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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Swap ya: Farmington Hills will study a proposed land swap that would improve the M-5/Halsted/Grand River interchange. /2A

Scary scene: The second-annual Halloween Fest drew plenty of happy folks to downtown Farmington. /3A

Tainted candy?: Farmington Hills police collected Halloween treats from residents in one subdivision after a Southfield girl became ill Monday. /4A

A bike for a buck: About 75 bidders showed up at the annual police department auction in Farmington Hills. /6A

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Commission choices: The Republican incumbents — Don Wolf and David Moffitt — should keep their positions on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. /18A

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Postage-due ballots to count



It makes no "cents," complain some Farmington-area voters who followed directions and put too little postage on their absentee ballots. Their votes will count just the same.

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Some absentee voters were worried that their ballots won't get the stamp of approval from Farmington and Farmington Hills.

But officials of both cities said that if absentee ballots come with postage

due, the cities will pay and the votes will be tallied.

"I had to go back to the mail box and get my ballot," said Russell Hines of Farmington Hills. "I'm 73. I'm not sure a lot of other seniors will notice that they need more postage."

For good reason. In past elections,

the city used punch ballots. The ballots were lighter than the new ballots that will be used in this election for the first time in the two cities.

The new ballots are read by a machine that speeds up the count and cuts down the likelihood of spoiled ballots.

Trouble is, since the new ballots are heavier and the old envelopes say to "affix one first class stamp," the ballots come in with 23 cents postage due.

"We want to reassure folks that if they didn't have enough postage,

their ballots will still be accepted," said Farmington clerk/treasurer Patsy Cantrell.

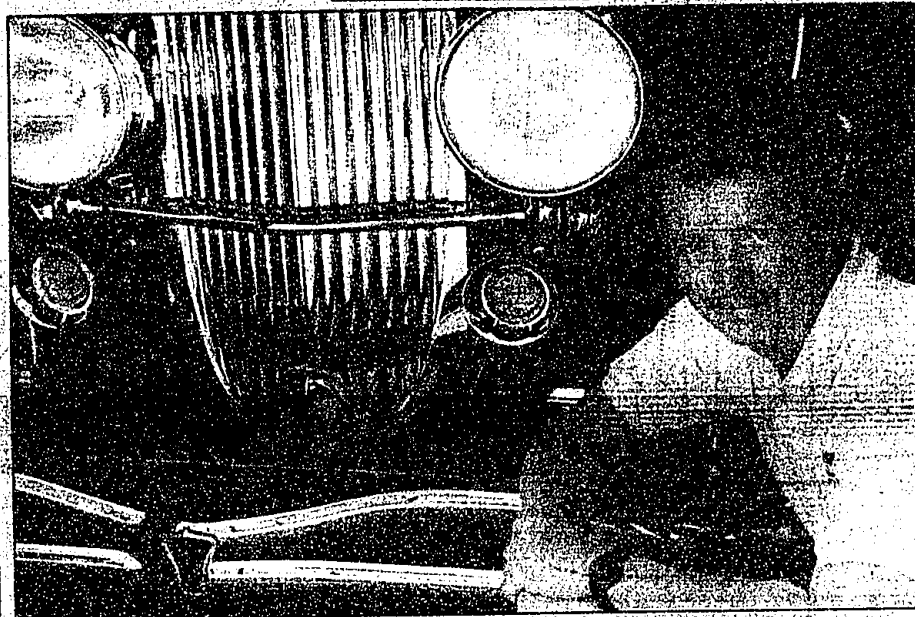
The envelopes sent out with absentee ballots used to tell voters to put on sufficient postage, Cantrell said. But the change to "one first class stamp" caught the city off guard.

Farmington Hills assistant city clerk Sue Rose said her office has received several calls concerning the problem.

"We are accepting ballots with pos-

See BALLOTS, 8A

He's good under the hood



ALAN HEALD, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Restores classic cars: Farmington Hills' Bill Bizer. "It must have been a grand time back then to drive cars like that."

Man's restoration work a real Duesenberg

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

To say Bill Bizer is good under the hood is like saying ancient Egyptians knew a thing or two about building.

The Farmington Hills resident restores classic automobiles. "The finished cars are like a head of state in the parade hall of a distinguished

Bizer will tell you it takes monk-like research, a diamond cutter's eye for detail and the patience of an ice fisherman in a blizzard.

Bizer needed six years to completely restore a 1933 Duesenberg owned by Henry and Marguerite Adair of Bloomfield Hills. The results are seen in the picture.

"It must have been a grand time back then to drive cars like this,"

Bizer said. "The fair, the beauty. These cars made a statement."

More than 20 years later, judges agree.

The stately manner was recently crowned an unprecedented classic car triple crown: Winning top honors at the Meadowbrook Concours d'Elegance, the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, and at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum Show in Auburn, Ind.

Bizer has restored Corda and Auburn in his Salem Township shop. The Duesenberg was quite another challenge.

The Adairs bought the car assembled in 1972. Bizer was given the parts in a box to piece together.

He made some of the parts himself, fabricating metal and doing

See RESTORE, 8A

Observer taking up downtown digs

BY TOM BAKER
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Observer is on the move — or it soon will be when its editorial office is moved back to downtown Farmington.

After almost five years away from downtown, the Observer is moving back to the heart of the Farmington community. The new address: 33411 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48335.

The telephone number will not change — 477-5450 for the office and 477-5722 for the fax.

The new office, which used to be the home of the Farmington/Farm-

ington Hills Chamber of Commerce, is on the south side of Grand River, four doors west of Farmington Road.

The office is directly across Grand River from the Masonic Temple plaza. It sits between a dental lab and a day-care center. There is ample parking in a municipal lot in the rear of the building.

The move from the present location on Farmington Road south of Nine Mile Road is scheduled to take place Saturday. The public is invited to drop by the new location beginning Monday, Nov. 7.

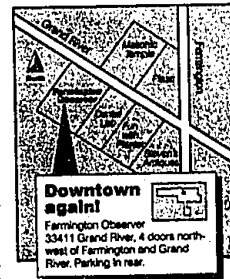
The Farmington Observer has a

long history in the Farmington area. It started 106 years ago this month as a modest, four-page paper published from a little printing shop on Grand River.

Edgar Rollin Bloomer, founder and first editor of the Farmington Enterprise, predecessor of the Farmington Observer, put out his inaugural edition Nov. 2, 1888, to serve the community he knew as the village of Farmington and Farmington Township.

Since then, the Farmington Ob-

See OBSERVER, 8A



Pigeon drop scheme homes in on another victim

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The pigeon drop landed in Farmington again, costing a Detroit woman \$150 cash Friday.

It was the third incident in a month reported in the Downtown Center area.

The scam involves a person who approaches the intended victim with what appears to be a lost wallet containing cash. They promise to split the money, but ask victims to put in their own cash as a good faith gesture.

On Sept. 30, a Southfield woman was bilked out of \$3,000. In another incident Oct. 21, a woman returned to get into a car with the perpetrator. All three incidents are believed to be related,

said Farmington Public Safety Commander Chuck Lee.

"We know there are three or four players," Lee said. "All three have happened on Friday."

The latest incident involved a black female in her 30s, a black male in his 60s and another black male who was driving a 1989 gray Lincoln.

The scam began in the Downtown Center parking lot after the victim had left Farmer Jack.

She noticed a money satchel lying on the ground. Another man and woman approached and picked up the bag, saying it contained \$100,000 cash after losing it.

They told the victim her share would be \$30,000. The women, as in the Sept. 30 incident, claimed

she worked at NBD and would have the money verified by the bank manager.

She returned to the 1989 Lincoln where the victim was waiting and said the bank manager needed cash to check the serial numbers. She also said the bag contained rare 1000s coins worth \$500,000.

The man, who is believed to be in on the scam, handed the woman some cash. The victim gave the woman all her money, which was \$150.

The woman went into the bank and came out.

As in the Sept. 30 incident, she told the victim to go into the bank and speak with a Mr. Goldberg.

When the victim went in, she was told no one worked there by that name.