

DEAR READERS,

Effective with today's issue, we've made improvements in the section front flaps inside your Farmington Observer.

We've designed a special typeface for the section front flaps, distinctive and easier to read. Section front letters also are larger and easier to read.

At the bottom of the page you'll find the telephone number and internet address of the editor and the newsroom. We want to make it easy for you to reach us.

We've also changed the name of our Community Life section to HomeTown Life so that it more clearly reflects the hometown news - news about weddings, engagements, religion and births - contained in the section.

You will continue to see improvements in the way we package and present your hometown newspaper which is part of the HomeTown Communications Network.

Our aim is to make our newspapers the essential tool for our readers and their families to live the good life in their home towns. That's why we are making these changes, with others soon to come.

Tell me what you think. You can reach me at (734) 953-2100 or at arsolik@homecomm.net.

Sincerely

Susan Rosiek
Susan Rosiek,
Publisher

Skaters to hit the ice

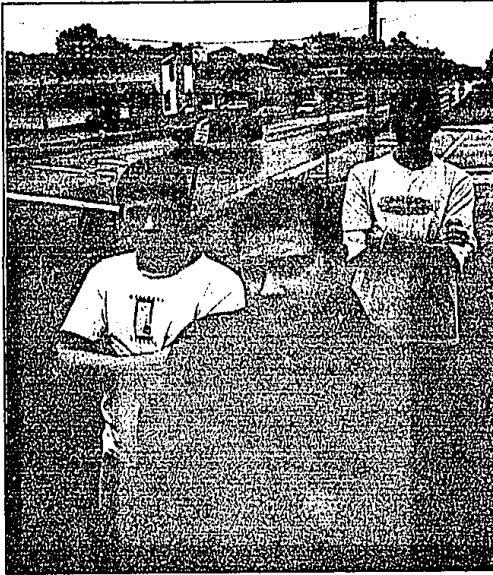
BY JONI HUBBED
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The legends of modern music will meet the skating stars of tomorrow this weekend, during the Farmington Hills Ice Arena's 4th Annual Ice Show, co-sponsored by the arena and the Hills Figure Skating Club.

"Mainly, what it's for is our kids in our 'Learn to Skate' program," said arena manager Tom Murphy. "This is their time to show off what they've learned."

This year, 180 skaters, assisted by 70 volunteers, will stage a show complete with music, group and solo choreography and costumes. From the 3- and 4-year olds who will be considered successes if they remain standing on the ice, to adult skaters who

Please see SKATE, A12



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRIDGER

Determined: Tony Kales, Nevin Hill and Andy Metry worked to get a left-turn signal for the intersection in front of Harrison High School. The intersection was the scene of a fatal wreck earlier this year.

Students push for safety on 12 Mile

■ A promise for improvements designed to alleviate traffic problems on 12 Mile Road in front of Harrison High School has been made. Classmates of a friend who was killed in front of the school in March have worked hard to draw attention to safety problems there.

BY JONI HUBBED
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Dozens of Harrison High School students and parents packed Farmington Hills City Council chambers Monday night with just one concern.

They left with something not everyone gets from government: the promise of improvements designed to alleviate the deadly serious problem of traffic safety on 12 Mile Road, in front of the school. During the course of the evening, county officials announced they will install a left-turn signal and take a serious look at expanding 12 Mile to five lanes and city officials agreed to pursue a ban on right-hand turns on red.

No one seemed happier than the three students who pushed most for those measures.

"We are here for a very simple reason," said senior Andy Metry. "Our safety."

Metry and his classmates Nevin Hill and Tony Kales took on city hall as a class project, under the direction of first-year teacher Jenny Barto. The assignment for their American government class was to get involved in "active citizenship."

■ 'We are here for a very simple reason. Our safety.'

Andy Metry
—Harrison student

Deeply affected by the death of schoolmate Daniel Lee in a March 31 accident at an intersection in front of the school, the three students contacted County Commissioner Terry Sever, R-Farmington Hills, with questions about a left-hand turn signal. Their research showed it had been requested and denied a few times because the intersection didn't meet certain criteria.

"They were already a little frustrated because they thought it would be an uphill battle," Sever said. "The county generally won't take action unless there are numbers to support it."

Undaunted, the students decided to videotape the intersection and document what they saw as accidents waiting to happen. Shown at Monday night's meeting, the video captured stacking between the east and west

Please see ROAD, A7

School officials say harm has been done

BY TIM SMITH
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Enough is enough. It is time to end the escalating war about words concerning the language and actions of a few Farmington High School teachers, several Farmington Board of Education members and FHS students urged parent Mark Mergener during Tuesday night's meeting.

"I think there's some very real harm being done and no real good is coming out of this," school board president Fricilla Brouillette, almost in tears, said to Mergener. "You're portraying us as a board and as an administration that's being insensitive and uncaring about the kinds of concerns that you've raised."

"All of those concerns have been dealt with, with the individual teachers."

Brouillette conceded that some of the teacher behavior brought to light in recent weeks by Mergener was "appalling." But, then directing her next comment toward the parent, she added that "I don't really understand what kind of punishment you seem to want."

Mergener, who read a prepared statement to the board, remains uncon-

vinced that proper action against the teachers has been taken. Mergener's reported problems with certain teachers date back to September 1998. He claims students have been subjected to profanity - in language and through various films and books - and jokes or remarks laced with sexual or violent references.

Please see ENOUGH, A5

Corridor face lifts on the horizon

BY JONI HUBBED
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Redevelopment along the Grand River corridor in Farmington Hills appears close to receiving a large boost from two projects that will add a 15,000-square-foot Walgreen's and a 140,000-square-foot neighborhood shopping center.

Although he may have taken some shots in the past, developer Steven Schafar of The Phoenix Group was praised at consecutive public hearings Monday night for his willingness to work with residents as he shepherds both projects through the planned unit development process, which allows multiple uses on one site.

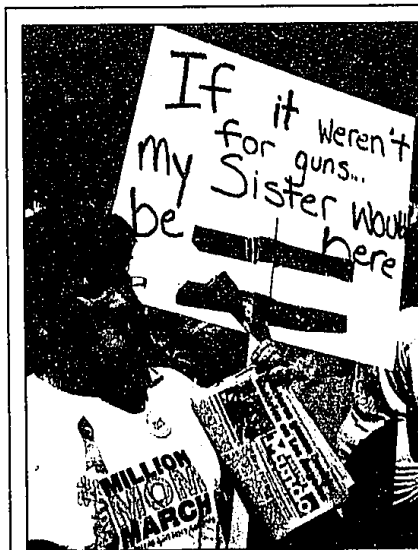
"It looks to me like this time you're going to be a hero to residents in this area," councilman Jon Grant said. For the most part, neighbors and city officials appear to agree both will provide a badly needed face lift for an area of the community that suffers from something of an image problem. Not everyone left the consecutive public hearings at Monday night's city council meeting happy, but Schafar made sure he took phone numbers from everyone who wasn't.

Walgreen's

Located north of Grand River between St. Francis and Colwell, the Walgreen's site ultimately received approval on a 6-0 vote, with councilman Barry Brickner abstaining, due to a potential professional conflict. The discussion was not without a little give-and-take on both sides.

Schafar said he had worked closely with neighbors from the beginning and into the final phases, even meeting with them to discuss some additional changes before Monday night's meet-

Please see CORRIDOR, A3



STAFF PHOTO BY BRAD KADRICH

Missing her sister: Maureen Prest of Farmington Hills holds a sign about the death of her sister at Sunday's Million Mom March.

Area moms on the march

BY BRAD KADRICH
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Julie Devine grew up in the inner city neighborhoods of Los Angeles where gun violence wasn't an abstract concept. It was a way of life.

In her high school yearbook, Devine's school dedicated an entire page to classmates, friends, whose lives had been snuffed out in violent death.

It was in memory of those fallen classmates that Devine made the trip to Washington, D.C., Sunday for the Million Mom March, the demonstration on The Mall designed to prod Congressional leaders into moving talks along toward what the moms call "reasonable gun legislation."

"These classmates didn't make it to this point in life," said Devine, who now lives in Farmington. "That's why this is so important to me. It's only when we band together we can get something done."

Devine was one of thousands of Michigan mothers who made the trek. Many left on buses from Livonia, making the 12-hour drive on mass in a show of solidarity and support for the mission, which grew out of the ashes of the April 1999 attack at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo.

Twelve students and a teacher were gunned down by students armed with weapons. The Livonia bus contingent, which included women from Farmington Hills, Livonia, Ply-

Please see MOMS, A11

City council says no to sign request

BY TIM SMITH
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According to Mike Richards, who operates a photography business in downtown Farmington's Village Mall, potential customers walk or drive right by because they don't know the shop exists.

One reason is location. Photography by Michael Richards is located in the basement of the landmark mall at Grand River-Farmington Road. Richards attended Monday's Farmington City Council meeting to request a ground sign be attached to a decorative wrought iron railing, which surrounds a stairwell not all that far from the

main entrance of the mall.

"Virtually no one knows where I am," said Richards, who proposed an archway sign to inform customers of his business.

Council members, however, voted against the request because they were

Please see SIGN, A8

HomeTown Classifieds WORK!

"I got great action from my Observer-Eccentric classified ad. My play structure sold really fast."

—Arlene B. Franklin

