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OPINION

On the road: Farmington Hills residents are right to want a solution to noise from I-275. /A14

OWL: In honor of Women's History Month, Virginia Nicoll, president of the Older Womens League calls for women to lead the way into the new millennium. /A15

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Is is nature or nurture? Kathie O'Donohue makes a solid case for nature being the primary influence in mothering four boys. See Chat Room. /B-1

Confronting: Suzanne Somers sheds the dizzy blonde role and tells what it was like growing up with an abusive, alcoholic father. /B1

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Defaced gay pride mural removed

A poster about accepting others and a letter from the Gay Straight Alliance have replaced a gay pride mural that was regularly defaced.

By TIM SMITH
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Regularly derided and defaced since it was painted on a Harrison High School wall more than three weeks ago, a "gay pride" mural exists no more.

In place of the Gay Straight Alliance student group mural, at the end of a corridor near the main office, is a small poster about "Acceptance" of others. Next to it is an open letter to the general school population from the group's adult moderators, explaining why the mural was painted over last weekend. "It's gone," said Harrison Principal Rande Horn. "The kids met and decided it was the best thing."

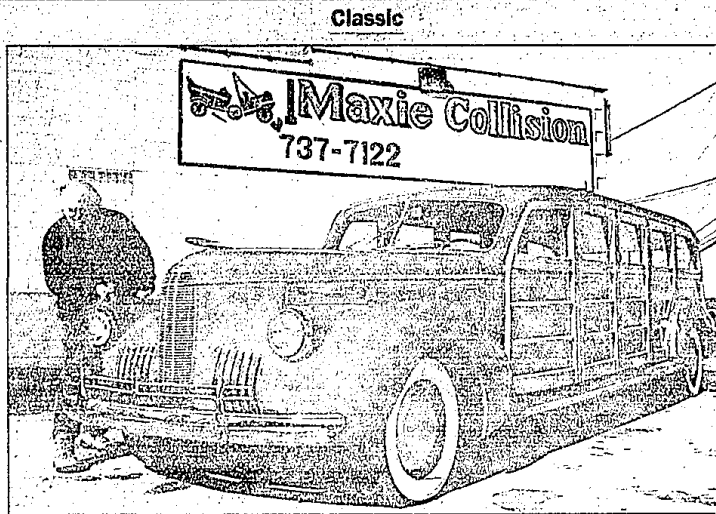
Assistant Principal Mary Brown noted that the group of more than 20 members - including gays and straights - "got their point of view across and they also didn't want to bring the school to turmoil."

Those in the alliance decided Friday to cover the mural because "the original intent of the message was overshadowed by damage done on a daily basis," the open letter stated.

"The original intent of the mural was to speak to a small portion of the student body who has always been frightened but never acknowledged. Their intent was never to provoke, offend or ridicule," it continued.

The mural featured the rainbow flag, symbolic of gay pride, surrounded by 100 circles. In every 10th circle was a

Please see MURAL, A5



Priceless: Jim Fleischer brushes the dust off of his 1940 LaSalle. The stretched woodie is one of a kind. The vintage auto is too big to put in his garage.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL HINESKE

Vintage

Classic LaSalle heads to museum

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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Jim Fleischer can't afford to get a big ego over his vintage 1940 Cadillac LaSalle woodie. As inflated persons and the 22 1/2-foot long eight-door car wouldn't fit in the same place.

"I have a garage I'd like to put it in, but I can't," said Fleischer, who

has the restored vehicle parked inside Farmington Hills-based Maxie Collision. "It's too big. I can't close the door."

Renowned Pottery Museum in Los Angeles is exhibiting the behemoth automobile (Fleischer guesses it weighs 8,000 pounds) as part of an American Woodie exhibition. The exhibit runs June 18-Sept. 5.

Fleischer is proud to have his 1940 LaSalle auto featured, one of only two known to be in existence. He's planning to attend the gala opening, which is a major fund-raiser. Curators and dignitaries such as Jay Leno, California Gov. Peter Wilson and Los Angeles Mayor Jim Riordan are also expected to be there.

Please see LASALLE, A5

After emotional journey, block passes

By TIM SMITH
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As expected, the Farmington Board of Education Tuesday approved a proposal to implement block scheduling at North and Harrison high schools.

The new schedule will be launched in 1999-2000 at North, and at Harrison during 2000-01. Variations of an alter-

ning block schedule will be launched at both buildings, with 84-minute sessions giving teachers and students a chance for innovative, interactive, multi-subject learning.

"It's emotional because we started with a committee nine years ago, and a vision, and it's been rough," said Judy White, assistant superintendent of instruction, after the proposal was

okayed. "But it brings it together. When I look at the elementary study, middle school learning and high school block scheduling, I just want to say, 'Whew.'"

White then thanked the school board, staff members and "Our parents that challenged us, and yet hung with us to really bring it where we are... I'm just so proud of Farmington. It's been a

long, long path." North will incorporate one weekly enrichment session, Student Enrichment Time (similar to Farmington High School's Student Managed Academic Resource Time) and a second extra block for teacher collaboration and student support.

Please see BLOCK, A8

Backhoes, boilers and new court form plan

By TIM SMITH
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Everything from a widened Farmington Road and expanded 47th District Court to backhoes and boilers are contained in the city of Farmington's six-year capital improvement program.

SIX-YEAR PROGRAM

The document, considered a key element in successful grant applications, was reviewed and approved Monday night by the Farmington Planning Commission. It also was forwarded to the city council for final approval, likely during the Monday, March 15, council meeting.

Approximately \$19.5 million in projects are contained in the capital improvement program, which covers 1999-2004.

"It's a relatively ambitious plan," said Assistant City Manager Bill Richards,

Please see PLAN, A7



STAFF PHOTO BY LEE CLARKE

Talk: Attorney David Koelzer talks with Brian Bowser of Dayton, Ohio, just before his preliminary exam.

Motorist expresses regret over mishap

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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The other driver wished he could reverse events that led to an Oct. 6 accident in which a man died on I-275 in Farmington Hills. Brian Bowser is charged with leaving the scene of an accident in what was described as road rage. On Wednesday, 47th District

Court Marla Parker bound him over to Oakland County Circuit Court after a preliminary exam on the felony count. If convicted, the felony carries a maximum five-year jail sentence. Terence Salisbury of West Bloomfield died after a meat truck struck his Mercury Sable broadside on northbound I-275. Salisbury

Please see RAGE, A5

Life isn't the movies: Internet dalliances can have sad outcomes

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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Internet and e-mail open new vistas for knowledge, kinship and understanding. Electronic driven dalliances, though, can leave hearts crushed.

For every story portrayed by Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan in "You've Got Mail," there are sad consequences of people believing they've found a soul mate only to have that hope evaporate after meeting the person for the first time.

The death of a 28-year-old French woman whose body was found in Farmington Hills March 3, in woods outside of the apartment of the man who rejected her, tragically underscores such outcomes, a University of Michigan psychology professor said.

Police rule Julie Yasa's death as suspicious, though sleeping capsules were found underneath her body. Authorities are awaiting toxicology reports before making a final determination.

"It's so sad," said Deborah Greer, a University of Michigan psychology professor and private therapist. "She obviously wasn't stable. She was pinning God only knows what kinds of hopes on a relationship with this gentleman."

According to police, the man broke off their affair after one night together in which they had sex.

When she returned to his apartment two days later, he drove her to the end of the driveway where he gave her a bedsheet. She walked over to the nearby woods where she died.

"There's a way to let her down in a more gentle manner," Greer said.

Julie Yasa carried on a six month e-mail correspondence with the Hills man, whom police questioned and released. Hills police continue to work with Windsor police and Canadian authorities retracing her whereabouts.

Police remain in contact with the woman's family through the French Consulate. The Michigan State Police crime lab is expected to turn over e-mail correspondence downloaded from the man's computer.

"There's still a lot of work going on with it," Assistant Chief Chuck Nebus said.

The relationship culminated with her flying to Toronto on Valentine's Day and paying someone to smuggle her

Please see INTERNET, A6

