

CITY

ARTS & STYLE



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CALGARY HERALD

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HEALTH

Power plant fight 'worth effort'

JOE WOODARD
CALGARY HERALD

Small in number but fierce in their opposition, more than 30 Erin Woods residents came out Sunday to register their concerns over a proposed electrical power plant near their southeast neighbourhood.

One organizer conceded it was a disappointing turnout for the afternoon information session, hosted by Residents for Accountability in Power Industry Development (RAPID).

The residents cite health, environmental and corporate concerns as well as a possible decline in property values for rejecting the plant, planned for just outside the city's eastern boundary.

"They may not be able to stop this plant, but it's still worth the effort," featured speaker Andrew Nikiforuk,



author of *Saboteurs* (on the Wiebo Ludwig case), said of RAPID's bid to halt the project.

Alberta's Energy and Utilities Board is to decide by Wednesday on the 525-megawatt, natural gas-fired power plant proposed by U.S. power giant AES Corp.

Given the LESB's history, RAPID chair Luby Thomas said she expects it to approve the project.

The plant will be located on a 32-hectare tract of farmland east of the city, four kilometres from Erin Woods.

Thomas said the plant's emissions plume would stretch six or eight kilometres, bringing it over her community.

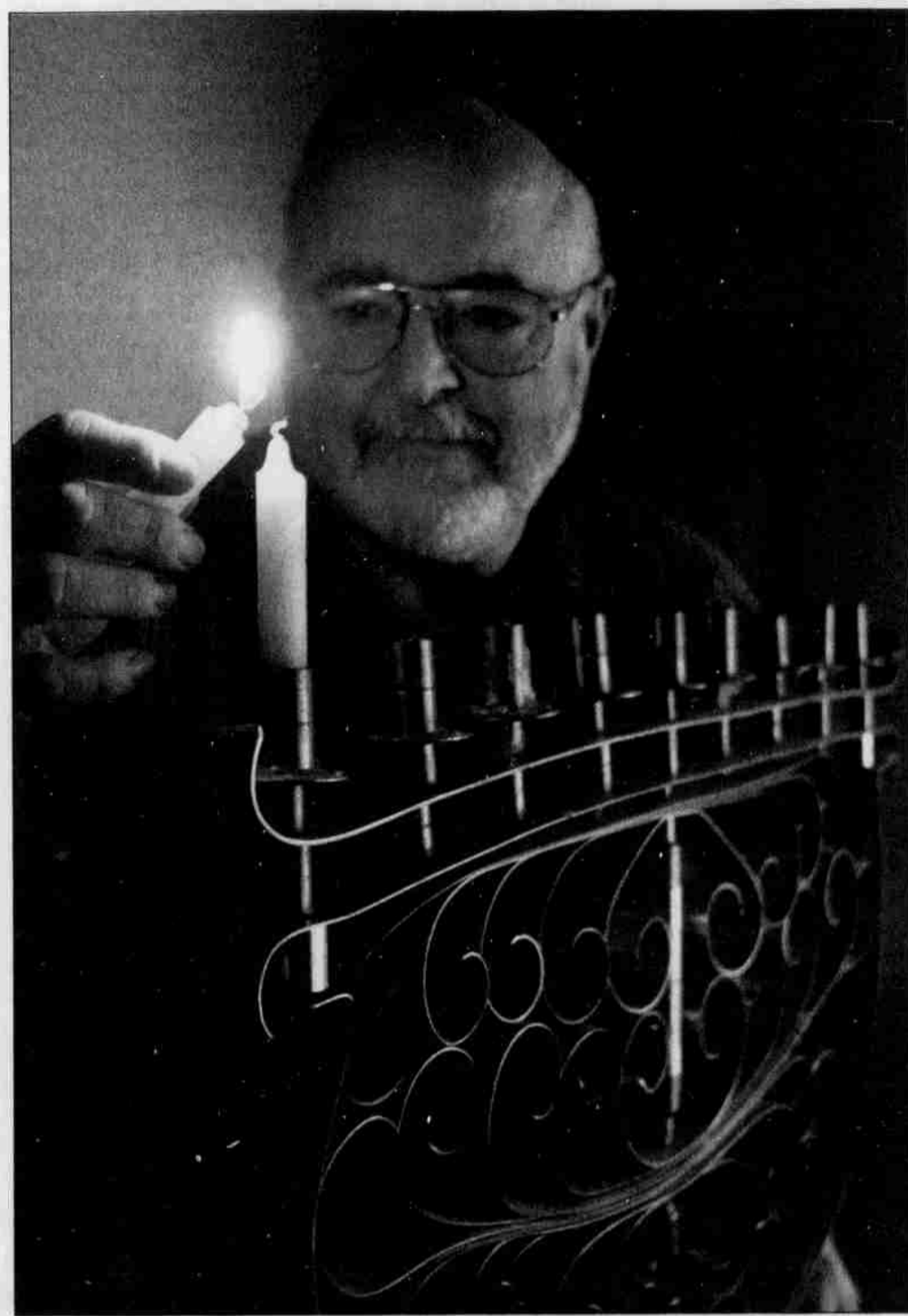
"Alberta has one of the highest rates of asthma in North America, and this plant will increase the pollution (asthma-triggering nitrous oxides) by 50 per cent," said Thomas, who distributed copies of University of Calgary pathologist Dr. Francis Green's submission to the EUB that questioned the public health effects of the plant, particularly on childhood asthma.

Nikiforuk gave a half-hour presentation on the history and workings of the EUB. He noted the board's guidelines for energy projects ignore population density, and argued that the board is "unwilling to consider public health issues," becoming "captive to the industry that pays (70 per cent of) its bills."

Realtor Lorne Coulman sent the RAPID session a statement saying the power plant's plume will reduce the value of Erin Woods home prices by \$15,000 to \$25,000.

SEE PLANT, PAGE B2

HANUKKAH



Philip Wolf lights a menorah at sunset Sunday, marking the beginning of Hanukkah. Leah Hannel, Calgary Herald

Jewish festival faces secular intrusions

Hanukkah gift-giving more popular

JOE WOODARD
CALGARY HERALD

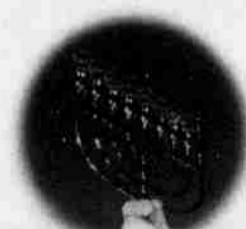
A t shutdown on Sunday, Jews worldwide began lighting the first candle of the Hanukkah menorah, beginning the eight-day, mid-winter festival.

And no, don't think of Hanukkah as a "Jewish Christmas," says Calgaryian Molly Wolf.

Because of the surrounding culture "and because it's fun," some Jews now give small presents to children during the eight days, she said. But Hanukkah is really a historical commemoration that recalls the liberation of Jerusalem 2,166 years ago.

"The lighting of the menorah is the centre of the holiday," said Wolf. "The first night, we light the shammas (servant) candle, and then the first candle on the right."

"We say a blessing as we light it, and then we sing



HANUKKAH FACTS

- Only religious observance is the lighting of candles
- Traditional to eat fried foods because of the significance of oil to the holiday
- Irony that this mislabelled "Jewish Christmas," which has its roots in a revolt against assimilation, is the most assimilated, secular holiday on the Jewish calendar

some hymns.

"The second night, we light the two candles on the right; the third night, three; and so on until, on the eighth evening, the entire menorah is lit."

The festival recalls the victory of Judah Maccabee over the Greek King Antiochus IV in 165 BC. When the Maccabees recaptured Jerusalem, it was necessary to relight the temple and relight

the sacred flame. But there was only enough oil for the lamp to burn for one day and the nearest supply required an eight-day journey. The lamp was lit anyway and then continued to burn for eight days, until new oil arrived.

Now, more than 21 centuries later, the nightly prayer at the lighting of the menorah begins, "Blessed are you, Hashem Lord King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments and has commanded us to kindle this holy light...."

University studies professor Eliezer Segal says it's ironic that the feast devoted to celebrating Jewish resistance to religious assimilation has itself become so assimilated to the Christian — or rather commercialized — feast of Christmas. Less so in Canada, he said, but extravagant gift-giving has apparently become the norm in the United States.

The customs associated with the feast include dreidel, a gambling game played with a square top, and the eating of fried food (remember the oil) and latkes, or potato pancakes.

COWBOY HERITAGE

Bank sale may doom Cochrane museum

Royal Bank to auction off centre assets

MARK REID
CALGARY HERALD

A looming auction in Cochrane may doom a new plan to revive the town's failed Western Heritage Centre.

The Royal Bank of Canada in Cochrane intends to auction off the centre's assets in early January in an attempt to recoup some of the \$400,000 in unpaid loans issued to the facility over the years.

Nora Schmidt, spokeswoman for a local group fighting to save the centre, said the auction would threaten plans to reopen the facility.

"I think it puts it in jeopardy," Schmidt said. "I can't believe, with (millions of dollars) in

profit, that the bank can't forgive the debt and leave the assets where they are, for the benefit of the community at large."

Schmidt's group is asking local residents to boycott the Royal Bank until it cancels the auction.

The Western Heritage Centre was opened in 1996. The \$16-million facility was intended to be a world-class interpretation centre for cowboy culture.

The province contributed \$4 million to the centre, but it failed to attract enough visitors to be economically viable.

The centre closed one year ago after accruing more than \$2.4 million in debt.

The Royal Bank is owed \$400,000, and was given permission a year ago to auction off the heritage centre's assets. These include ornate chairs, tables, a variety of commercial kitchen equipment and other assets valued at approximately \$250,000.

SEE MUSEUM, PAGE B2

HIGH RIVER

Cargill meat plant damaged in fire

EMMA POOLE
CALGARY HERALD

A fire ripped through a portion of the Cargill Foods processing plant near High River on Sunday, forcing the cancellation of the company's dinner for the needy.

The blaze, which broke out around 2:30 p.m., erupted in the "penthouse" of the plant — an upper portion of the warehouse used for rendering.

During rendering, animal

bones and intestines are cooked down to make tallow (hard fat) — which is used to make soap and lipstick.

Huge plumes of smoke billowed high into the air above the plant while employees and townsfolk gathered to take in the sight.

Linda Johnson, a former Cargill employee, was in her truck when she saw emergency vehicles and detoured to the plant.

SEE CARGILL, PAGE B2

Lorraine Hjalte, Calgary Herald
Firefighters from Calgary, Okotoks and High River helped fight the blaze Sunday at the Cargill Foods plant.

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