

Farmington Observer

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The detour from westbound I-696 to southbound I-275 that takes motorists to a turnaround on the Haggerty Connector is expected to continue for at least another month.

Originally, Michigan Department of Transportation officials anticipated that the new ramp from westbound I-696 would be re-opened in July to traffic. Since the new ramp would need to be reduced from two lanes to one, officials wanted to avoid traffic backups onto I-696 - a problem that occurred early in the reconstruction project.

Also, southbound I-275's exit ramps onto Six Mile Road will be closed for at least another week. That closure also includes entrance ramps from Six Mile onto southbound I-275. Motorists should use Seven Mile or Eight Mile.

On a Six Mile is completed, contractors will move crews to Seven Mile to construct new ramps there. That closure will begin in about a week to 10 days, and last about 12 days, weather permitting. During that closure, motorists should use Six Mile and Eight Mile to access southbound I-275.

AHEAD

MONDAY

Aglow: Farmington Aglow International will meet at 7:30 p.m. at the Farmington Hills library, 32737 12 Mile Road. Dorothy Boone, a graduate of the Rehema Bible Training Center in Tulsa, Okla. will speak.

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Neighbors foil break-in

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Alert neighbors in Farmington Hills subdivision are credited with foiling a break-in, which led police to arrest a Detroit man, 40.

The seniors' quick actions prevented the incident from having a more serious outcome.

Shortly after 10 a.m. Friday, police were called to a home at 30364 Clubhouse Ct. on a breaking and entering in progress.

An officer saw a man matching the description of the burglar on the front porch. He was detained while police talked to the resident and neighbors.

Corella Kaufman, 69, told authorities she and her husband Damon saw a man in a T-shirt lurking around the home in the Woodstream Farms subdivision area, which is north of 13 Mile between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads. Another neighbor seen the man earlier walking around the sub.

When Corella went to check on her neighbor, she saw the man inside the house. The neighbor rang the doorbell, which prompted the homeowner to come downstairs where she saw the stranger who'd answered the door.

Please see BREAK-IN, A4



All in a day at the festival

The big top comes with nostalgia

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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What do you when the circus comes to town?

If you're 9-month-old Elizabeth Schelske, you count your toes while an elephant parades around with a female performer who has her leg in his mouth.

If you're Farmington resident Russ Duncan, you sling two 35mm cameras around your neck to capture every move under the big top. You also reflect on your own childhood and ponder whether future generations will see such an event.

"Growing up as a kid, I remember the circus coming to town," Duncan said. "It's the nostalgia.

"You wonder if the circus will still be around when they have families. You don't know. Everything is so high-tech today."

Undoubtedly, there was something for everybody at Thursday's performances of the Kelly Miller Circus in Farmington Hills Founders Sports Park. The Oklahoma-based outfit is one of the few traveling, big-top tent circuses left.

Cloves, acrobats, horses and elephants dazzled children and parents alike during two 90-minute performances.

Farmington resident Stella Schelske and husband Steve took sons Quinn, 3, and Stas, 2, and daughter Elizabeth to see a bit of history. Or, in the parent's case, to catch up on the past.

"You know," said Stella, scrunching

Please see CIRCUS, A5

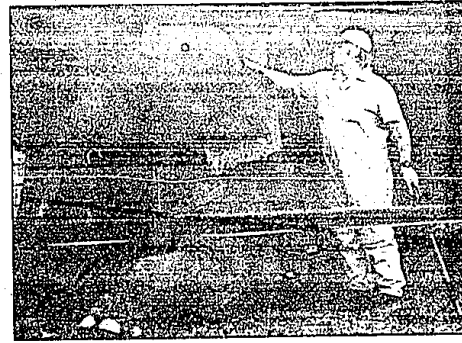


STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER

Clowning around: Kari the clown, alias Karen DeChant of Livonia, took center ring in the Kelly Miller Circus.



Let the show begin: Barry DeChant (at left), husband of clown, Kari, is the ringmaster for the Kelly Miller Circus. At right, a circus animal trainer cares for one of the elephants, all of whom delighted circus-goers, especially the kids.



Good fun, good eats

BY TIM SMITH
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As usual, the Farmington Area Founders Festival thrilled fun-loving folks with eye-catching, mouth-watering delights of the artistic and culinary variety.

Just a whiff away from where members of the Farmington Rotary Club were selling slices of Papa John's pizza, customers gathered around Bob Hutcherson's "Wacky Hats" booth, under the big tent at the Downtown Farmington Center.

"The last time I was at this festival Sir Graves Ghastly was making an appearance," joked Hutcherson, a former Farmington resident and performer in his own right.

He and his wife, Rachel, are barnstorming Michigan festivals and fairs with their painted, corrugated paper concoction - with the goal of raising enough money from sales to join a Los Angeles improv troupe.

With a Wacky Hat on his head, Hutcherson demonstrated how one works for Livonia's

Please see FEST, A6



Tangy: Frank Sisco makes fresh lemonade for thirsty patrons.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER

Taking it easy: Jane Solar and Edna Slampak stroll along the booths by the Masonic Temple, pushing Danielle and Courtney Solar.

Helmet law put on hold

A petition bearing 498 signatures has been presented as notice to the city, prompting a halt to the new helmet law for youths. Opponents want the ordinance stopped or at least put for a public vote.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Farmington Hills bike helmet ordinance is on hold after a petition protesting the measure has been turned in.

The 498 signatures collected serves notice to the city. Those against the mandatory bike helmets for kids 16 and under have 24 days to amass 4,368 names, which would bring the matter back before city council.

The helmet ordinance was to go into effect July 6.

"We think what the council should do is end it, or at a minimum put it on the ballot and have the voters vote on it."

■ 'We think what the council should do is end it or at a minimum put it on the ballot and have the voters vote on it.'

Robert Igrisan
—Ordinance opponent

"If they don't want to do that, we'll get the necessary signatures to block its effectiveness."

Igrisan and a group of 15 volunteers accumulated nearly 500 signatures in three weeks. They only needed 435 to serve notice.

"You always want to file more," said Igrisan, who is a Farmington attorney.

Of 500 names turned into the City Clerk's Office, only one or two were invalid, said Deputy Clerk Pam Sibley. Those who signed the petition had to be Farmington Hills residents.

Please see HELMET, A2

Changes irk some crafters

BY TIM SMITH
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The 35th Annual Farmington Area Founders Festival wasn't even half over before complaints started raining down, almost befitting Friday's damp weather.

Some crafters and vendors vowed they wouldn't think too hard about coming back in 2000, citing higher fees to rent table space (as high as \$150), lack of communication and promotion about the event and getting moved from friendlier, more familiar locations around downtown Farmington.

One area of concern was the northwest corner of Grand River-Farmington. Estimates were the number of crafters set up on the Masonic Temple grounds and adjacent Memorial Park were one-third fewer than in past years.

According to several crafters, problems began after assignment of the Memorial Park space was "taken over" by the festival's new management company (Watts-Up! Inc.), instead of again being provided for the Masonic's own, separate craft show. (The Masonic runs a craft show that coincides with the Founders Festival.)

In January, Watts-Up! Inc. was signed to a three-year contract by the newly organized Farmington Area Founders Festival, Inc. - a nonprofit organization which had taken the event over from the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce. Farmington City Manager Frank

Please see CRAFTERS, A6