

# School days

## Mental adjustments needed

**T**here are some big changes in Farmington-area neighborhoods and subdivisions this week. School is in, and the kids are out, en masse, mornings and afternoons.

The first day of classes was Tuesday for most students in the Farmington and Clarenceville school districts.

The opening of school marks a number of pedestrian and transportation changes from patterns firmly established over the summer months. Some of these changes are obvious. Others are subtle. Many require adjustments by motorists.

One of the more important and obvious changes will be the emergence of yellow school buses and vans on major thoroughfares.

The mental adjustment for motorists will be to remember to stop when the bus lights are flashing to notify drivers that a stop is being made to pick up or let off students.

In many districts, including Farmington, new stop signal arms have been installed on the buses.

When a bus halts for passengers, a stop sign with two flashing lights will automatically be activated. The sign and arm extend two feet from the driver's side, warning motorists to stop for children crossing the street.

Motorists should remember to stop and wait until the flashing lights on a school bus are turned off before proceeding. Impatient motorists who get worked up by the wait should look for alternative routes with fewer buses.

For the first couple of weeks in September,

**■ For the first few days of school, mom or dad might drive their youngsters to school, or walk there with them. But, in the days ahead, when the kids are on their own, motorists must continue to be alert.**

motorists should consciously look forward a block or two for youngsters who just might be stepping into the roadway. Special care is also needed by motorists when turning where there are buses or students.

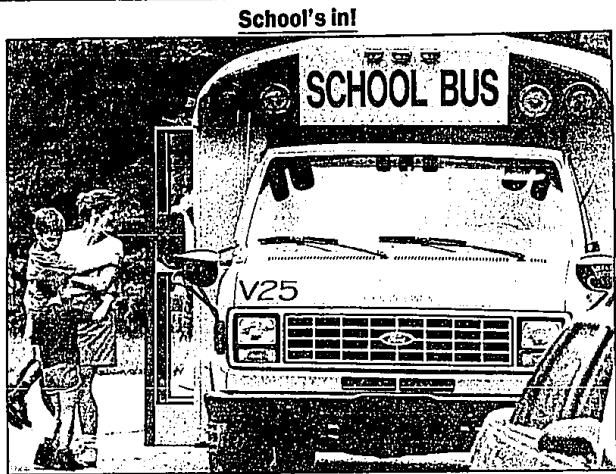
Motorists need to drive more defensively to compensate for the exuberance and impulsiveness of youth.

Smart, defensive drivers also should remember that the opening of school marks a highlight in the lives of many youngsters. They are less street-smart than the older students and won't yet have received all the safety training students get at school.

For the first few days of school, mom or dad might drive their youngsters to school, or walk there with them. But, in the days ahead, when the kids are on their own, motorists must continue to be alert.

School bells and other reminders should ring in our minds as we get behind the wheel this week and in the weeks ahead. Mental adjustments must be made.

Hopefully, this will be a safe school year for us all.



GUY WARREN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Hop on:** Linda Stoner introduces 6-year-old son Scott to his new bus driver. Scott is attending Ferrand Elementary School in Plymouth. Traffic is heavier with the opening of schools throughout the Observer & Eccentric area, requiring extra caution by drivers.

### School's in!

## New cable rates are unfair

**A** gross injustice is committed when those who can least afford basic cable rates find them rising, while those who can most afford the niceties like remote controls and premium channels get a price break.

We think that residents of our communities should have access to basic cable TV at as inexpensive a rate as possible.

Citizens need to stay informed about important local issues. Cable TV, with its showing of live city council and school board meetings and candidate forums, is one way for them to keep informed.

To deny residents access to basic cable TV these days is just about the same as denying them the chance to read a local newspaper.

Cable TV rates increased for many subscribers Sept. 1, despite new Federal Communications Commission regulations intended to reduce rates nationwide.

For example, MetroVision, the outfit that holds the cable TV franchise in Farmington, Farmington Hills, Redford Township and Livonia, is sending increases to more than 60 percent of its Farmington-area subscribers. Increases range from \$1.83 to \$10.54 a month.

The hardest hit will be the 300 who pay bottom dollar for the broadcast and public access channels.

Of course, many at the upper end of the spectrum, those who spend more on cable TV, will have their rates cut.

Yes, something's screwy.

Rate changes differ throughout communities covered by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, even in communities served by the same cable company. For instance, Continental Cablevision in Westland formerly charged \$20.25 for one basic tier service. It now offers three services: basic at \$10.90, a satellite tier at \$11.36

and a mini tier of three channels at \$1.36. The basic, satellite and mini tiers all must be purchased in order to carry premium channels — an obvious increase.

However, a remote control drops drastically from \$3.95 a month to 12 cents. And premium channel costs remain the same.

In Southfield, Continental customers will pay an additional \$3.25 a month, up from \$19.50, to receive its 2-53 channel group. Those paying \$12 for the 2-36 channel group will have new option packages of \$13.27 and \$14.69.

Garden City's Maclean Hunter Cable TV Inc. seems to be the most economy-minded of the lot, while the situation is entirely different for Booth customers in Birmingham. There, officials are arguing over whether to even offer local commercial stations 2, 4 and 7.

Many cable companies are sending out notices to their customers to explain the confusing rate changes. There is a better way to run cable TV.

We've said it before in this space, but we'd like to reiterate emphatically that we don't need a federal agency to straighten out cable TV. Good, old-fashioned competition in these suburban markets would accomplish the same thing.

The same market factors that drive our economy should apply to cable TV, that great electronic middleman that sits between the viewer and what there is to view. Who knows? Perhaps someday, with competition and new technology, we'll eliminate that middleman.

We recognize that cable companies are in business to make money, but that profit should not come at the expense of those who can least afford it.

### LETTERS

#### 'Come on, Jeff'

**T**his letter is in response to Jeff Counts' column on Aug. 26 "... who just don't get it."

Come on, Jeff. So your wife wears the power suit while you push the stroller. And Hemingway you ain't, in spite of that pipe. And that hat won't hide your bald spot. And fish never did bite in a bar.

You just don't get it, Jeff. Take a journalism class, and don't write any more, please, until you've got something to say.

B. Joyce Cardwell, Farmington Hills

For now, I'll let the readers decide what organizations the snipers were associated with. I believe it shouldn't be too hard to figure that out.

In my opinion the Warren Commission and its report were instruments used for the purpose of pacifying and calming the public. The report simply did not tell the whole truth.

Perhaps, someday, it will all come out in the wash for everyone to see.

George R. Mell, Farmington Hills

#### Thanks, watchers

**I**t is a shame that Joanne Smith has again used the Farmington Hills City Council's air time to deny what she said during the July 19 council meeting, rather than to just apologize to Masha Silver.

Bluffing may work in the game of poker but it will not erase my video tape. And yes, I live in one of those "certain homes" where the VCRs are always running on Monday evenings.

All citizens should feel offended when a taxpayer resident is insulted by a council member during a council meeting, not once but twice. It is difficult enough to speak before council without worrying that your elected representative may verbally cast doubt on your sanity and your personality.

I would like to thank every "self-appointed" watcher of the city council and all the commissions, boards, and committees. Keep up the good work.

Betty Cook, Farmington Hills

#### Men should share load

**I** am writing regarding columnist Jeff Counts' recent column, "... who just don't get it."

I personally think Counts' comment regarding fathers and strollers was way out of line, and I believe he opened a can of worms. Women of the '90s work as much, if not more, than men. There's no apparent reason why men should not push strollers. If women didn't do things because they didn't want to look silly, then there wouldn't be any children, considering the childbirth experience.

I personally think it's nice to see a man behind a stroller, taking his fair share of the responsibility. It's about time.

Counts had better take a look to see what decade he's stuck in and see who really "just don't get it."

Put that in your pipe and smoke it.  
Cheryl Keefover, Redford

#### In his opinion

**A**t the 30th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy approaches, I think it's time to present some food for thought.

In my opinion Oswald did not act alone. I believe there were three snipers on the grassy knoll — Oswald fired at the President from the sixth floor of the Book Depository Building, but at that point in time, the President was facing away from Oswald.

Oswald was shooting at the back of the president. In my opinion, only one of the bullets fired from Oswald's rifle hit the president. The bullet from Oswald's rifle that struck JFK did not kill him.

In my opinion the bullet that killed JFK was fired from one of the snipers rifles. That bullet entered the front of the president's head and exited the back. In my opinion, this was the bullet that killed President Kennedy.

In my opinion, the other two snipers were in place as a back up and were to be used to take out any one that looked up at the grassy knoll when the shots were fired, or to take pictures of anyone that looked up at the grassy knoll so that those witnesses could and would be taken out at a later date.

#### She makes 2 points

**T**wo regular occurrences disturb me greatly, and I would like to see them addressed.

1. The policy of allowing solicitors for charity to weave in and out of traffic at busy intersections should be stopped immediately. Government should not wait until some innocent person is killed to take action on this increasing dangerous practice.

2. In Georgia, my former home, there is a law which disallows elections with less than a certain number (I do not recall exactly the number) of issues on the ballot. This keeps the cost of holding elections down. Taxpayers are concerned about increasing taxes, and while some may feel having few issues on the ballot gives certain causes a better chance at passage, this was not borne out in the Farmington Hills library vote. When government gets truly concerned about using taxpayer's monies wisely, government will vote to end this wasteful practice.

I have written a letter to State Rep. Jan Dolan and the Farmington Hills City Council concerning these issues. If others in the community are concerned, they should write.

Ruth Honick, Farmington Hills

### COMMUNITY VOICE

#### QUESTION:

How was your summer?

We asked this question at The Grand Cafe and Kitchen Master in downtown Farmington.



'Busy... we're redoing our house and lots of stuff.'  
Pat Edmunds  
Farmington



'It's been an awesome summer. I got a good job. I went to the beach a lot.'  
Michelle Deepkar  
Farmington Hills



'Pretty good. I got to go to the park a lot. It was a lot nicer this summer than last.'  
Chris Jury  
Westland



'Businesswise, it's been wonderful. People seem to be in a much better mood.'  
Ken Strom  
West Bloomfield

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