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FOCUS

Residents see fear, justice in Desert Storm

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

The waiting is over. As war broke out in the Middle East, Oakland County residents expressed a wide range of emotions — surprise, shock, fear — and some jubilation.

But the thread weaving those emotions together seemed to be a feeling that the waiting and uncertainty are over.

"Relief is not the word," said Martha Moran, 29, a waitress at the Midtown Cafe in Birmingham. "Nobody's happy about war. But at least we know..."

Farmington High School student Lana Parker held a minority view among her classmates. She believed the U.S. hadn't given sanctions enough time to work against Iraq.

"You can't push things — they take time," she said during a class discussion Tuesday. "And we shouldn't have to start first."

At the Farmington YMCA, Chris Hart, a worker at the racquetball court, said people quit playing and gathered around the television set. "A lot of people thought Iraq would strike first," he said.

"They seemed shocked that fighting actually started."

While some were shocked, Hart said draft-age people were also nervous. "I know I was," said Hart, who is 21.

At the Farmington Community Center, Doris Germany was on duty as a caretaker and manager when news of the war came over the airways.

"I hate what's happening. But what will be, will be."

THE GULF WAR

Hitting Home

"I just pray and leave it in God's hands," she said.

EDWARD HURWITZ, A West Bloomfield resident who was quietly sipping a beer at the Midtown, was philosophical. "We knew it was coming. It was just a matter of time. I'm scared, but sort of relieved."

In Keego Harbor, John Lewis at the Brewhaus Bar said he was glad the U.S. was taking swift action to curb a madman, Saddam Hussein, president of Iraq.

"I support the attack," he said. "The time to stop him is now before he (Hussein) gets nuclear power. Chemical warfare scares me enough."

At the Carnival Gourmet Shoppe in West Bloomfield, owner Bonnie Jiddou was shocked and saddened when a customer brought the news. "A lot of innocent people will get hurt," said Jiddou.

Shelli Lyons of Keego Harbor said she didn't want U.S. troops to be activated. But, "as long as we're there, let's support them," she said.

As news of hostilities continued, Lyons, who runs a day care center in Birmingham, thought about something a 4-year-old said earlier in the day.

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Farmington High School student Lana Parker on more time to work and that the U.S. should said during a class discussion Tuesday that not make the first move. economic sanctions against Iraq should be given

After long wait, developer loses rezoning bid

By Joanna Maliszewski
staff writer

Developer Mel Kaftan looked up at the ceiling Monday as the curtain closed on his latest 18-month effort to rezone acreage to the controversial industrial-research-office.

After the long wait for an answer, an angry "no comment" is all Kaftan could say following the Farmington Hills City Council's 5-2 denial of his request to rezone 14.5 acres from small office to IRO.

Councilmen Larry Lichtman and Ben Marks supported Kaftan's request. Mayor Aldo Vagstad and council members Jonathan Grant, Nancy Bates, Terry Sever and Jean Fox opposed the rezoning on the vacant land, east of Drake, west of Grand River.

"I'm thrilled. At this point, it's been a long, hard fight. It's been 18 months. The democratic process works," said Independence Hills subdivision resident Brenda Kandt of Citizens Against IRO Zoning.

"I feel we have really won," Kandt continued.

"Now we might get a rezoning the residents and Kaftan are happy with."

Before Kaftan left council chambers following the denial, residents were aware the developer made it clear he will continue his efforts in court. He has a lawsuit filed June 1990, which is still pending against the city, for the 16-month IRO moratorium imposed by the city council in September 1989 and lifted Dec. 17, 1990.

IN THE EIGHT-COUNT complaint, Kaftan also charged that the council's earlier in 1989

refusal to rezone the land — when the moratorium was imposed — was unlawful and invalid. Before the moratorium was established, council members introduced the rezoning measure in July of 1989.

In a telephone interview Friday, Kaftan told the Observer that he has lost about \$100,000 a year in the last three or four years waiting for a decision on his rezoning request. Kaftan began efforts to rezone the property in 1986.

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Parents unite to back school tax plan

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A group of 240 parents stumping for a new Farmington school millage is working hard to get out the vote, despite some opposition to the measure.

Organizers of the Friends of Farmington Schools say they are up for the fight.

Phone banks began operating this week with the help of members of the Michigan Education Association.

School Millage

information mailings, are underway and even school vendors who spend on the district for orders, and real estate agents, who sell houses in the community are being targeted for informational letters.

"The state took \$5.8 million of our

money. We're just reacting for our kids. We're trying to get back what was taken from us," said parent Jayne Wechsunka, one of three co-chairs the political action committee formed to get a new 2.7-mill tax for school operations and an additional mill for capital projects during a special school election Tuesday, Feb. 5.

Both are 10-year proposals which would cost the owner of a \$100,000 house between \$135 and \$185, depending on whether one or both pass.

Proposition 1 would bring the district about \$6.75 million per year, and Proposition 2 a total of \$2.5 million per year.

THE OTHER two co-chairs of the group, Bobbi Feldman and Carol Luckscheiter, agree Farmington's school program is worth fighting for, which is why they volunteered time to head the group. "I like the program here. It's exactly what I want

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Fire destroys school bus; no one injured

By Casey Hans
staff writer

No one was injured early Tuesday morning when a Farmington school bus caught fire on 11 Mile Road just east of Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills.

The driver — the lone occupant of the bus — had just left the district bus yard two miles away and was on her way to pick up students, said Rev. Hausman, district transportation director. The bus was gutted by the fire and will cost the district about \$35,000 to replace.

Hausman said she is confident fire drills done with students in the dis-

trict would have been sufficient preparation to handle Tuesday's fire had the bus been full of students. "We do evaluation drills on how to get off a bus. The children are evacuated in about 90 seconds," she said. "Even if the bus was full, we feel they would be able to leave."

"I guess we've been very lucky we haven't had anything like that" to date.

The fire seems to have started in the engine area of the bus, school and fire officials said. Hills police said 11 Mile was closed for a short time through the morning rush hour.

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SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Mark Terry of the Farmington schools transportation department prepares the remains of a school bus for towing on 11 Mile near Orchard Lake Road. The bus caught fire Tuesday.

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