

Safety drives traffic concerns

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Local Realtor and landlord Joyce Cornwell is stepping up her concern for pedestrian safety in downtown Farmington.

Cornwell, whose office is on Grand River across from the Downtown Farmington Center made remarks at the Aug. 13 Farmington Downtown Development Authority, of which she is a member.

Cornwell has watched drivers shaking their fists at crossing pedestrians when walkers have the right of way. She wants to take this issue head-on.

"As real estate brokers we have heard about the lack of pedestrian occupation on sidewalks," Cornwell said. "I sit at the window and I watch the near misses of pedestrians who are walking at the light and have the right of way. This board needs to take some action. We won't have people shopping on the streets in this community if they don't feel safe. I don't mean safe from crime, I mean safe from being run over."

She noted that the Farmington Observer "had one of their own staff moved down on State Street and Farmington Roads" earlier this year.

Receptionist Katie McManus was hospitalized for three days with a fractured pelvis.

"You have to remember, Joyce, that she walked out in front of a car mid-block," said Farmington City Manager Frank LaHoff.

Besides McManus, a construction worker was struck this year in the Village Commons roadway but didn't seek treatment.

"We haven't had a fatal accident," said Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss. Michigan drivers are notorious for forcing pedestrians off the crosswalk, LaHoff said. For some people, even a traffic ticket doesn't matter, he added.

"Starting with Traffic and Safety, I would like to be the person who goes to them and says, 'People wake up,'" Cornwell said.

She said several tenants in the Village Mall building have contacted the Traffic and Safety

Board only to be told there's not a problem.

Tenants and landlord Dave Cornwell's concerns have centered around cut-through traffic in their private lot, Goss said.

The Farmington Traffic and Safety Board meets the third Thursday of every month at Farmington City Hall.

The board, which supports a pedestrian-friendly city, agreed to invite both Goss and Bob DuCorte, a Traffic and Safety board member, who works for the Traffic Improvement Association to the next or future DDA meeting.

"They need to hear what your concerns are," LaHoff said. "They react differently at a board meeting. Everything is by the book. You're talking about a very unique area which needs a special consideration."

"Pedestrians have to be more vigilant," Goss said later.

Drivers tend to pay less attention and are less observant, talking on cell-phones, and just looking around the area. Likewise drivers need to be re-educated.

About 24,000 vehicles travel Grand River daily, Goss said.

"I don't know how to deal with near-misses," Goss said. "We have near misses every day."

"Near-misses" might be a matter of perception. "Near misses could be three car lengths," he said.

Other communities seem to have more respectful drivers, Cornwell said. "In Ann Arbor, if you don't stop for pedestrians you will be running down 50,000 students."

Toronto drivers drive like crazy but the minute a pedestrian goes out, they stop, DDA Director Judy Downey said.

The light near Grand River and Grove needs to be retimed, said DDA board member Suzanne Paul. "That light is so short. Seniors complain about that all the time."

"That means they don't go across the street to shop. It's difficult to ask people to park two blocks away."

"Traffic lights are evaluated periodically," Goss said.

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Erica Waldman, Jasmine McBryde, Joselyn Weaver, Ashley Cohagen, Kayla Jones, Brittany Modreski, Brooke Gordon, Caltrine Sottis and Ariel Isble.

Youth present summer production

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Some students who participated in the summer Farmington Youth Assistance Program stretched their abilities by acting this summer in the production of "I Want My Mummy."

Written by Tim Kelly, with music and lyrics by David Reiser, the play was performed by FYA's first Youththeatre group.

The play was one part of the summer program, which drew 200 children from the Farmington community. The program was moved from William Grace Elementary this year due to construction, Dana Reiman, FYA program director said.

"This is something we added for the first time this year," Reiman said. "Julie Devine came up with the idea."

Devine, who served as director, is a Farmington resident and a volunteer mom who loves to work with kids. A community activist, Devine admits her greatest treasure is her family.

Timmy, her six-year-old son, who will be in the second grade at Highmeadow Common Campus, played a werewolf in the musical which featured a monster hunt, a kind of retirement home for monsters.

"This was open to anybody ages six to 14," Devine said.

Written by Tim Kelly, with music and lyrics by David Reiser, the play was performed by FYA's first Youththeatre group.

Other roles played by Farmington-area children were: Baroness Frankenstein, played by Ashley Cohagen, 11, an East Middle School sixth grader; Igora, by Joselyn Weaver, 10, a Lanigan Elementary fifth grader; Phantom Bride, by Brittany Modreski, 11 and an East Middle School sixth grader; Jacqueline Hyde, by Jasmine McBryde, 10, a Beechview Elementary fifth grader; Vampire, by Ariel A. Isble, 12, a Power Middle School sixth grader; Hanna Hoople, by Catherine Sottis, 11, an East Middle School sixth grader; Mummy, by Erika Waldman, 11, an East Middle School sixth grader; Pauline, by Brooke Gordon, 10, a Warner Middle School sixth grader; and Christine, by Jade Gordon, 9, and a Woodcreek Elementary School fourth grader.

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Cities pay tribute to attorney Donohue

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills City Council paid tribute to the passing of city attorney John Donohue Monday and commented on his value to the city as a friend and public servant.

Donohue, 52, served as city attorney for Farmington, Farmington Hills, Walled Lake and represented the Oakland County Drain Commission.

Hills Mayor Nancy Bates held a special tribute before the council meeting and noted Mr. Donohue was the city's attorney for 12 years.

"He was a man of genuine quality," she said. "He was always a gentleman and a noble practitioner."

Councilman Jon Grant said Mr. Donohue was a "man of high morals and ethics."

"It's often difficult to understand God's work," he added of Mr. Donohue's unexpected passing.

Councilman Jerry Ellis said Mr. Donohue "guided the administration and council through more mind fields than I care to remember. We had the utmost trust in his advice."

"We lost a talent," Bates said. "He loved this city and he served it with honor."

The mayor pointed out Mr. Donohue's ability to put "legales" in plain English for the administration and council.

"His knowledge will be greatly missed," she said.

The mayor offered a moment of silence in his honor at the meeting and a single rose in a vase was placed on the council table where he was usually seated.

At the Aug. 5 meeting of the Farmington City Council, members also spoke about Mr. Donohue and held a moment of silence in his honor.

Funeral services for Mr. Donohue were held Aug. 7 and burial took place at the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Southfield.

Bates read a memorial tribute in honor of Mr. Donohue.

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In it she pointed out his involvement with local municipalities extended statewide, where he served as a member of the Michigan Municipal League's Legislative and Urban Affairs Committee, a mediator for the Oakland County Circuit Court and an arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association.

He also served as president of the Farmington City of Planning Officials.

"John may no longer be with us on Earth, but the gifts he gave to us professionally and personally will be with us forever," she read aloud. "He will be sadly missed."

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RCOC ROAD WATCH

Information for Road Watch is supplied by the Road Commission for Oakland County (www.rcocweb.org). Information is subject to change.

FARMINGTON

■ Road: Farmington Road, south of Nine Mile to Grand River — This section of Farmington is closed to southbound traffic as the RCOC

reconstructs and widens the road. During the project, the detour route for southbound traffic is Grand River, Drake and Nine Mile. Motorists traveling northbound on Farmington should expect delays and are encouraged to use the detour route as well. This week, stamped concrete pedestrian walkways are being installed in the intersection, narrowing traf-

fic at times to one lane. Completion is expected Sept. 30.

FARMINGTON HILLS

■ Road: 12 Mile at Orchard Lake Road — RCOC is widening this intersection (adding a right-turn lane on eastbound 12 Mile and extending the right-turn lane on eastbound 12 Mile). Completion is expected Aug. 16.

Revvin' with FORD. CONTEST

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Visit Revvin' with Ford August 17th for cars, stars and family fun in Downtown Birmingham. For information on tickets for the August 16th Charity Preview Party, call (248) 644-5832 or visit www.revvinwithford.com

RULES

- Contest is open to all adults.
- There will be only one winner.
- Entries must be postmarked no later than August 15, 2002.
- Winner will be announced in The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.
- Answers may be placed on a postcard and mailed to: **Revvin' with Ford Contest**, The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia MI 48150. Attention: Cathy Young, Promotion Manager

CONTEST

Clip and put on a postcard—Answers to the three questions below are your entry to win a drawing for 2 VIP tickets to "Impact At Ford Field," courtesy of Revvin' with Ford.

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