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Median prompts debate



The Oakland County Road Commission listened to residents' opinions about plans for a boulevard on Orchard Lake, 10 Mile to I-696. Some residents like the idea, others don't. The commission will take opinions for two weeks.

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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Residents cheer the widening of Orchard Lake Road, but when a boulevard enters the picture, the response is a mixture of boos and applause.

Some want the 28-foot median included in the 1.4 mile Orchard Lake Road project from 10 Mile to I-696.

They see the landscaped thoroughfare as protecting a vital residential setting. Others don't buy the boulevard, saying a majority of land to accommodate the grassy median is coming from west side property.

Besides, trees and berms that give the residential feel will be removed, they say.

The Road Commission of Oakland

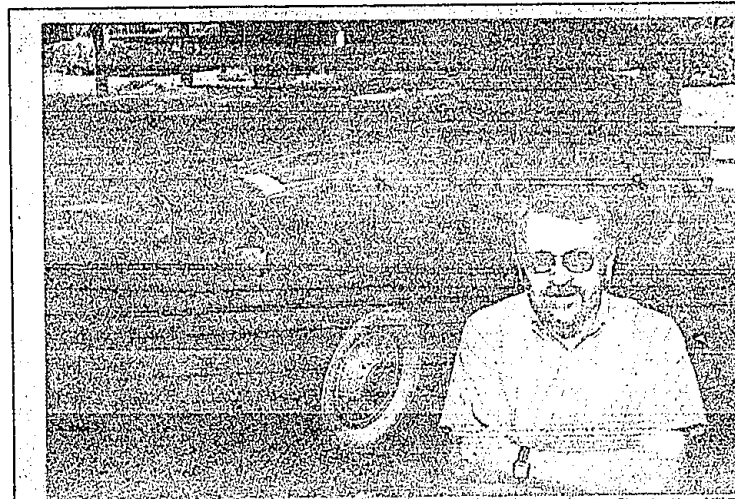
County took down what homeowners had to say during a public hearing Wednesday at Farmington Hills City Hall. Residents have until July 30 to submit statements to the road commission about the project.

That didn't fly with one Orchard Lake Road resident.

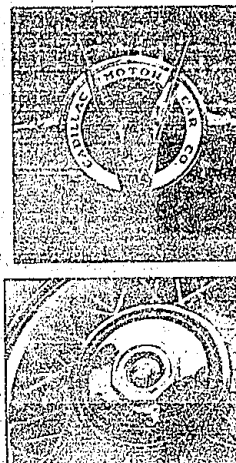
"I'm not asking for 25 years like you guys got, but I think we should get more time," said Bill Jodway, who lives on Orchard Lake south of Rocky Crest. "Why do we only have 2-



Please see MEDIAN, A4



Looking good: Farmington Hills resident Paul Ayres said he was looking for a gangster-era car or a Cadillac when he bought his 1931 Cadillac that he is taking to the glitzy Concours d'Elegance in August. At right are close up photos of detail work on Ayres' classic auto.



Concours d'Elegance

Area enthusiasts prepare for premiere event

By TIM SMITH
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William Chorkey hopped into the only 1934 Packard "Woodie" thought to exist today, and took it for a little spin in front of his sprawling Farmington Hills home.

After showing visitors a little bit of what the restored classic can still do, Chorkey returned it to his garage, wiped a few beads of sweat from his forehead and served up a historical tidbit.

"In the '30s and '40s it was fashionable to own wooden-bodied cars on the east coast," said the 73-year-old Chorkey.

People actually preferred such special-made cars to pick up guests at Grand Central Station and transport them to Long Island yacht clubs.

"It was found off Long Island in the water, on its side," explained Chorkey, who restored the relic. "And the salt water saved the ash, preserved it."

Chorkey's rare Packard "Woodie," manufactured by Bridgeport Body Works in Connecticut, will be among 60 classic Packards to be showcased 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 1 at the 21st annual Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance.

The Packard is marking its 100th anniversary. It is considered the American car that during its time rivaled big European imports for prestige and mystique. Also sure to wow crowds will be a showy fleet of more than 20 Bugattis.

Among other locals participating in the show will be Paul and Bev Ayres of Farmington Hills (1931 Cadillac) and Robert Sage of Franklin, who will

Please see ELEGANCE, A4

SONIC lowers boom on drug trafficking



Weigh in: Crack cocaine bought during an undercover buy comes in at slightly less than a gram.

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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An elderly couple walks under a starlit sky while a man with a white pouch in tow follows not too far behind in the tree-lined Farmington Hills apartment complex.

Unknown to them, they teeter along a front line of the ongoing drug war. On one side of the walkway undercover narcotics officers home in. On the other

dealers unrepentantly peddle dope.

On this night, crack cocaine is being sold. The setting for the impending transaction is not a decayed urban thoroughfare but an apartment complex sequestered in what might otherwise be considered a tony part of the suburbs.

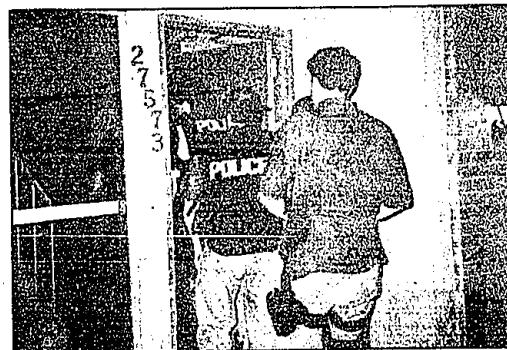
With his lights and engine off, Farmington Hills police Assistant Chief Chuck Nebus leans over to turn down his radio while sitting in his GMC Jimmy outside Gateway Apartments. The squawk and static might attract attention, he says. Silence is only interrupted by rustling branches as a warm breeze blows through.

Tension heightens when another vehicle pulls into the complex. A solitary figure emerges and swiftly enters the building.

In police radio parlance, he's known as "UC." His undercover movements are tracked from colleagues staked out at various vantage points around the apartment building.

After a few minutes, the man responds and drives off. Radio messages come in staccato bursts.

"The perp is lit," comes a radio message. Nebus turns the ignition.



Taking a charge: South Oakland Narcotics Intelligence Consortium officers rush into a Farmington Hills apartment building as part of an early morning raid.

As a green Mazda veers out of the dark and heads up the driveway, the GMC Jimmy follows in the distance. The Mazda is stopped at a red light.

Police swoop in

Two patrol cars suddenly appear as the convoy approaches the 12 Mile and Middlebelt intersection. Nebus pulls his indistinguishable GMC Jimmy alongside like any motorist about to

make a right turn onto southbound Middlebelt. Suddenly, red and blue lights flash like a Las Vegas revue. Boxed in, the green Mazda with three men inside rolls to a stop on 12 Mile, slightly east of Middlebelt.

"Let's go to work," the call comes. South Oakland Narcotics Intelligence Consortium - SONIC for short - is in

Please see SONIC, A5

1-275
construction
update

Motorists may be using a newly paved ramp from westbound I-696 to southbound I-275 as early as Thursday when it is tentatively scheduled to open to traffic.

But last week Michigan Department of Transportation officials and project engineers wrestled with how traffic can best be managed through the area. They are considering leaving the ramp's old detour open as an alternative route to ease traffic backups onto westbound I-696.

That detour directs motorists to a turnaround ramp on the new M-5 (the Haggerty Connector) just south of 12 Mile Road in Farmington Hills. MDOT is considering modifying that detour so that the portion of M-5 between 12 Mile and 14 Mile roads, located north of the detour, can be opened to motorists in August.

Southbound and northbound I-275 traffic is expected to be crossed back over to the newly paved southbound side during the first week of August. (See accompanying story on A2.)

THE WEEK AHEAD

On display: You're invited to stop by the Borders Cafe, Farmington Hills location, where local artist Leon Schochit is displaying his watercolor.

INDEX

Taste	B1
Obituaries	A6
Crossword	E7
Classified Index	E5
Autos	H7
Home & Service	H5
Jobs	G2
Rentals	E7
Health and Fitness	B4
Sports	D1
Entertainment	C1
Real Estate	E1

Protective services contacted

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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Farmington Hills police have notified child protective services after a shoplifting incident involving a mother and her 8-year-old daughter.

The mother, a Farmington Hills woman, 33, has been charged with second-degree retail fraud and contributing to the delinquency of a minor after police said she had her daughter push a cart with \$116 in merchandise out of Kroger on 12 Mile and Halsted without paying July 20.

Magistrate Dennis Phoney set personal bond at \$1,000. Pre-trial is set for 9 a.m. Sept. 1 before 47th District Court Judge Fred Harris.

SHOPLIFTING

The woman said she just gave birth to an infant five days ago and needed food.

However, items found in the shopping cart didn't exactly cover the basic food groups.

Inside was distilled water, helium balloons, bath towel, child's doll, four packs of cigarettes, flower bouquet, two Beanie Babies, two 12-packs of Michelob beer, two food baskets, a can of peanuts, a fifth of

Please see SHOPLIFT, A5

