## Orchard Lake Road has seen big changes

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special writor

If you asked a person who has lived in the Farmington area for over 30 years, they would surely mention the changes that have taken places along Orchard Lake Road.

Between Grand Filter and 14 filting the control of the control of

According to local historian Ruth

footprints in history

Moehlman, Kris Port was a planned development of Christ Kristiansen who bought the land from Isaac Bond in the 1930s.

Kristiansen established the 140-acre airport in 1936 and planned to surround it with light industry. This idea would spur an economy based on a handy air freight service and storing planes owned by local resi-

At this time in Michigan history, the small airplane was considered a possible means of commuting to work. This concept, cadoraed by Henry Ford himself, perished with the death of Harry Brooks, Ford's test pilot, in a plane crash.

KRIS PORT, nevertheless, survived and prospered. The airfield had two runways. One ran northwest-southeast and the other north-cast-southwest. They were grass strips 200 feet wide and 2,000 to 2,700 feet long.

The airport was also the site of Kristensen Alreraft Sales, featuring the Cessna and the Ercoupe, a spin-proof plane.

"The airport was busy," said Floyd Cairns, retired Farmington Hills city clerk, who lives in the 13 Mile-Orchard Lake Rand area. "One of the most memorable moments was when two Royal Canadian fight-er planes made an emergency land-

ing at Kris Port in the late 1930s."
He explained that they had to land
there during a storm. Before leavlog, the Canadian pilots displayed
their planes to the public. The American Air Force even tried to lend a
hand by landing a U.S. military
plane.

A Canadian DC-3 arrived to deliver fuel to the stranded planes and the Canadians ended up giving some gasoline away so that the DC-3 could take off. Even with its lightened load, the cargo plane barely missed the house that sat at the end of one of the runways.

of the runways.

Two airplane crashes were noted in the Farmington Enterprise during the late 1940s. Bobl planes took off from Kris Port and found crashed in nearby fields. Aerial photographs were taken in 1949 by an instructor at the airport. These photos of the Farmington area were displayed in town for weeks afterward. (I sure

THE LARGE building now occu-pied by the LaSaile Collison firm is sometimes mistaken to be a vital part of the airport. Some people oven refer to it as the old "main ter-minal." They look at the enclosed structure on the roof and think that it was a control tower of some type. According to Floyd Cairns, the build-ing was not used as a terminal or a control tower. It did house several light industries and was even a DPW garage for the township.

The square glass room, now covered with plywood, was built and used by the local chapter of the Ground Observer Corps in the early 1950s. The Corps was established to sight enemy aircraft during those years of the Cold War and Korea. The shelter was manned 24 hours a day by local volunteers. (The Farm-

ington Enterprise noted that in 1952, and 1953, two observers sighted fly ing saucers in the night sky).

mg saucers in the night sky).
Al Loeffler, owner of a stonoworks
on Northwestern Highway, reflected
back to the 1950 when persisten in the
ment of the persisten in the
ment became valuable, "he said, "andthe airport was sold. Spicer moved
on to the National Airport in Garden
City."

Loeffler, an ex-paratrooper, took-three lessons at Kris Port before it-stopped operating. He pointed out, that the original hangers are now a row of shops just north of LaSalley Collison.

The two-lane dirt road is gone. The houses are almost gone along Orchard Lake Road. The once busy-airport is gone too. What was once a cow pasture and potato farm, later a local airfield, and than a subdivision, describes this growing area well.

## YMCA highlights

urtesy of the Farmington MCA, 28100 Farmington Road, armington Hills. For informa-

SUMMER MEMBERSHIP The Farmington YMCA is offering summer membership special for

families, adults, college students and graduating high school seniors. These summer memberships are good from date of purchase through Saturday, Sept. 2. The Farmington Area YMCA features a large gym, running/walking track, racquetbail courts, 25-meter pool and two weight-training rooms. Prospective

members are encouraged to visit the Y for a tour and explanation of membership services.

• WEIGHT LOSS
The YMCA will be offering a weight loss and control class on Tuesday, July 11, at 8:30 p.m. Let

"Achieve Now" re-educate your mind set as it relates to controlling your weight and your individual eat-ing habits.

STOP SMOKING
 The Farmington Area YMCA will
 CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

also be offering a Stop Smoking class on Tuesday, July 11, at 7 p.m. "Achieve Now" will help you estab-lish a totally new mind set that will help you stop smoking.

The Farmington YMCA offers its Corporate Membership Discount Program to local businesses. The program involves discounted memberships for employees as well as on-site programming. Interested businesses should call Greg Voss at 553-4020.

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