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Field of dreams



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DAGANIS

Getting ready: Bill Szyrka marks fresh lines on a ballfield, one that's a hidden jewel in Farmington Hills. For the story and more photos, please turn to page A14.

Speed bumps split neighborhood



Speed bumps, the installation and financing of them, has served to split neighbors on LaMuera Street. Some want the devices to curb speeding, which is something the neighbors agree happens and needs a resolution.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Along with religion and politics, scratch speed bumps from the list of block party conversation topics - at least on one Farmington Hills street. LaMuera Street neighbors are pitted against one another over a measure to curb speeding.

The furor over an \$8,000 road project has led to finger pointing at neighbors who speed and claims of bogus petition signatures. One homeowner association board member was prompted to resign over harassment she received.

At Monday's Farmington Hills City Council meeting, a resident opposed to speed bumps turned to those in the audience.

"I really do hope the antagonism

between the neighbors ends," Debbie Casener said. "We will probably never see eye to eye on this issue."

"That doesn't mean we should stop being good neighbors."

If it didn't snap, that olive branch rustled after city council awarded the bid in a 4-2 vote with Councilwoman Vicki Barnett and Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi dissenting.

Those supporting the measure said the issue was decided last year; Council was only deciding who would get the bid.

Residents against speed bumps say they're ugly and could bring down property values. Some who live on

nearby Springland also feel the deterrent will shift traffic onto their street.

A majority believe the obstacles, which city traffic engineers considered a last resort, is the only way to stop speeders. The street has no sidewalks and children are at risk, residents say.

In July 1998, 22 of 28 residents signed a petition in support of speed bumps as part of the city's Safety Awareness for Everyone Through Education, Endorsement and Engineering.

As a result, council approved three speed bumps in a 5-1 vote with Barnett dissenting July 6, 1998. Councilman

Please see BUMPS, A5

IN THE SPOTLIGHT TODAY COMMUNITY LIFE

Here she is: The Miss Farmington pageant was a three-hour extravaganza packed with entertainment. For the low-down, /B1.

SPORTS

Road race winner: Eighteen-year-old Dan Jess of Farmington Hills was the men's overall winner Saturday in the annual Founders Festival road race. /C1

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Hometown pride on parade

BY TIM SMITH
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Community pride seemed to pump up the chests of Farmington residents Kae and Gail Green when they saw Gill Elementary School's float roll past them during Saturday's Founders Festival Parade.

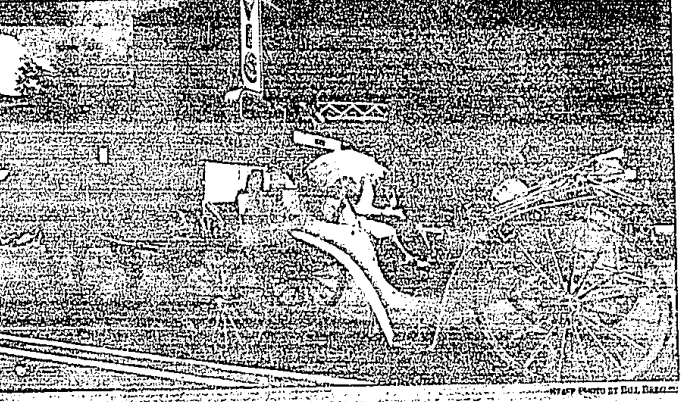
The Gill entry featured a replica of downtown nestled neatly onto a flat bed. "Nowhere else but Farmington would you see something like this," said Gail Green, particularly thrilled about how the students incorporated a miniature version of the Civic Theatre onto the back of their float.

The Greens, who early Saturday staked out a portion of curb on Grand River near Farmington Road, said they never miss the parade.

"We love it every year," said Ken Green. They soon watched as a contingent for Botaford General Hospital moved past them. "I like seeing the businesses being a part of it," commented Gail Green, about Botaford.

The variety of the parade astounded the Greens, who were thrilled to see the Farmington Rockets little league football team represented by cheerleaders and a float.

Another hit was scored by the Plymouth Fire & Drum Corp, said Lansing's Bethany Bonner. She



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DAGANIS

History: The Farmington Area Founders Festival Parade Saturday morning featured fun and a little bit of history as with the Governor Warner Mansion carriage.

was in town to watch with her parents, who live in Farmington. The musical group wore 1700s-era uniforms and played "Yankee Doodle Dandy."

Here come the Shriners

But Bethany held back on calling them the best part of the parade, not for good reason. "My dad's in the Shriners, so I'm a little partial."

Actually, it seemed like everybody was in the parade.

Please see PARADE, A4

Arrested man was spotted in Hills area

BY DARRELL CLEM
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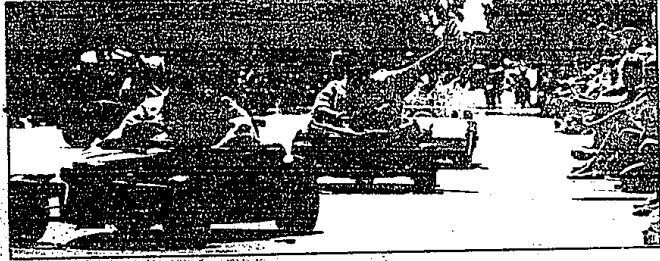
Farmington Hills police believe a 28-year-old man suspected of abducting young girls was in this city, based on reports made.

Farmington Hills and Westland police are investigating their portions of the case as the man, Kenneth Steffanski, was arrested at Beck and Pontiac Trail, Like Westland, Farmington Hills has not filed any charges.

Westland police are investigating Steffanski for two sexual fondling incidents police believe happened at his former Westland residence.

Parents told police that two girls, ages 3 and 9, reported being fondled in early May after a man lured them into a residence on Edgerton in Westland, police Lt. Marc Sto-

Please see ACCOBT, A7



Fun times: Shriners joined in the annual parade Saturday. This group entertained in their miniature cars, speeding up and down Grand River Avenue.



On the march: Jonathan Baldwin marches with his Cub Scout Pack 321 flag. The pack is based at Beechview Elementary.



A winner: Michelle Maxwell of Farmington Hills reacts to winning the Corvette. Jon Whitfield, her boyfriend, may get to drive it, if he's lucky.

STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LANGELZ

Decision: Cash or car

BY TIM SMITH
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Let's see. Take the Corvette or the cash?

For the Farmington Hills couple who won Sunday's Fantasy Crusin'

Raffle, it was a question with a quick answer. "I like the cash," said Michelle Maxwell, who won the Farmington/Farmington Hills Cham-

Please see RAFFLE, A5

Business travel sparks facelift for Holiday Inn

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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With every new desk added in a newly built Farmington Hills corporate office comes an increased need for beds.

Business travel as part of a booming economy is sparking a surge in hotel occupancy in the area. Last year, a new Fairfield Inn opened on 12 Mile and Ed Stuy on Stansbury near went up in the mid-1990s.

Mainstays like the Holiday Inn on 10 Mile Road and Grand River are sprucing up.

The locally owned lodging facility recently finished a \$3 million upgrade, which included a complete overhaul of its 292 guest rooms.

New beds, furniture and 25-inch color TVs have been added to rooms along with technological amenities such as data ports and voice mail.

As part of the revamped look, a rev-

There were no other businesses around here when this hotel opened. We were the first hotel in this area.

Nancy Koziatek
—Holiday Inn general manager

seafood restaurant, Pompano's, replaces the space formerly occupied by Brady's Tavern. Weights and a new cardiovascular system have also been added to the hotel's fitness center.

Holiday Inn Farmington Hills is one of the area's oldest hotels, going up 30 years ago in what has become a heavily traveled area.

"There were no other businesses around here when this hotel opened," said Nancy Koziatek, Holiday Inn general manager. "We were the first hotel

Please see HOTEL, A6