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# The Sunday **Beacon** News

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FINAL EDITION

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

BY THE NUMBERS

**13** out of 80 Fox Tech students dropped out of school before graduating.

**8** of the 150 K-8 students at Aurora Education Center returned to their home districts.

# LAST CHANCE LEARNING



PHOTOS BY JONATHAN HOUSE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A student at Aurora Education Center listens while her teacher goes over a class exercise on geographic locations of the 50 states in the union.

## Local schools aim to save area's most troubled students

**T**ucked away in a former office building in a North Aurora industrial park, Kathy Volceka teaches some of the most troubled fourth-graders in the Fox Valley.

Her students have long histories of disruptive behavior; most have been outright violent. They are the students teachers at regular schools simply can't handle.

But common sense — and federal law — says expelling such problem children is no better than a doctor curing a disease by killing the patient.

The medical analogy is especially apt considering most of these students have been classified as having emotionally

❖ Turn to LEARNING, A8



Teacher Erika Lamb helps a student at Aurora Education Center.

INSIDE DAYBREAK

## Fox Tech helps troubled teen turn his life around **G1**

BY DAVE GARBE / STAFF WRITER

# Gang snitches play critical but risky role

## POLICE TRY TO SAFEGUARD RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION

By Mike Cetera  
STAFF WRITER

**AURORA** — He is known in court files as CI #210. In a former life, he was a cocksure street gang member unafraid to flaunt his attitude.

He showed his gang colors by wearing a Seattle Supersonics jacket that hung down over his black jean shorts. He warned cops busting him for a parole violation that a rival gang was in for a long season of violence.

He was known as a "terminator" or "enforcer" during part of his time as a gang member.

Police believed he was capable of harming them.

The gangster life for Confidential Informant No. 210 came to an abrupt halt in the spring of 2002 when law-enforcement authorities made an offer the former Aurora man didn't refuse.

He would become a key figure in an investigation of the Insane Deuces street gang that led to the arrests of nearly one dozen men last year on charges ranging from weapons possession to murder.

His cooperation demonstrates how police use criminals every day to gain

access to gangs and how otherwise dangerous men can end up working on the other side of the justice system.

"You never take what they say," said Robert Berlin, first assistant state's attorney in Kane County. "You always look and try and corroborate what they're telling you to see if it stands up or not. A lot of times, there's no other way to get information."

The story of this particular informant, husband, father and drug dealer begins years earlier, when the scars from new gunshot wounds to his right hand and right leg were still fresh.

By this time, bullets were nothing new to the skinny kid who grew up a gang member.

Court documents show the young man, who like many hood-

lums used a nickname meant to sound menacing, joined his first gang in 1989. He switched allegiances several times before settling on the Insane Deuces during the middle of last

**"The problem with the use of confidential informants ... is that they are inherently unreliable because they are either working for money or working off another crime."**

Defense attorney  
Kathleen Colton

❖ Turn to SNITCHES, A2

# Suicide boats target Iraqi oil ports; two U.S. sailors killed

By Bassem Mroue  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Suicide attackers detonated explosive-laden boats near oil facilities in the Persian Gulf Saturday, killing two U.S. Navy sailors in a new tactic against Iraq's vital oil industry.

Elsewhere, violence across Iraq killed at least 33 Iraqis and four American soldiers.

It was the first such maritime attack against oil facilities since U.S. troops invaded Iraq more than a year ago. The blasts resembled attacks in 2000 and 2002 — blamed on al-Qaida — against the USS Cole and a French oil tanker off the coast of Yemen that killed 17 American sailors and a tanker crewman.

In the attack, three dhows, or small boats, drew close to two major oil terminals in Gulf waters about 100 miles from Iraq's main port, Umm Qasr, and exploded when coalition craft tried to intercept them.

A U.S. Navy craft was flipped by the blast, killing the American sailors and injuring five others, the U.S. military said.

Initial reports said there was no damage to the terminals, the military said, and Iraq's main southern oil outlet, Umm Qasr, remained open, a British spokesman said.

The Gulf bombings came on a day of multiple attacks in Iraq: The deadliest was a roadside bomb that hit a bus south of Baghdad, killing at least 13 Iraqis. A mortar barrage struck a crowded market in the capital's biggest Shiite neighborhood, Sadr City, killing at least seven.

The U.S. soldiers were killed around dawn, when two rockets were fired from a truck and slammed into the base in Taji, 12 miles north of Baghdad, the military said. U.S. helicopter gunships then destroyed the truck. Seven soldiers were wounded, three of them critically, the military said.

❖ Turn to IRAQI, A2

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