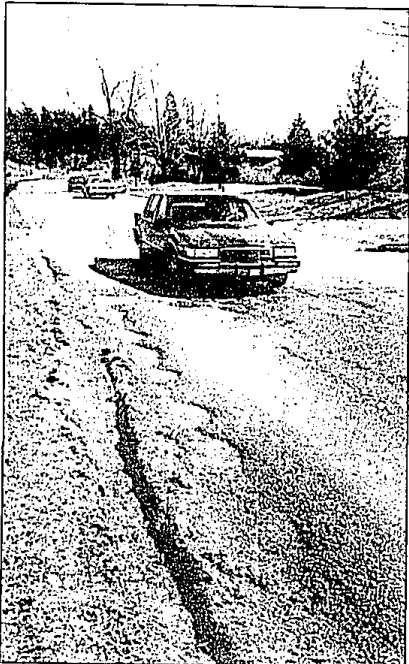


# 'Black Hole' wins Oakland pothole contest



STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

A motorist on Lone Pine Road narrowly escapes the jaws of the "Black Hole of West Bloomfield" — winner of the O&E's Oakland County Pothole of the Year contest.

By C. L. Rugenstein  
staff writer

Those potholes! They lie in wait — just beyond that innocent looking dip in the road or around that curve — waiting to jump up and take a bite out of your car.

But, thanks to the help of readers who participated in the Observer and Eccentric's first annual Oakland County Pothole of the Year contest, we know where some of them are.

And even better, the contest caught the eye of the people who could do something about it.

Said Brent O. Bair, deputy managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission in a letter to the O & E, "We at the road commission . . . have a sincere interest in locating . . . and repairing . . . potholes. We deeply appreciate all assistance from our customers." Bair continued, noting that the department can't "be everywhere and see everything" on the county's 1,400 miles of paved roads. (The road commission has an overall total of 2,400 miles of road under its jurisdiction.)

"WE NEED ALL the cooperative input we can get from our customers."

Well, here it is, then, compliments of our readers.

The winner is! — direct from Lone Pine Road, "The Black Hole of West Bloomfield," nominated by Harvey and Nadine Miller.

Located on the north side of the road, just west of Strathdale, be-

tween Middle Belt and Orchard Lake Road, the hole has been a big crowd pleaser for family, friends and neighbors of the Millers.

"It's certainly a challenge (to drive it)," Nadine Miller said after being notified of her candidate's win. "You can either go up on somebody's lawn, or east in the westbound lane to avoid it."

Miller, who said they've previously had cars thrown out of alignment by hitting potholes, noted the dangers they pose for pedestrians.

"You have to swerve to avoid the potholes — and until recently, there was no place for joggers and walkers to exercise but on the roads," she said. "Miller suggested that the bad weather was responsible for this year's pothole crop."

"I think we had a very bad season, a lot of rain. It was a good year for potholes."

BUT POTHOLES are as much a sign of spring in Michigan as crocuses blooming, suggested Sue McDowell of Bloomfield Hills.

"They know this Michigan, and they know this is going to happen," she said. McDowell's entry was first runner-up, a real Bulck-basher ("I drive a Bulck") of a hole she said.

"The hole is on the south side of Big Beaver east of Woodward, between Adams and Wrenwood."

McDowell, who works as a volunteer in Royal Oak Beaumont Hospital's parenting program, also nominated the second runner-up, a series

of potholes and crevices on 13 Mile Road, between Woodward and Beaumont Hospital.

"All the people I work with cheered when I sent it in," she said.

The only problem with that pothole is that it's out of the county's jurisdiction and in Royal Oak's, said John Joy spokesman for the road commission.

"The thing that's important, that gets lost in the issue, is the fact that we have that 2,400 miles of road. No

matter how conscientious an organization may be, it can't look at all of it."

The department expects citizens to report potholes and other road problems, Joy said.

"About 60 percent of our input comes from citizen reports to the services department."

Two citizens have spoken. The ball — or pothole, that is — is in the road commission's court — so take it, O&E.

## OU offers 'Confidence' class

The Oakland University Continuing Center will offer a workshop on confidence building Tuesday at the Signature Inn in Auburn Hills.

The workshop is designed to teach personal growth experience that can be imparted to students, employees or clients. Participants will learn the perception and application of self-esteem.

Jackie McCarroll will present the workshop and track the effects of personal value systems, perfection levels, positive and negative "self-talk" and internal criticism.

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