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at it again on Monday.

Gushman said things went well during the clean-up, but not perfectly. He noted how some residents ignored a snow emergency Saturday, not moving their vehicles out of the street. As a result, crews had to work their way around snow-buried cars and trucks. The emergency was expected to be lifted yesterday.

"It is more difficult plowing because you have to go around them," said Gushman. "The problem is, when you remove a car (from the street) you have a large amount of snow where the car used to be."

Clearing snow off of downtown sidewalks posed another problem in Farmington. As of Monday afternoon, a number of sidewalks still were covered with snow, up to ankle-deep or higher in some instances.

Gushman said snow removal companies contracted by business property owners are just inundated with work and unable to respond to requests in a timely fashion.

Because of that, and the massive snowfall, enforcement of a city ordinance was softened this week. The city extended its usual snow-removal deadline, with property owners receiving a two-to-three day grace period (until yesterday), instead of 24 hours, Gushman said.

Surprisingly, medical emergency runs were down. Many people used common sense and didn't venture out into the blizzard, Farmington Hills Fire Lt. Michael Garr said.

Fire officials are concerned about the potential for fire hydrants getting snowed under. In Farmington Hills, there are 6,000 hydrants alone.

"If they're buried, when we go to find them we just find a mountain of snow," said Garr, who suggests residents and property owners shovel them out or at least denote where hydrants are located. "If they can't see them, we can't see them."

In Farmington, all hydrants are clearly marked on a city utilities map, Gushman said.

With blowing snow, though, comes a chance to be neighborly.

"This is a way if you see a driveway plowed in and it's an elderly neighbor, it's a time to get out the shovels and help them out," Garr said.

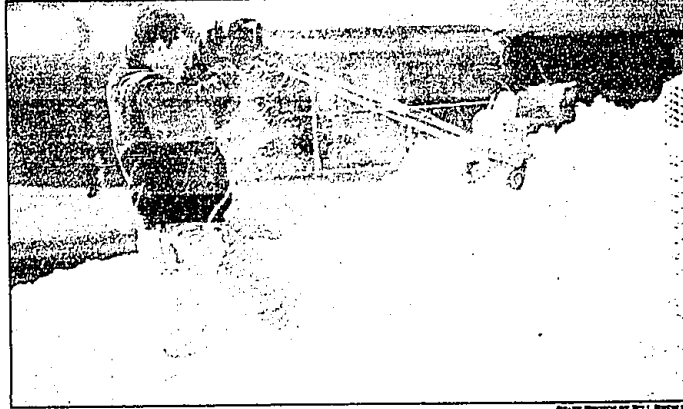
Meanwhile, Gushman suggested that people think ahead for when the snow eventually melts. They can dig snow out from around the perimeter of their homes, near downspouts and sewer grates, to aid with drainage.



Wow! Ian Hall launches himself from the top of the hill behind the school board office



Getting ready: Sabrina Klecha finds a new snow shovel at Damman Hardware.



Attack! Doug Frettenborough attacks a big pile of snow with a little snowblower. He was clearing the sidewalk in front of the Goodyear tire store on Grand River.



Family affair: When the big snows came, a lot of residents brought the family out in force to clear it out of the way. At left, Norene Parent and her kids Kyle and Caitlin clear the driveway of their Farmington Hills home.

Bundle of white stuff leaves center parking lot plowed under

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Monday was almost "create-your-own-parking-space" day at the Downtown Farmington Center, to the chagrin of customers and merchants alike.

"It's crazy," said an employee of one of the center's retailers, looking out toward the snowy parking maze about 5 p.m. Monday. "I don't know what they were thinking."

The they he might have been referring to was the company that plowed the parking lot on Sunday. The row of spaces closest to the wing of stores from Starbucks to Harmony House was just a pile of snow, impenetrable by vehicles. Customers parked sideways, in the aisle normally used for two-way traffic.

"Normally, they'd get a ticket" for parking in such fashion, said Gary Goss, director of the Farmington Public Safety Department.

Other paths were almost randomly cleared. A surprise awaited those who tried to drive down the aisle at the east end of the lot. There was a snow barricade. In some parts of the lot, customers literally had no option but to walk through snow drifts to go from car to store.

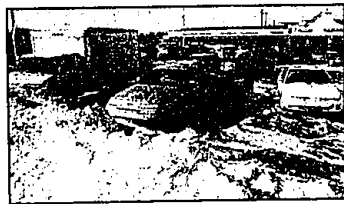
A couple doors down, lamenting the situation was Tom Petros, owner of the adjacent Wine Emporium and Cigar Emporium stores.

"It's hurt my business a lot," Petros said. "Yesterday (Sunday), I spent the whole day doing paperwork. I had maybe three or four customers. Usually, Sunday is a good day for me."

Customers were few and far between Monday at Dagwood's Deli, but employee Michelle Hamady tried to maintain a positive attitude.

"It (business) has definitely been lighter than usual," Hamady said. "You can't get in and out of here that easy."

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff, fol-



Tricky navigation: Cars had a hard time maneuvering in the Downtown Center lot.

lowing Monday night's council meeting, admitted that the parking lot was "a mess." But he was confident center landlord Kimco Realty Corp. would act quickly to rectify the situation - and they did. The lot was in much better shape by Tuesday morning. "I got a call from Kimco (Monday) morning," Lauhoff said. "And she (Trish Brooks) said they're very unhappy with the condition of it" and wanted the contractor to go back and clear the lot.

That urgency did not go unheeded. Downtown center shoppers were actually able to park near Starbucks, and motorists could drive through the far-east lane. One center business that seemingly fared well in spite of the weather was Damman Hardware, where supplies of shovels, rock salt, car battery cables and windshield wiper solvent were selling out and being quickly restocked.

Even plastic molded sleds were being snapped up, said Randy McNutt, assistant manager at Damman's.

"We're pretty unique," McNutt said. "It didn't affect us too much, because the items we have people really need."

Weather tacks on day to school break

BY TIM SMITH
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To youngsters who attend Farmington Public Schools, Monday's snow day might have been nothing more than an extension of their holiday vacation.

But giving them an extra play day had no impact on the district's decision, made Sunday, Farmington stayed closed Monday because it was the safe and sensible thing to do.

School board President Cathy Webb said the decision to shut down for Monday was due to neighborhood streets not being adequately plowed.

"The other strong considera-

tion was (projections of) minus 30 wind chill" for Monday morning, Webb said. "It just didn't make for a safe situation for kids."

On top of that, noted Webb, "Our biggest (maintenance) truck was down and we had to clear a lot of parking lots and the bus yard."

District schools were open Tuesday, but not without a snag. Tuesday morning at Gill Elementary School, water pipes (used for heating) in one portion of the building burst due to the frigid temperatures, said James Myers, executive director of K-12 student services.

Students were moved to classrooms in a warmer part of the

school for the rest of Tuesday, Myers said. Gill was closed Wednesday while the problem was fixed.

With about 80 percent of elementary and middle school students taking the bus, and with many roads and sidewalks likely to remain snow-covered for some time, common sense needs to be exercised when it comes to kids and bus stop safety, Webb said.

Youngsters should try to stand away from the road but relatively close to the bus stop - perhaps on a nearby front yard, sidewalk or driveway.

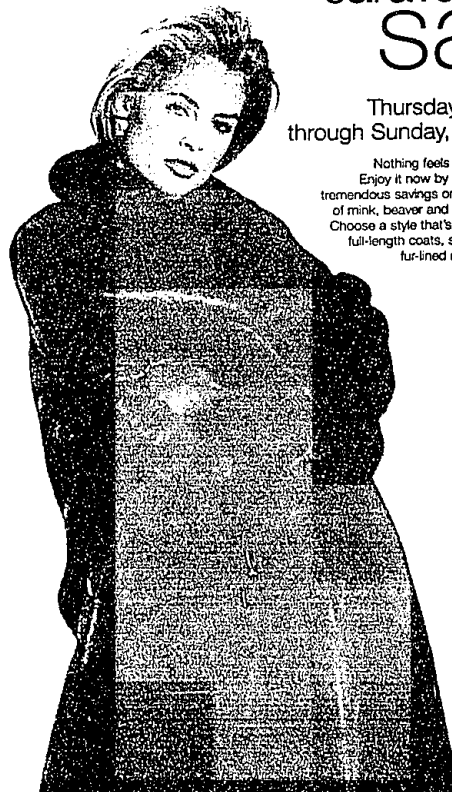
"We hope and pray that the kids are careful. And that parents remind them to be," she said.

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