

# Sing a song

## Balmy temps warm up annual tree-lighting and singing fest

BY TIM SMITH  
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Weather was more suited for an Easter egg roll than for Christmas. But nearly 600 Girl Scouts came out in balmy temperatures for the annual "Holiday Sing" and tree-lighting ceremony, held Tuesday outside the Farmington City Hall.

Coming out for the festivities were exuberant representatives from eight Farmington schools in the Michigan Metro Girl Scouts Neighborhood 32. Of course, the Girl Scouts did a lot more than just show up and sing carols, which they did. They also put creative bird feeders on the giant evergreen tree (how do bangs covered with peanut butter and bird seed sound?) and dropped off unwrapped gifts by the flag-pole, which were then collected by the Farmington Goodfellows.

Following comments from Farmington Mayor Mary Bush, the white lights on the giant evergreen tree were turned on with a flip of the switch. Doing the honors was Jennifer Ohman of Mercy High School, who recently earned the Gold Award — the highest award in Girl Scouting, equivalent to an Eagle Scout ranking in Boy Scouts.

According to Neighborhood 32 spokeswoman Robin Stanford, who has two daughters (Kimberly, 13, Ashley, 11) in a troop based out of Power Middle School, the 60-degree temperatures could not take away from the holiday enthusiasm or Farmington city tradition.

"It's been going on for more than 20 years," Stanford said. "It's a tradition."

About the weather, Stanford said that "Even though it's not Christmas, it's nicer than having the girls out in the rain."

Girl Scouts who participated, as a community service project, included Gill, Flanders, Hillside, Longacre elementary, Power Middle School and Farmington High School (all from Farmington Public Schools); Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

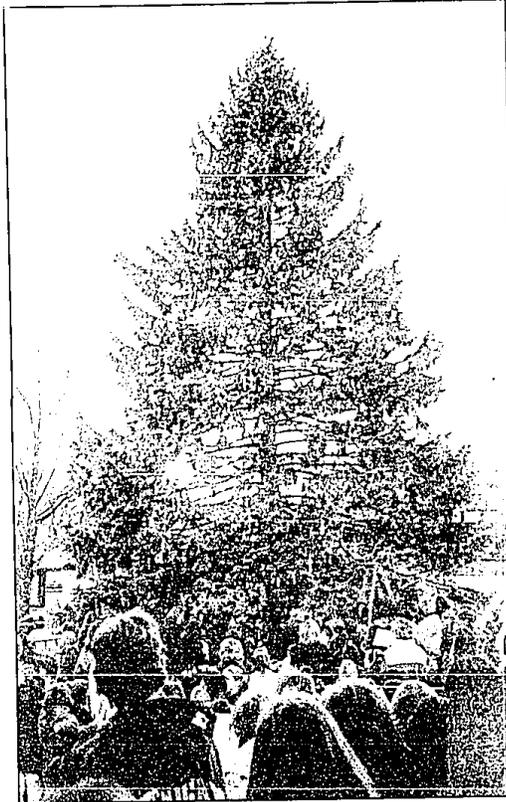
Ohman helped Joseph Marasco of the Goodfellows to collect the gifts, which were then taken to the Goodfellows holiday headquarters on Grand River, where they soon will be packaged for delivery to needy families.

Marasco said the spirit shown at this year's "Holiday Sing" seemed to be better than ever.

"Maybe it's the warm weather," Marasco said, with a chuckle. "Plus everyone's in more of a giving mood, it seems."

Unfortunately, the tree lights were only on for a couple nights last week. Construction workers cut off the electrical line serving the tree, in order to install a water line extension for the renovated public safety building, said Frank Lauhoff, Farmington city manager.

The lights are expected to be back on possibly tomorrow or Tuesday, and will remain on for the duration of the holiday season.



Let there be light! With one flick of a switch the holiday tree outside Farmington City Hall came alive with the spirit of the holidays.



In song: Revelers didn't need snow and cold temperatures to get in the mood for some holiday cheer and song during the annual "Holiday Sing" and tree-lighting.

### HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

#### MODERN CHRISTMAS STORY

See a modern Christmas story unfold through drama, dance and music, "A Light Still Shines" at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 11-12, and 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13, at Orchard United Methodist Church in Farmington Hills.

Two frightened teenagers wander into church looking for an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Instead, they find a dress rehearsal for the Christmas musical and experience the miracle of Christmas as they get caught up in the spirit of the season.

Tickets are \$5 each or \$10 for a family of four. Call 988-6716.

#### DETROIT CONCERT CHOIR

The sights and sounds of the holiday season will come alive in the Nardin Park Methodist Church's Music Series welcomes the Detroit Concert Choir at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13, at Nardin

Park Methodist Church in Farmington Hills. This 100-voice choir, under the direction of Gordon Nelson, is world-renowned, having won the coveted title of "Choir of the World" at Llangollen in 1996. They will perform traditional holiday favorites

along with several new arrangements.

Guests are invited to a festive reception prior to the start of the concert, beginning at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$5. Call 476-8860.

#### HOLIDAY CONCERT

The Farmington Community

Chorus will present a 1998 holiday concert, "Once Upon A December," at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 18-19, at the Mercy High School Auditorium in Farmington Hills. Call 788-5322.

## Man mistakenly set free; sheriff now tracking him

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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Oakland County Sheriff's Office is trying to track down a man wanted for rape and burglary who was inadvertently released on bond.

Farmington Hills police asked that the man be held in Oakland County Jail until his identity could be confirmed. Hills police arrested the man — who has several aliases — for stealing a bottle of vodka from a Rite Aid on 14 Mile Road around 1:30 p.m. Nov. 29.

"He was released in error," said Captain Michael McCabe of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department. "At this point in time, it appears there was some

type of paper mix up, not the fault of the Farmington Hills Police Department, but apparently up here."

Part of the mix-up is due to the several aliases the man goes under. An investigation is continuing to find out why he was released.

Police stopped a 1999 Pontiac Sunfire on Northwestern and Inkster shortly after the incident and found three bottles of Absolut Vodka in the passenger's feet.

Police took the passenger, a 28-year-old Detroit man, into custody. When officers checked the address he gave, they found a man under a different name but who had the same physical description of a person with an outstanding warrant for first

degree criminal sexual conduct and burglary charges.

The passenger, who also had a scar on his head similar to the man wanted by Detroit police, did not provide identification or a social security number. His fingerprints also appeared to match.

After being arraigned on shoplifting charges, Hills police asked that the man be held in county jail until they could confirm his identity through further fingerprint analysis.

However, county jail released the man on \$200 bond on the shoplifting charge.

Police also arrested the driver, a 44-year-old Detroit man, who was driving with a suspended license. He also goes under several aliases.

## Take a visit: Detroit Zoo welcomes 3 new bears

Three female polar bears arrived recently at their new home, the Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak.

Two of the females, 31-year-old Snowflake, and 22-year-old Nikki were brought from the Pittsburgh Zoo. The third bear, Sissy, Nikki's twin, has lived at the Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia, S.C. since 1993.

"The arrival of these bears signals our continued, long-term commitment to polar bears," said Detroit Zoological Institute Director Ron Kagan. "We're particularly fortunate that these polar bears are being reunited."

The three newest bears join

Vilma and Icee, two other females, in the zoo's polar bear exhibit. Polar bears are one of the Zoo's flagship species, having been exhibited since the zoological park opened in 1928. Next year, the zoo intends to acquire a few male polar bears.

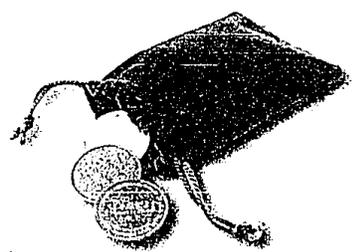
In the wild, polar bears lead solitary lives foraging and hunting for food, meeting only in the breeding season. Although they live almost exclusively on seal blubber in the wild, at the zoo, polar bears are fed a dry, meat-based chow, fish, beef fat and treats of vegetables and fruit.

Native to all of the polar regions of the northern hemi-

sphere, the largest population of polar bears live in the Canadian Arctic archipelago and the Hudson Bay-James Bay regions.

There are 20,000 to 40,000 worldwide. They're not officially endangered, but they were threatened by overhunting until they came under the protection of a 1967 conservation treaty signed by the five "polar bear countries" — U.S., Canada, Russia, Norway and Greenland.

Admission to the Detroit Zoo is \$7.50 for adults; \$5.50 for senior citizens 62 and older and students; \$4.50 for children ages 2 to 12; and free for children under 2.



## FOR THE CHILDREN, FROM SANTA

Santa will be at Somerset North every day til closing. And for each child who visits, he has a special gift. A velvet pouch for three golden coins from Santa's treasure chest.

Children can use the coins for purchases at participating stores.  
Or tuck them away as mementos.

While you're waiting to visit Santa, the characters from "The Giving Season" will be on hand for rollicking entertainment, amusement and storytelling. If you wish, you can even join them for Saturday breakfast. (Reservations can be made at the club.)

And for your entertainment, we've arranged daily performances at 1, 3 and 5 pm of "A Most Unusual Gift," a musical staged by The Children's Theatre of Michigan.

The Holidays at the Somerset Collection. Something for everyone.



Cockidge and Big Beaver in Troy. Just west of I-75  
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