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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Reindeer? — NOT! About 500 kids braved the cold to catch Santa's visit to Farmington. He came by helicopter./3A

Celebrating a saint: One Farmington Hills congregation is celebrating a Swedish holiday tradition — over breakfast./13A

COUNTY NEWS

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Magie moment: L. Brooks Patterson's youngest appointee is a West Bloomfield native and accomplished magician./7A

OPINION

TV justice: The sentencing of a Farmington Hills man for computer fraud got more attention from TV stations than the sentencing of a man who killed his 3-year-old son. Is that justice?/20A

ENTERTAINMENT

Historical drama: "The Queen's Physician," a rich historical drama, with a torrid fictional romance between the Queen of Spain and her Jewish physician, opens at the Jewish Ensemble Theatre./8B

CREATIVE LIVING

Graphically speaking: The Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills is presenting an exhibit of graphics from the Federal Republic of Germany, showing the diversity of German art from the 1980s./1D

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Swim stars: The area's best in girls swimming are on the All-Observer team./5B

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Residents tap city for water



By MARY LOU SONG
STAFF WRITER

It would be water under the bridge if the debate would end. But for some residents of Biddlestone Woods, the issue of hooking up to the city's water system is not done and over.

At the Farmington Hills City Council meeting Monday, the issue surfaced again when Ruth Rycroft, president of the Biddlestone Woods Association, told the council that five residents want to be connected to the city's water system and asked the council to consider installing water

lines to the entire neighborhood.

This request came after several months of debate and tension between city officials and neighborhood residents regarding the water hookup issue. The council did vote Oct. 19 to install water lines to a special assessment district that included four lots owned by two residents in the northern end of the subdivision.

Earlier this fall, the council considered building lines to that assessment district from a water main on Farmington Road but ultimately decided to build lines from a main un-

derneath the parking lot of Oakland Community College. OCC has not yet given permission for that move.

"You don't want any money in OCC's parking lot, do you?" Rycroft asked the council in her appeal.

"We've opened up Pandora's well," said councilman Aldo Vagnozzi. "I finally voted for the last proposal because I saw it as an opportunity to at least bring a line into the subdivision."

"I did ask if we are going to agree to bring in water for four people who are

See WATER LINES, 2A

Window wonderland



Brushing up: Loyola Quinn of Detroit watches as David Fleck paints holiday decorations on a window at Greene's Hamburgers in Farmington. Fleck, formerly of Farmington, goes to great panes, painting artistic decorations in businesses and houses. For the story, please turn to Page 1D.

Arrests made in thefts

With the arrest of two Michigan men, Farmington Hills police say that a string of burglaries in the Hills may be solved.

Livonia police arrested the men, a 29-year-old Hills man and a 28-year-old Ann Arbor man, Dec. 2 on burglary charges, police said.

Hills Sgt. Charles Nebus said the arrests help solve a rash of burglaries in the Hills area as well as burglaries in surrounding areas during the summer and fall.

The arrests came after a consent search of an Ann Arbor residence where police recovered photocopyers, stereo equipment, computer software and large screen televisions.

According to Nebus, Hills police are expecting to obtain burglary warrants for the men, who are in custody in Livonia. The names of the two suspects have not been released.

Nebus said police knew the burglaries were related because the entry methods were the same: rocks thrown through windows.

Channels are a changin' on cable TV

By SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Cable connection, 15A

Double check those channels, MetroVision subscribers.

MetroVision made channel changes Dec. 2 to make room for added new channels that are part of a tier, explained Tom Bjorklund, vice-president and regional manager.

Many services are on different channel numbers, so viewers are hunting and pecking their way during the adjustment phase.

"We probably changed 30 channels," Bjorklund said.

The City channel for Farmington Hills, for example, is now on Channel 8.

MetroVision wants to use common

channel numbers for all their viewers in Farmington, Farmington Hills, Novi, Redford and Livonia, as much as possible, Bjorklund said.

Future cable guides will list channels as well as program names, as is done now.

MetroVision is also offering a new, optional package of services called Entertainment Plus, which includes four new channels.

These are:

■ FLIX, featuring movies of the 1960s through 1990s, uncensored, unedited. December's schedule has

some 60 movies, ranging from Hello Dolly to The Color of Money.

■ Comedy Central, a combination of sketches, classic situation comedy and stand-up comedy.

■ The Cartoon Network, the first 24-hour, all animation channel in history.

■ The Sci-Fi Channel, featuring science fiction, science fact, fantasy and horror.

Entertainment Plus costs \$3.95 per month. One-premium service subscribers pay \$1.95 per month.

Subscribers with two premium services, a remote control converter and The Cable Guide magazine, can get Comedy Central, The Cartoon Network and The Sci-Fi Channel free.

The FLIX Channel can be added for \$1 per month.

"In order to add all of these new services, one existing service needed to be removed," Bjorklund said. "The Inspirational Network has always been at the bottom of viewer preference surveys and will no longer be available. However, no other channel will be removed from the system."

MetroVision subscribers received a new channel line-up card recently. Those who wish more information can call MetroVision at 553-7300.

"We realize that, whenever we make changes to our channel lineup, there will be some short-term confusion and a bit of frustration," Bjorklund said.

Holidays spark concern over fire hazards

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The tragic death of a Ferndale family last week is a reminder that the holiday season should be a time for extra care to prevent fires.

Fire prevention officer Mike Garr, of the Farmington Hills Fire Department, said the addition of Christmas trees and lights, along with space heaters and other potential hazards require residents to use extra care. The Ferndale family of five died because of overloaded circuits from

Christmas lights and no smoke detectors to warn them.

Lt. Garr said the holidays pose extra hazards for many reasons. People travel a great deal, leaving their homes unattended, and perhaps leaving a fire hazard behind. But they also stay with relatives, which adds to the number of people living at a house.

"We have a plan for escape, in case of fire, at our house," Garr said. "When we have someone staying with

us, we tell them what to do if there is a fire."

Garr stressed that everyone should have a planned escape route, in case of fire or emergency. And those routes should be updated for the proper conditions.

"If you have cold weather, climbing out of an upstairs window onto an icy roof could be dangerous," Garr said. "You should look at an alternative plan."

And speaking of Christmas, giving smoke detectors and fire extinguish-

ers for gifts is a good idea, Garr said.

And what would Christmas be without a tree? Well, a good deal safer, perhaps. But if you're going to include "Oh Tannenbaum" in your holiday plans, make it an artificial tree. If you buy the real thing, try not to buy it too soon, and keep it well watered and out of the way of heat vents, Garr said.

"It's amazing how much heat a burning tree generates," he said.

See HAZARDS, 2A

Senior housing dedicated

There were plenty of dignitaries in attendance at Friday's dedication ceremonies for the Freedom Square Apartments on Freedom Road just east of Drake Road.

The complex has 112 units designed for senior citizens and handicapped residents, said the property's developer Paul Hendrickson. As of Friday, only three units remained vacant.

The units are designed for independent living by residents 62 and older, and for handicapped residents. The 9.8 acre lot was donated to the city of Farmington Hills by the Hanaway family, with the provision that it be used for senior housing.

Twenty percent of the units (23) are income qualified, and a 24-hour monitoring service is in place.

Ron Jan Dolan of Farmington Hills, City Manager William Costick and officials from the Michi-

FARMINGTON FOCUS

gan State Housing Development Authority were among those to attend the dedication. Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Hanaway cut the ribbon to dedicate the new complex.

Uptown Santa

Not to be outdone by Farmington's downtown, Uptown Farmington will host the jolly white-bearded man in the red suit Saturday.

Santa and his helpers will greet children from noon until 3 p.m. at the former Pets 'N Particulars Shop (next to the Plaza Veterinary Hospital) on Mooney Avenue across from the Uptown Farmington Plaza.

All children will receive candy canes and an opportunity to have their photo taken with Santa. The event is being sponsored by the Uptown Farmington Business Association for the holiday season. The plaza also plans other shopping specials.

Bowling record

Jason Johnson, 15, of Novi, re-wrote the record for youth bowling Monday at Drakehire Lanes in Farmington Hills.

The left-hander fired a three game series of 278, 300, and 300, for a total of 878. It was the highest score ever bowled in the nation by a 15-year old. It surpassed the state record of 802 set by Kurt Pilon just last year.

Jason also bowled a 300 game two years ago at the age of 13.