

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Cruise away: Mercy High School's annual auction offers a fully loaded 2001 PT Cruiser and much more. See *Hometown Life*, Page C5.

Getting It: Students shared thoughts and concerns about diversity at a recent forum. Page A3

Pedestrian Injured: A 66-year-old woman was injured Monday afternoon in an accident on Tall Oaks. Page A5

LOOKING AHEAD

Common Concerns: Look in Sunday's *Observer* for coverage of Tuesday's meeting of the Farmington Board of Education and city councils from Farmington and Farmington Hills

OPINION

Taking responsibility: Who should take the blame for the death of Travis Miles? Page A5.

ARTS & LEISURE

Yeehaa! Saddle up for steer wrestling, calf roping and bronc riding at The Longhorn World Championship Rodeo at Palace of Auburn Hills. Competition includes a Rochester Hills man and his daughter. Page B1

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GMC 1993 Starcraft Conversion Van - \$7,100, loaded

Sold last day. B.M. Farmington Hills.



Teen pleads innocent

BY JONI HUBRED
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A 16-year-old Farmington Hills youth pleaded not guilty Friday to charges of involuntary manslaughter and firearms violations connected with the death of his father, at a hearing in Oakland County Probate Court.

The teen has been held in Children's Village since the night his father died, in lieu of \$50,000 bond. He faces

Please see TEEN, A5

Festival exec plans to build on tradition

BY TIM SMITH
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Newly named Farmington Founders Festival administrator Suzanne Lichtman this week begins work to help restore the shine to the area's annual jewel of a community event.

And Lichtman said Tuesday she is looking forward to the job, which became hers following Bruce Lilley's unexpected resignation from the post due to personal reasons.

"I realize it's an incredible challenge," Lichtman said. "I just want to be part of something that really has become ... such a great annual tradition. I'd like to be part of the initiative to bring it back to something that's

Please see FESTIVAL, A5



Going underground

Students travel back in time to learn about slavery

BY TIM SMITH
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Led by lantern light through darkened hallways, Beechview Elementary School students navigated their way from safe house to safe house along the school's version of the Underground Railroad Monday morning.

They met Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, key figures in the fight for freedom waged during the 1800s by African-Americans.

Depending on which classroom students were taken to, students listened to any one of five parent volunteers in the role of writer Douglass, the "voice of freedom" for many African Americans. Another five parents portrayed Tubman, known as the "Moses" of her race for leading hundreds of slaves to freedom. Portraying Truth were four parents.

The innovative, interactive Black History Month program was sponsored by Beechview's PTA, in cooperation with the Farmington district school.

"My house was one of the stations on the Underground Railroad," said parent Donald Warren, whose version of Douglass featured a gray wig and beard. "They would be extremely tired, hungry... Sometimes it would take three months to go from the south to the north to freedom. If the weather was bad, sometimes it took a year."

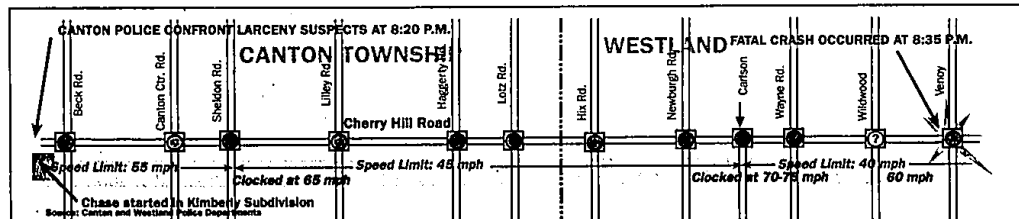
Students also found out from Warren's Douglass that even freed slaves

Please see RAILROAD, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLER

Today's lesson: Sitting in a hushed and darkened classroom, Alexis Fernan holds Harriet Tubman's baby and listens to the story of her life on the Underground Railroad. Above, Donald Warren portrays Frederick Douglass, telling the story of his life.



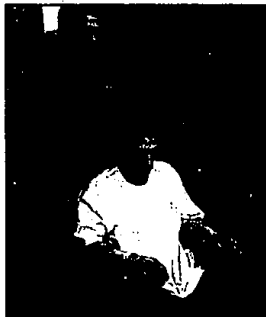
Felons in flight, cops in pursuit and an 8-year-old boy collide in a

Tragedy on Cherry Hill

BY SUE MASON
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Balloons, teddy bears and wilted flowers strapped to a light pole at Cherry Hill and Venoy roads testify to a young life lost in a horrific crash at the intersection Saturday evening.

Eight-year-old Travis Miles of Garden City died when the vehicle in which he was riding collided with another truck involved in a high-speed chase with the Canton police.



Charged: John Moffitt is brought in for his arraignment in 35th District Court Tuesday.

"A big part of my life has been taken from me and can never be replaced," said his father, Donald Miles. "He was a very passionate person. He'd do for others before he'd do for himself."

Friends, family members and classmates gathered at Uht Funeral Home in Westland this afternoon to say good-bye to the youngster, who died just shy of what would have been his ninth birthday on March 10.

Travis enjoyed everything — Pokémon, Power Rangers, World Wrestling Federation, dinosaurs, making all kinds of music with his guitars, watching old Godzilla movies and looking up at the stars.

While mathematics was his best subject in school, his favorite subject was Spanish. "He'd come home and try to teach us how to count in Spanish," said his step-mother, Cheryl.

Travis loved hockey most of all. He enjoyed playing with his dad in the back yard of his grandmother's home on Barton Street.

"I'm surprised I didn't get hockey pucks through the windows," said Irene Carraway.

Travis watched Red Wings games with his father and could identify almost everybody on his favorite team.

"He was a definite fan of Brendan Shanahan," added his father. "He talked about getting into hockey and playing for the Red Wings."

Miles said they had talked about going to Joe Louis Arena to see a game, but "we'll never get to do that." Travis was a Red

Please see TRAGEDY, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY TIM HARLEY

Remembering: Donald Miles holds photographs of his son Travis.

4 facing felony charges

BY CAROL MARSHALL
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While the family of a third-grade boy prepared an untimely funeral, Wayne County prosecutors Tuesday were preparing charges against four men, ranging from larceny to first-degree murder.

Two of the defendants led Canton Police on a Saturday-night car chase that resulted in the death of 8-year-old Travis

Miles of Garden City. John Moffitt, 38, of Farmington Hills pleaded not guilty to murder, and receiving and concealing stolen property at his arraignment in 35th District Court. Police say Moffitt drove the truck that collided in Westland with the vehicle in which Miles was a passenger.

"(Moffitt) made a conscious decision to flee and elude," Canton Public Safety Director

Please see CHARGES, A5