

# Summer days drift to troubled nights

The signs of summer in Hines Park are GTO, Mustang, Corvette, Blstein shocks, Koni wheels, 426 Hemis. Moon-roofs, sun roofs, T-roads.

Motown — more high-performance per square foot than anywhere else north of Indianapolis.

The high-performance includes Craig, Pioneer, Sony, Panasonic. Who has time for the sounds of silence when there is the echo of stereo amplifiers competing in the night?

"Hey, a friend of mine from California came here and it just blew him away. He says, 'This is better than California.' You've got some excellent vehicles here," said Jim, a 21-year-old Novi man who stopped at the park on the night of the year's longest day.

BUT LIFE in the fast lane this is not. No sir. Not at 11 mph in your \$10,000, 400-cubic inch Trans Am it's not. Through the park's busy sections, places like the Westland Nature Center, traffic snakes down the two-lane road at a pace suitable for a cardiac patient's evening stroll.

"There's five times more people down here (than last year). It's a little crazy now, no doubt about it. It looks like Daytona Beach," says Larry Melvin, a 22-year-old Livonia who says he has been a Hines Park regular longer than he can put a date on.

"There's so many people down here, there's got to be a few crazy people," says Dave, a 25-year-old Redford Township man who passed away the time slugging back cans of Stro's at the Nature Center.

Dave grew up in Garden City and remembers fleeing pursuing sheriffs a decade or more ago on a mini-bike. He never had trouble with traffic.

"This park has really changed in the past five years. I mean, everybody's just down here. There's people from way over on the east side," he said.

Maybe so. But a night spent in conversation with perhaps 20 young people — old people no longer exist in Hines Park after sundown.

IF YOU WONDER what happens at Hines Park, it's largely a matter of cruising in traffic so heavy it makes the I-94 rush hour look like the General Motors test track at Milford.

You keep one eye on the temperature gauge at these speeds, and the other looking for a parking



By day, the park is an infant's Eden, but after dusk it's party time for the teenage crowd, sometimes frustrated in their pursuits by police intent on clearing the park for traffic. (Staff photos by Steve Fecht)

place. This isn't easy. There aren't enough to go around, and anyway, it is also of prime importance to keep an eye out for Wayne County Sheriff's Department deputies. "Wayco," they are called, as if they were a small Texas town.

When you find a parking space, you pull in and get out. But your car still has a use. You sit on its hood, drink a beer, fire up a joint, turn up the stereo.

One young man more interested in stopping than going has stereo speakers installed in the trunk of his Mustang II. They're useless, unless you're pulled over and parked in a place like... well, only in Hines Park.

Once parked, you settle back to watch the cars cruising by. Most of them seem to be looking for a place to park.

Finally, depending on an accident of birth, you hoot loudly at A) girls, or B) boys, as they cruise slowly by.

Hines Park closes at 10 p.m., an hour the sheriffs take seriously. Some ugly confrontations were required, some cursing, too, and one incredibly bold, or stupid driver in a Corvette was ticketed



when he parked his car directly in front of a sheriff on the no-parking side of the road.

But by 10:12 p.m., the Nature Center was almost deserted.

The only people left were a reporter and a young man with a golf hat walking a dog.

Earlier, the young man had stumbled against a picnic table and tripped over his words telling a story about a horse that tried to kill him at Detroit Race Course.

"Ask anybody," he said. "Park's closed," a sheriff's voice boomed from a loudspeaker.

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