of the Christmas lights, I sensed a feeling of relief on the part of a lot of people at not having to put them out. It seems there were feelings of social pressure to 'do something' that didn't have much meaning."

"If we do get back to using

a lot of outside Christmas lighting, I think it will be for those who really want to do it."

The Rev. Philip Magee, minister of the First United Presbyterian Church of Plymouth, said the churchgoers who greatly swelled attendance at services in his church enjoyed "luminarias," made with paper bags, candles and sand to provide extra lighting.

"Whatever the reason, we know our attendance was well over last year's and it set a record then," Rev. Magee added.

"The Christmas season was a little less hectic — I

heard that a lot," said the Rev. Roger Schiefel, pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Livonia.

"Many of our people who ordinarily travel at Christmas did not leave. They stayed around, and our pace in church services seemed more deliberate."

The Livonia pastor also reported much increased attendance at Christmas services and added:

"One thing that surprised us was that our economic situation, this Christmas has been better than ever. I would have thought that with the fear of losing jobs, people might have been inclined to

hold back, but they have been very generous in church contributions."

One pastor who reported attendance slightly down this Christmas was the Rev. Kenneth Davis of St. Andrew Episcopal in Livonia.

"I heard a number of people say that without the outside lights they didn't really feel much Christmas spirit until they got to church," he added. "But some also said the cutting back in decoration meant time saved and agreed they didn't need all that agitation."

Dr. Louis Gerhardt of North Congregational Church

in Southfield acknowledged that he was among those who felt the lack of lights of the Christmas season.

"We always decorate our own home and I missed it," he said.

"But I think people have cooperated remarkably well in the energy crisis, and if anything the situation this year helped our church attendance."

Dr. Gerhardt added that North Church cut back its traditional lighting of the church building and used reflectors instead on its Christmas tree.

"I don't think the energy

crisis depressed things at all," the Rev. James O'Hagan said of his St. Gerald Catholic parish in Farmington.

"It wasn't quite as cheerful around the subdivision without the lights, but attendance at services was at least as good as in former years — maybe a little better."

He added that the fuel shortage means "a time when our youth realize for the first time a difficult period which the older people had known before."

"I used the occasion to tell them we didn't choose our difficulties, and I felt sure they would respond as well as previous generations had done," he said.



A TURTLE has a hard shell and is fun to touch, hearing-impaired and hearing children learn together in an unusual Redford Township nursery school. From left are Becky Bajorek, Livonia, her mother, Mrs. Sandra Bajorek, teacher of the class, and Jenni Peters and Jerry Jakubowski of Redford Township. (Observer photo by Harry Mauthe)

## In This Nursery School

## Handicapped? Not Really

Because two-year-olds tend to act like two-year-olds whether or not they wear hearing aids, a special kind of nursery school in Redford Township is proving a big boon to parents.

Mrs. Sandra Bajorek, who teaches hearing-impaired children in the Redford Union District's Keeler School, launched the nursery as part of her program of beginning special instruction for the very young.

As it works out, there are once-a-month sessions in which children with normal hearing join the hearing-impaired ones for a couple of hours of play and learning.

Their parents come, too, so it looks like almost any cooperative nursery session.

"Children in this age range don't really play together," Mrs. Bajorek said. "It tends to be parallel play — doing the same things side by side."

But parents of a hearing-impaired child, bringing him to school for this special instruction at the earliest possible age, often feel that their child's lack of communication with other little ones stems from his handicap.

"They also may feel that, other behavior problems come because the child does not hear. And parents of children without handicaps may tend to think they have to treat differently those who have problems."

In the morning sessions, they have a chance to compare notes and under-

stand all the children better."

While the children play in this special nursery, they are improving a number of skills, their teacher said.

They learn colors and shapes through the matching name tags each family wears. There is equipment to improve physical skills for all the children and speech and language games that benefit especially the youngsters with impaired hearing.

Each time the children gather, Mrs. Bajorek also brings a special surprise, such as a couple of baby chicks to pet or a turtle to touch.

Mrs. Bajorek launched the nursery program when she noticed how similar were the

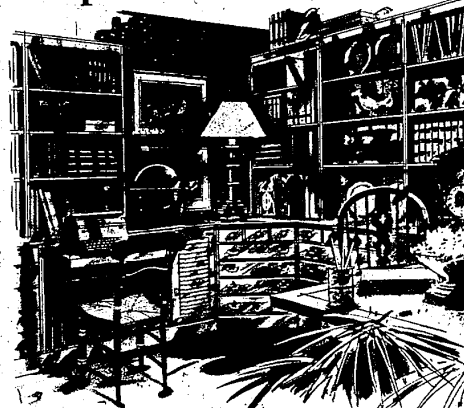
responses of some of her young charges to those of her own pre-school daughter, Becky.

She started having Becky visit occasionally, and other hearing children came from the homes of fellow workers at Keeler School.

Some are siblings of hearing-impaired children in the program.

"That is quite a good feature," Mrs. Bajorek said. "In some cases, the two-year-old hearing-impaired child in the family is going to school, but his older brother is four and not in kindergarten yet. This gives him a chance to go to school too."

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