

King walkers brave cold, wind chill

Despite single-digit temperatures and below-zero windchill, hundreds of residents made their way by candlelight from the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills to Nardin Park Presbyterian Church Sunday night, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The legacy of the slain civil rights leader was celebrated in a ceremony held in the church sanctuary. Combined choirs from Gill and Wood Creek Elementary School, under the direction of Brenda Gold-Sloan, sang songs with a message of peace.

Dunckel Middle School teachers Steve Koponen, Jerry Morissey and Ninette Soares performed the National Anthem; Gold-Sloan sang "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

For the third - but hopefully not final year - Mercy High senior Alexandria Marshall delivered King's "I Have a Dream" speech, which she recites from memory.

Committee chairs expressed the hope that



Mercy senior Alexandria Marshall delivers Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

Marshall would be able to come back even while she's in college.

The audience seemed to agree; Marshall was given a standing ovation.

The annual celebration is sponsored by the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council, co-chaired by Karen Bolsen and Jim Hall.



Justin Sloan prepares to lead a group of high school students down the aisle of the church and then light the Unity Candle.

Benefit help offered

In view of problems with jobless benefits, State Rep. Aldo Vagnozzi has worked out an arrangement with the Dept. of Consumer and Industry Services to help Farmington/Farmington Hills residents who have been adversely affected.

"If any resident is having problems receiving the unemployment benefits they are entitled to, please contact me at home or at my Lansing office and I will follow through on the complaint and get back with an answer," Vagnozzi said.

"Governor Granholm has assured me she will take the necessary steps, including reopening a number of the offices that were closed and

improving the telephone system, to make sure that benefits are delivered on time."

Starting in February, Vagnozzi will have office hours in the district and start meetings over coffee to allow residents to talk about any problems or offer suggestions about how to improve state government.

Vagnozzi can also be reached by e-mail, vagnozzi@aol.com, or advagnozzi@house.mi.gov, by phone at (248) 474-3655 or (517) 373-1793; by FAX (248) 474-3655 in Farmington or (517) 373-4501 in Lansing.

Vagnozzi urges callers to leave their phone number so he can contact them if more information is needed.

Program offers gardeners ecologically sound advice

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

Individuals wanting to learn how to make their gardens and home landscaping beneficial to the Rouge River are invited to sign-up for a program called Ecological Gardening for the Rouge River.

Sponsored by the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority (SOCWA), the program will include four sessions, beginning Monday, Jan. 27 at the Troy Public Library. Other sessions will be held March 29 in Latrup Village, April 5, and April 10 in Birmingham.

According to SOCWA's Lillian Dean, the program will help gardeners connect their home landscapes with nearby river greenspace and lakes.

"Our goal is to equip home gardeners with ecologically sound gardening principles, and to help neighbors create neighborhood natural corridors. It's a real nice starter course," she said.

Topics of discussion will include native plant selection, soil testing, rain gardens, and practical methods for avoiding the use of pesticides. Guest speakers will include David Mindell, a native plant consultant, Elaine Chittenden of the W.J. Beal Botanical Gardens, Rick Lazzell of Lazzell Horticultural Services, and landscape architect Elizabeth McKenney.

There is a fee of \$25 for the program. For more information, or to register, call SOCWA at (248) 288-5150.

MILITARY NEWS

Reilly commissioned

Brent C. Reilly has been commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force after graduating from officer training school at Maxwell Air Force Base in

Montgomery, Ala.

At OTS, cadets undergo a demanding 12-week course that trains them to be top quality Air Force officers.

Reilly is a pilot trainee and will be stationed at Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Ga.

He is the son of Terence and Kathryn Reilly of Farmington Hills and a 1998 graduate of North Farmington High School.

He earned a bachelor's degree in 2002 from the University of Michigan.

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