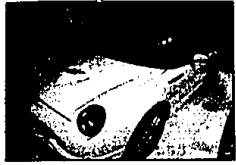


## IN THE PAPER TODAY



STAFF PHOTO BY BRYAN MITCHELL  
Here's the 2002 Ford Thunderbird.

**Vroom with a view: The North American International Auto Show opens to the public Saturday, and we tell you all about it in a special section inside this issue. The Ford Thunderbird above will be one of many cars on display.**

## HOMETOWN LIFE

**A change: Deb Watson is closing her shop, Deb's Crafts, in downtown Farmington. But it's not the end of her business. See HomeTown Life, Page C-5.**



Honored as one of the best Lifestyle sections in Michigan

**Our town's history: Farmington got its first post office in 1826, and the house is still standing. Read about its history in Vintage Farmington: Page C-5.**

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Music: Violinist Meredith Helfman, a sophomore at North Farmington High School, and member of the Detroit Symphony Civic Orchestra, talks about the world premiere of a work commemorating Dr. M. L. King. /B1**

## INDEX

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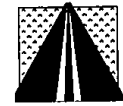
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Don't miss out! I got lots of calls.  
West Bloomfield

6 53174 10005 4

# Exit would ease Hills rush hour

BY JONI HUBBARD  
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An "historic" agreement between the City of Southfield and the Michigan Department of Transportation has led to a new interchange that will benefit Farmington Hills residents as well.

Work on the new Franklin Road interchange will begin this spring, with the relocation of Franklin Road from 12 Mile Road south across North-western Highway to the existing Franklin Road near Matriott Street. The \$27 million project, which includes an east-bound off-ramp and a looped-on ramp from southbound Northwestern Highway to west I-696, is expected to take three years to complete.

"We're all very excited about this project," Assistant Director of Public Works Paul Terrian

**Farmington Hills city council got a lot of details at Monday's regular meeting on the new I-696 interchange that would ease northern Farmington Hills traffic and, hopefully, the long rush hour lines at the Orchard Lake exit.**

told Hills officials Monday night. "We've been working on it since 1987...since it became part of our Master Plan to have an exit near Inkster."

In a series of public meetings on that proposal, held in the 1970s, residents asked that the interchange be moved a quarter-mile to the east. However, that proposal didn't fly, and neither did one for a partial interchange at Franklin Road, Terrian said.

Southfield's current proposal, initiated 18 months ago, will also widen 11 Mile Road to three lanes from Franklin west for one mile, expand the Franklin Road bridge to five lanes and close off Beck Road with a cul-de-sac.

In addition to covering right-of-way purchases, Southfield will foot the bill for a parking deck to

mitigate 200 spaces taken with land needed from owners of the Wyatt Office Building and Doubletree Hotel. Southfield will deal with the Department of Environmental Quality to complete and environmental assessment, because of wetlands in the project area.

Also, the city decided to jump start the project with an initial investment in design, Terrian said. "We wanted to be proactive, so we decided to do the engineering work," he commented. "We put up all the design engineering costs."

While the total cost to the city will be \$11 million, taxpayers will invest \$7 million

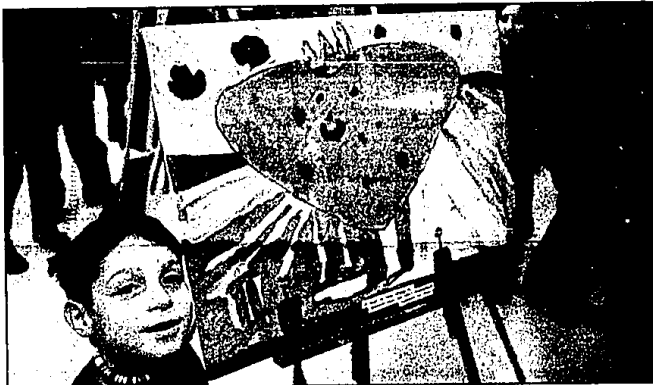
Please see EXIT, A4

### NEW INTERCHANGE IN 2003

New interchange location planned for I-696 and Franklin Rd.

**I-696/Franklin Improvements Year 2002-2003 construction**

RANDALL MASTERS / STAFF ARTIST



Artist: Jason Berman thinks "It would be really strange if somebody could turn into a strawberry."

STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER

## Kid gallery

### Eagle eyes find art is everywhere

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
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Smiling strawberries and spaceship houses would be strange, indeed. Eagle Elementary School pupils concocted such compelling visual images, as well as fantasy-filled essays, poems and songs, as part of the Farmington Area PTA Council-sponsored Reflections contest - with the theme, *It would be really strange if...*

Not so strange, but wonderful, was the "Reflections Gallery" of student works put on display for all to see on Thursday, Jan. 4.

"We wanted to get people here to see the (creative) energy," said Eagle

PTA member Lisa Barnett, who co-chaired the school's contest effort along with PTA member Elaine Trout.

Barnett said the gallery was "a celebration of their creativity. There was just a lot of enthusiasm to do this, as evidenced by the fact we had 55 entries."

Meanwhile, the district-wide list of Reflections winners in the contest's four categories were officially announced Friday, with three Eagle students capturing honors. But, according to Eagle Principal Arnie Rubin, the gallery's intent was to celebrate the efforts of all students (in grades K-6) who made their various creations at home, on a voluntary basis.

About 400 students attend Eagle,



In key: Thomas Doherty plays an original composition titled "Bad Masterpiece."

which is at 14 Mile and Middlebelt roads in West Bloomfield.

"This is really a wonderful thing," said Rubin. "We don't announce who won what, because we don't want everybody to be competitive. And so, tonight, we'll recognize everyone."

In categories for literature, music,

Please see GALLERY, A10

## Planners approve in-house business

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
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Vocal opposition aside, the owner of Baker Street Draperies probably will get her long-coveted new business home in historic downtown Farmington.

The Farmington Planning Commission Monday night approved proponent Shelley Raymond's proposed site plan and rezoning request for 33432 Oakland Street, near Grand River Avenue. Final approval rests with the city council, which next meets at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16. Approval was not unanimous, as commissioner David Granbach voted against it.

Raymond's likely new next-door neighbors, Jack and Sandra Felout, and others who spoke out against the rezoning during a lengthy and emotion-packed public hearing Monday probably will be in the audience next week. That will be their last chance to keep the house as a residence instead of a drapery design studio.

"We're going to appeal to the council to respond to the wishes of the residents," said Jack Felout, also worried that the business would infringe on his family's privacy. "They're going to have to deal with us."

Several of those residents complained during and after the meeting that the planning commission's approval was decided well before Monday night and that the public hearing was done only as a charade.

### Happy to stay

Planning commission Chairwoman Terri Morency later stressed that nobody on the commission knew how others were voting ahead of time.

Unless council members turn down the commission's recommendation to

Please see BAKER STREET, A2

## Snow day make-up will be Friday

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
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Let the make-up days begin. With Farmington Public Schools needing to make up the lost instructional time from last month's third snow day, elementary and middle schoolers will attend a full day of classes Friday, Jan. 12, rather than the original half-day.

But students at Farmington, Harri-

Please see SNOW DAY, A4

## Candlelight march honors King

BY DOUG JOHNSON  
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council invites everyone to join in remembering and honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 14, for a candlelight vigil, walk and program.

The Candlelight Walk will begin at the Coastick Activities Center at 28600 Eleven Mile Road in Farmington Hills, between Middlebelt and Inkster roads. Walkers will be able to use the sidewalk the entire way.

After the gathering and lighting of candles, the group will proceed to the

Mercy High School Auditorium where a unity candle will be lit on stage. A tribute will also be given to the work that King and so many others devoted their lives.

Alexandria Marshall, a Mercy sophomore from Detroit, will give King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech from memory as a dramatic presentation.

King gave the speech in August 1963 from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial before thousands of marchers who had gathered hoping to influence pending civil rights legislation.

And Mercy junior Nellissa Dorsey of Farmington Hills will sing a cappella *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, with words by James Weldon Johnson, a black

educator and newspaper man. *Lift Every Voice and Sing* is the official song of the NAACP.

The program welcome will be given by Sister Regina M. Doelker, RSM, a member of the council and principal at Mercy. Scheduled to give welcoming remarks are Mayor Nancy Bates from Farmington Hills, Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Mitchell from the City of Farmington and school board president Frank Reid.

"I'm delighted we have started this special celebration for Martin Luther King in our two cities - cities that have been so supportive of cultural diversity," Sister Doelker said.

Please see KING MARCH A7