

Safety on Drake

Residents push for tougher traffic controls

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Marlo Andretti, move over. Drake Road residents are growing tired of speeding motorists who can hold their own with the famous Indy 500 racer along the winding, newly paved road.

"For years, I've watched the accidents. It's kind of sick entertainment to sit and watch them scrape cars off the lawns," Pleasant Valley resident Dick Cook said.

Drake-area residents last week received the Farmington Hills City Council's blessing on recommendations for improving the safety of this natural beauty road, between 11 and 12 Mile.

"The safety issue is the primary thing and to keep the trucks off. Here, we've got a situation where the only way we can control traffic is by controlling speed," Drake Road spokeswoman Janet Compo said.

The residents' recommendations may make some motorists unhappy. The existing 25 mph speed limit will be maintained between 11 and 12 Mile. To further ensure low speeds and safe driving, there's a good chance more stop signs will be installed along the newly paved stretch between 11 and 12 Mile. On Dec. 23, 1988, the first day Drake was open to traffic following the repaving project, four accidents occurred. From Dec. 23 to Feb. 23, 1989, Farmington Hills police issued 424 speeding violations. Police issued 151 warnings during that period when special attention was paid to the roadway, said Sgt.



Ray Cranston, Farmington Hills Police Traffic Section supervisor.

"The police enforcement helped," Compo said. "It's an unusual road. It has a tough configuration and a lot of blind spots."

THOUGH SOME residents were ticketed, police and city officials acknowledge the road is getting more through traffic as a short-cut to 12 Mile to avoid the congested Grand River-Halsted area.

As residents requested, a four-way red flashing stop light will be installed at 11 Mile and Drake to reinforce the existing stop sign there. To remind motorists of the residential nature of the area that is filled with small children, including a handicapped child, the word "residential" will be placed on the speed limit signs.

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Drake Road spokeswoman

When Farmington Hills traffic officers tracked speeds of violators in mid-January, they found the average speed in the city council-designated 25 mph zone was 45.2 mph, Cranston said.

Studies will be conducted on the residents' stop sign requests because traffic consultants have long-maintained that stop signs there are not warranted.

The requests to be studied are for:

- Installation of two, three-way stop signs for north of 11 Mile at West Lyman and at the new entrance of the proposed Selective Group cluster housing near the big curve immediately north of Howard. A stop sign at Howard also will be installed.

- Installation of two, three-way stop signs south of 11 Mile at the

main entrances of Independence Commons and Independence Hills subdivisions.

"THE POSITION of traffic consultants is that stop signs are not the best solution for controlling traffic," city manager William Costick said.

Stop signs don't necessarily help sight distance problems, characteristic of Drake Road. Studies show that while some motorists obey the signs, many others ignore them or roll past them, stopping beyond the sign, Farmington Hills public services director Tom Blasell said.

"We may (take) actions that are really contrary to what professional engineers suggest," Mayor Terry Sever said.

He suggested erecting stop signs where suggested by residents and see what happens.

Residents also want to change the name of 11 Mile, between Halsted and Drake, to Pleasant Valley. "This would help discourage big trucks from thinking they can go through because it is 11 Mile Road and help to keep trucks from using the road in the area northbound toward 12 Mile Road," according to residents' recommendations.

Though city administrators are generally opposed to changing names on mile roads, residents were told to petition the city with the change. A public hearing would be required.

"We're just concerned at a staff level this will cause confusion," Costick said.

Nuttall recalled as kind, creative

James Nuttall was a "kind, soft-spoken man" and a creative educator, according to one co-worker.

The 23-year veteran of Farmington Public Schools and longtime Farmington Hills resident died Feb. 25 following an illness. He was 63.

Formerly a fifth grade teacher, reading consultant, reading department chairman, testing coordinator and gifted programming coordinator for Farmington, Mr. Nuttall also had an artistic streak. He taught piano lessons to area children, and also did some painting.

"He just had a lot of abilities," said Kenbrook first grade teacher Carol Malone, a former co-worker. "He was very creative. He was a very kind and soft-spoken man. He was good with the children."

When he retired from the Farmington district in 1981, his supervisor, now-superintendent Graham Lewis, said Nuttall's diverse life enhanced the jobs he handled.

"Because of his varied background, he brought to the job many experiences which we took advantage of," Lewis said.

IN ADDITION to his career with the district, Mr. Nuttall taught private piano lessons to people in the Farmington area in the 1960s and 1970s.

He did corporate tutoring, and was a benefactor and friend to the Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament in Farmington Hills. Using his art skills, he created many craft articles that were sold in the monastery's gift shop.

He had lived in the Farmington area for 30 years, and his education career extended back 31 years. Before coming to Farmington, he



James Nuttall
'very creative'

worked in school districts in Romulus, Port Huron and Lincoln Park.

A funeral mass was held Feb. 28 at the Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament in Farmington Hills. The Rev. Peter H. Frendo officiated. Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield.

He is survived by his mother, Jean Schultz; a brother, William Nuttall; a sister, Sue Willson; and nieces and nephews.

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Crime down but trend not expected to last

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Enforcement of liquor laws and driving and drinking laws are an example. "We made a big push in conjunction with the Say No to Drugs campaign. We measure the impact of the campaign by the increases in enforcement and the education in the schools," Dwyer said.

The department's Citizens Crime Advisory Committee kicked off the annual "Say No to Drugs" campaign in April. Programs and increased enforcement have marked the effort. Other notable increases in the part II crimes category were fraud, embezzlement and forgery. Fraud cases increased to 253 from 198 in 1987.

Embezzlement increased from 31 in 1987 to 51 last year. And forgery increased from 26 in 1987 to 47 in 1988.

"When the city is growing, you're going to have more businesses reporting these kinds of cases," Dwyer said.

Vandalism, however, took a downturn in 1988 when 1,151 incidents were reported compared to 1,281 in

1987. "Preventive patrols have helped. We have better organization and better utilization of manpower," Dwyer said.

BUT DWYER is nevertheless hoping that the city council will allow him to hire an undisclosed number of new officers. The ratio of officers to population is 1.2 per 1,000 population.

According to the department's five-year plan, the ratio should be 1.7 to 1,000 population. The department currently has 91 sworn officers, spread over patrol, juvenile, traffic and administration.

"It sounds like a lot but 365 days a year, seven days a week, the numbers are absorbed quickly," Dwyer said.

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THURSDAY, MARCH 16 9:30 a.m. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Dress for Spring...Breakfast Show. Continental breakfast in our restaurant. 3.50 per person, R.S.V.P. 591-7696, ext. 269. Spring dresses informally modeled.
SATURDAY, APRIL 1 9:30 a.m. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Sportswear Spring Breakfast Show. Continental breakfast in our restaurant. 3.50 per person, R.S.V.P. 591-7696, ext. 263. Spring sportswear informally modeled.
THURSDAY, APRIL 6 7 p.m.	Miss J and Mr J Spring Break Fashion Show and Prom Fashions formally modeled by J Board.
SATURDAY, APRIL 8 9:30 p.m.	Maternity Spring/Summer Breakfast Show. 3.50 per person, R.S.V.P. 591-7696 ext. 242.
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