

# Farmington Observer

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## Construction suspended

Construction was suspended for three days on I-275 this weekend for the holiday break, but that means little change for holiday motorists. Northbound traffic will continue to ride on three lanes, crossed over to the southbound side.

On Wednesday, contractors closed the ramp from northbound I-275 to Six Mile Road, and opened the ramp from northbound I-275 to Seven Mile Road. Contractors were delayed in completing the ramp from Eight Mile to northbound I-275 after someone drove around barricades late at night and on part of the ramp where cement had been poured only hours before, according to Robin Panencuk, spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Transportation.

The ramp exiting to Six Mile Road may re-open Tuesday. Late last week contractors were working to make adjustments in the lane closure on the ramp from westbound I-696 to southbound I-275 to allow easier travel for motorists.

## MONDAY

**Jammin': The Harrison High School Jazz Ensemble will perform at noon at the Ford Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival in Hart Plaza, downtown Detroit.**

## TUESDAY

**Meet: The Farmington Board of Education will meet in a study session at 7:30 p.m. at the Lewis Schulman Administrative Center.**

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## Strangers approach 2 kids; patrols increased

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@oe.hometown.com

Farmington Hills police have increased patrols and contacted school officials after two children were approached by strangers offering rides home.

In both cases, the children refused and told their parents, who phoned police.

Though descriptions of the suspects vary, both incidents happened Tuesday afternoon in the area north of 12 Mile, between Orchard Lake and Farmington.

"They're somewhat different in terms of the facts. We're treating as if they may be related," Assistant Chief Chuck Nebus said.

"There haven't been any others reported and we monitor those very closely."

While walking home on Bonnet Hill Street around 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, a 10-year-old boy told police an older couple in a black car approached and asked him if he needed a ride home. The boy said "no" and

Please see **APPROACH**, A4

## Start your engines

BY LARRY O'CONNOR

STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@oe.hometown.com

A Corvette drives people to park in a deserted lot at the break of dawn and wait for 110 other vehicles to pull up.

Around 6:45 a.m. Thursday at Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge in Farmington Hills, a legion of Corvette owners gathered in the campus lot, fueled by coffee and love of the automobile.

## 46TH BIRTHDAY

Their destination: The National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Ky., the equivalent of Mecca for owners of the Chevrolet sportster.

More than 30,000 Corvettes from Europe, Canada and across the U.S. were expected to attend the 46th birthday celebration at the museum Sept. 2-6.

The Michigan/Canada contingent included 625 members alone.

As the 'vettes flied out onto Orchard Lake headed by a Farmington Hills police escort, a flock of 21 geese flapped in the same direction overhead.

For a half-hour prior to departure though, Corvette aficionados chatted and shared tidbits about their coveted autos, which spanned in model years from the 1980s to the present day.

Officials were expected to unveil the 2000 model Corvette during weekend festivities.

"How'd you get that so yellow?" asked Phyllis Monaghan, pointing to the front end of another 'vette.

Phyllis just bought her 1995 Corvette Coupe of the same road sign color. Her husband Phil and she wore matching black jackets with bumble-striped sleeves.

The Macomb Township couple marveled at the 'vette's sleek body work.

"I think they're classy and sporty," Phyllis said. "You feel so good in them."

Phyllis wanted a Corvette most of her adult life. A few months ago, her husband granted her wish.

She cringes when mentioning the odometer has hit 9,000 miles already.

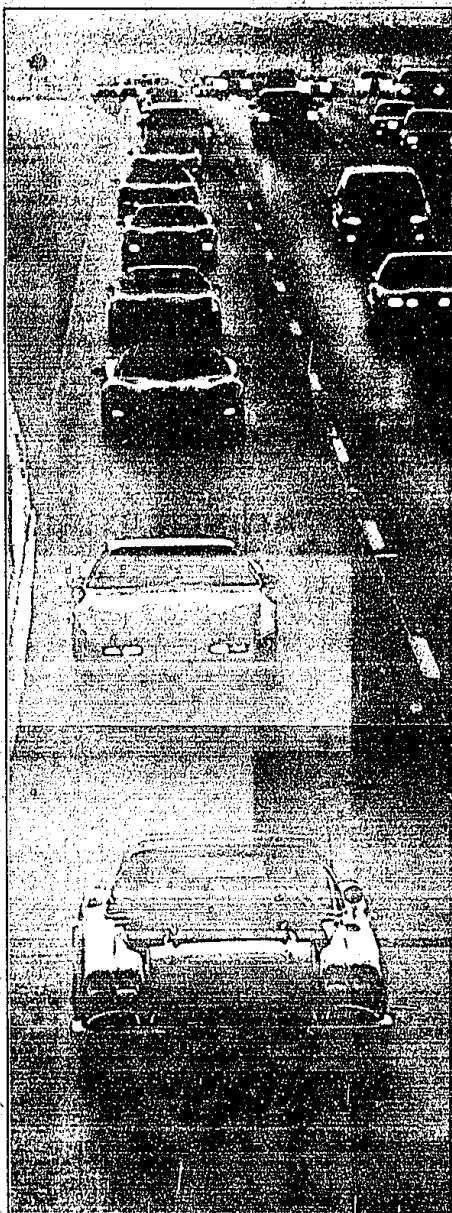
Those miles are often shared with friends who belong to a Corvette club, her husband said.

"You make long-lasting friendship with the other Corvette owners," Phil Monaghan said.

Sometimes, though, the owner of the cherished sports car is a solitary figure.

Corvette owners started their engines in the OCC lot to depart, Lapeer's Robert Burda had both hands on the wheel in preparation for the journey. His love of his 1982 Corvette convertible was spoken in his eyes as much as in his words.

"They're their own breed," Burda said.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL TREKLER

**Convoy: Hundreds of Chevy Corvettes, vintage to brand-spankin' new, enter westbound I-696 at Orchard Lake Rd. Next stop was to be a lunch break in Ohio.**



**New era: Terry and Wendy Johnson check their baby's tire pressure and clean her windows before the journey. The 2000 Vette's yellow paint color is called "Millennium."**

## Going to the dogs

Another segment of the community has been heard from: dog owners, who would like a park for their pooches.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@oe.hometown.com

What is the world coming to when Rover can't rove and Fido is fighting just to fetch anymore?

Simple: One where cities are increasingly anchored by dog parks.

Some Farmington Hills canine owners are clamoring for a fenced-in area where their pets can roam, romp and run. They point to Mount Clemens, which recently opened a one-acre dog park.

Even a couple of city council members champion the idea, and a mayoral candidate plans to make a pet park presentation at an upcoming meeting and wants to kick in \$500 of his own money.

Many residents don't have fenced-in back yards, dog park supporters say. In fact, some subdivision bylaws ban chain-linked barriers.

"Our dog is just so friendly," said Margaret Masuzawa, who owns a yellow Labrador retriever. "It likes to run and meet neighbors, to play fetch and

Please see **DOGS**, A6

## Anxiety over schools continues

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.hometown.com

Anxiety about the physical state of Farmington Public Schools' construction-ridden buildings continues, despite the district's having received the official approval from fire marshals to open.

See related story page A5

One resident's e-mail to the Farmington Observer was in response to an article printed Thursday, Aug. 26, about a guided tour of construction sites. On Aug. 27, fire marshals okayed the buildings in time for school to open last Monday.

The unsigned e-mail urged an investigation into the condition of East Middle School, Farmington and North high schools.

It stated that East was "a dangerous mess inside and outside," that North classrooms were missing furniture and that FHS was not in any shape for traffic - whether pedestrian or vehicular. The letter concluded by suggesting that taxpayers might be able to be reimbursed for breach of performance.

Please see **ANXIETY**, A5

## Woman accosted by teenager

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@oe.hometown.com

A 14-year-old Farmington Hills boy is in custody after a woman was fondled by a teen as she walked near 12 Mile Road Thursday afternoon.

Around 6:15 p.m., the victim told authorities she was walking near Woodhew Apartments off 12 Mile between Alyce and Rollcrest when someone came up from behind and grabbed her buttocks using both hands.

The assailant then placed his hands on her crotch while uttering vulgarities at the 48-year-old woman, police reports said. She managed to break free and screamed at the boy, who ran away.

Please see **ACCOST**, A4



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