

# Businessman conserves prized 160-acre antique

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

When suburban shoppers trek out to Novi to gaze at Twelve Oaks Mall, this week, Farmington businessman August Meyer will gear up to protect his Tollgate farm across the road from the center against the increase in traffic, dust and dirt.

It's one of many battles that Meyer, owner of American Screw Co., Farmington and his farm manager Ernest Morris say they have fought since the late '50s to keep their farm land in the condition it was when it was settled in 1850.

"Read something of the history of this country, and you'll know why I want to keep this. Nothing has changed here. The topography is the same as it was when the first settlers got this land from the government," Meyer, 84, of Birmingham said.

"If you don't have antiques, you don't know what they look like," added Morris.

Meyer has been fighting for his 160-acre antique since 1959, when it was proposed that a 53-acre dump be established on what eventually became the Twelve Oaks site.

"We took that to the Michigan State Supreme Court and won," said Morris. "That fight lasted until about 1961."

In 1967, Walter Reuther, Lynn Townsend and other auto industry notables started the Metropolitan Detroit Citizen Development Authority, which was aimed at producing low-income housing through an assembly line method. That project was slated to get a start in the Nine Mile Beck area of Novi.

Once again, Meyer and Morris opposed development, saying it would ruin the rural character of their town and property.

Shortly before plans for Twelve Oaks were announced, the pair fought a proposal to build 600 apartment units on the spot, according to Morris, who has been a farm manager since 1956.

Their zeal to preserve the working farm extends to conserving its resources. Last year, the farm earned recognition from the Department of Natural Resources for the best soil conservation practices in Oakland County, according to Morris.

The duo also has managed to keep a forest, which includes precious walnut trees, in the same condition it was in 1850.

"We're thinning the woods out a bit, like the Department of Natural Resources told us to," said Morris, gesturing toward the woods with his pipe.



Tollgate farm, stands just across the road from the new Twelve Oaks Mall.

as he sat in the cab of his pick up truck in a field across the road from the new mall.

ALONG WITH MORE traffic, the mall will bring new people into the area. It's a thought neither man relishes.

"We might have to go with more fencing in the back of the cornfield to protect against vandals."

"When they were retopping the road (Twelve Mile), I was scared," Morris said. "With as much traffic as that brought, I was afraid someone might drop a match. The field was powder dry."

About two years ago, during a heavy snowstorm, vandals made off with two huge walnut logs from Tollgate Farm's woods. The culprits were caught by a Novi Department of Public Works employee. The logs were returned and eventually sold.

"They were worth \$1,000. We had bids from Germany for them," he said.

Morris also oversees the large corn crop the farm still produces.

"We'll have about 5,000 bushels, of course, due this year, if it rains," Morris predicted. "We had the starting of an excellent crop. You couldn't see it."

was like a forest, the leaves were so thick in the rows."

Chickens, horses and cows are raised on the farm, also. Although it remains a working farm, things have slowed down, in recent years, according to Morris.

HOGS ONCE WERE RAISED in the building that now houses the chickens.

"Hogs and cattle are too expensive to raise, now," said Morris. "I know some farmers who sold their land because it became too expensive."

Meyer, who has owned Tollgate since 1951, has signed an agreement with the state which binds him to preserve the land as a farm for the next 10 years. It's another step toward insuring that the house and barns, built in the 1850's are preserved. He estimated that he has spent \$500,000 on the property. All of the structures remain at least a part of the original wood and its first design.

Last year, Novi City Council voted to give the farm a residential farm zoning to replace the phased out agricultural zoning in the gradually developing area. Meyer fought the change unsuccessfully.

"WHO KNOWS how long this will last once we're gone?" Meyer said.

## Hills gains Eagle Scouts

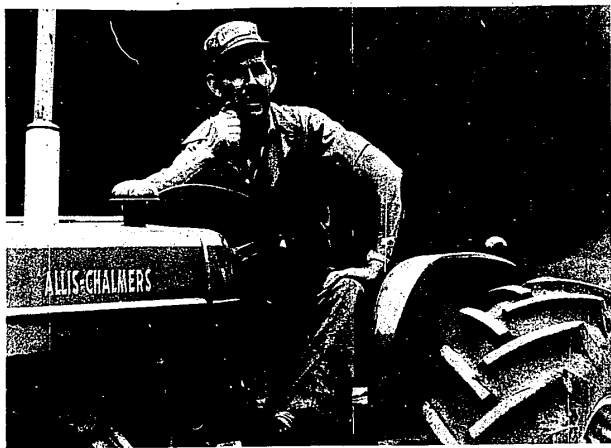
Three new Eagle Scouts were recently recognized at court of honor ceremonies by the Farmington Hills Boy Scout Troop 389.

The new Eagle Scouts are Robert Harvey, Steven Johns and Kevin Martin. All three were introduced by longtime friends.

All three came from scouting families. Paul Harvey, Robert's father, is

the present scoutmaster, and Fred Johns and Don Martin are assistant scoutmasters.

Dr. William Mercer, senior minister of the sponsoring Nardin Park church, gave the Eagle charge, while Kenwood Church of Christ youth minister Cliff Woodrum gave the invocation before dinner.



Farm manager Ernest Morris surveys Tollgate Farm from his usual position high in the tractor. (staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Ministers' wives choose individual, secular lives

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Days when wives of ministers were greying shadows who were depended on to give the congregation a free organist or teach Bible school are slowly seeping into history as their present day counterparts seek lives separate from the husbands.

That seems to be the consensus of Farmington area women who are married to ministers. Orthodox priests or rabbis.

"I am the wife of a man who happens to be a minister. It's not different from the wife of an insurance agent," said Mrs. Jane Hooper, whose husband is affiliated with Trinity Episcopal Church, Farmington Hills. "I don't see how I could be any different as a minister's wife from a doctor's wife or anything else."

With more freedom to pursue her own interests, Mrs. Hooper has completed work for her masters degree and will teach clothing and textiles at Marygrove College in the fall. She has taught part time at Wayne State University.

SHE TAUGHT home economics when she and her husband were first married, 22 years ago. They knew each other in high school but went to separate colleges. They were married before he entered seminary.

While the Hoopers didn't face any unexpected problems in adjusting to a life within the ministry, Mrs. Beth Rosenbloom was unprepared for the type of recognition that accompanies being the wife of Congregation Adat Shalom's rabbi.

"I didn't expect to go from being nearly anonymous to being so well known," said Mrs. Rosenbloom. "Before we were married I knew a handful of people. Now, I'm known by hundreds of people. I can't go to the grocery store without being recognized."

Other than her unexpected celebrity, Mrs. Rosenbloom's life in the synagogue has been what she expected.

"My husband and I talked about it before we were married. I have found it what I want to make of it—minimal," she said. "I serve as the wife of a man who happens to be a rabbi. I'm not involved very much in the Sisterhood. I'm not involved in the synagogue except in a ceremonial function," she said.

Her husband was a rabbi when she married him. They met on a blind date.

"WE WERE FIXED UP," she remembers. "You can imagine what I thought when someone called and said he was a rabbi."

She and Rabbi Seymour Rosenbloom have been married nearly two years.

Her minimal participation in formal religious activities contrasts with the early experience of Mrs. Elise Mercer, wife of Rev. William Mercer of Nardin Park Methodist Church.

"I don't do much work in the church, now. I used to secretary, active on the choir and head of the women's society. These were the years of my youth," she said.

Now, she sees her role as being a grandmother, wife and mother rather than an assistant to her husband.

"I'm not an assistant minister to my husband. There has to be heaven in my husband's life," said Mrs. Mercer, who describes herself as an "old fashioned woman."

"I was only 29 when I was married. I read books on the roles of a minister's wife. There were happy times and bad. After 34 years, it was exactly as the books said it would be," she said.

Her life has demanded she take on the roles of mother for two daughters and director of the Detroit Town Hall. She rounded up speakers for the Town Hall between 1961-62, with an emphasis on persons who could impart a message with spiritual insight.

AMONG THE SPEAKERS she brought to the city were Bishop Fulton Sheen and actress Olivia DeHavilland.

Another fringe benefit she received from being a minister's wife was the



BARBARA FOX



BETH ROSENBLUM

opportunity to travel. She and her husband have been leading tour groups to the Holy Land and Europe since 1956.

Both she and her husband are outgoing persons who enjoy an active social life. As a result, Mrs. Mercer finds herself doing a lot of entertaining.

"We have friends all over the country," she said.

Another woman who doesn't see herself as a minister's wife is Mrs. Barbara Fox, wife of Rev. Charles Fox, of St. John's Lutheran Church, Farmington.

"No one expects me to be more than myself," she said. "I see myself as a Christian, a wife and a mother."

Mrs. Fox teaches second grade at Wooddale Elementary School. Her career doesn't interfere with her role as the wife of a minister. She teaches Bible school on occasion and tries to leave her evenings open for visiting, although she keeps her calls to a manageable level.

"I don't have time to socialize outside of the church," she said.

SHE MET HER husband during a church picnic in their native Ohio. He had five years of school ahead of him. She had one year to finish.

Her adjustment to life as a minister's wife was eased because she and her husband entered into the life together.

Mrs. Helen Hooper, wife of Father Stephen Anthony of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Farmington Hills, spent the earlier years of her marriage raising their four children.

Because he was on call for the church, she devoted herself to their home. Now that she has more free time, she is active in the church's Ladies' Auxiliary, is an adviser to the youth group and teaches Sunday school.

The Anthonys married 28 years ago. They met when her brother, a seminary student brought Father Anthony to their home parish to deliver the sermon. He had graduated from the seminary but wasn't ordained and was still able to be married.

Like other wives, she believes that her duties within the church are the same as any other good member of her faith.

"I'm not much different from any good Christian in the church," she said.

The difference that can be pinpointed by Mrs. Rosenbloom is in the degree of her family's observation of the religious holidays and regulations.

"THERE'S A HIGHER DEGREE of observance on my part," she said, adding that religion is an added discipline in life.

"We have a strong feeling for our religion and a strong Zionist feeling in our family," she said.

Her family was active in Jewish organization in Washington, DC. "We were not strictly observant, but we were probably slightly above average," she said.

She isn't aware of any pressure from her husband's congregation to act or dress in a certain way. Most of the feedback she's received has been second hand information from her

friends. Most of the reports have been favorable.

Sometimes, a congregation adopts a minister and his wife and pressures them to fulfill their expectations.

"We were star-eyed in our first

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## OCC honors grads

The majority of Oakland Community College graduates receiving honors hail from either Farmington or Farmington Hills.

Of 69 students graduating Cum Laude (3.4-3.9 grade point average), Magna Cum Laude (3.6 to 3.79 GPA) and Summa Cum Laude (3.8 to 4.0 GPA), 25 come from Farmington and 11 are from Farmington Hills.

Graduating Cum Laude are Terry Mulville, Deanna Crane, Christopher Leidlein, Michael O'Connor, Thomas Renaud, Cheryl Schmitz, Constance Shepp and Ignacia Vasquez from Farmington and Patricia Ambrose, Carolyn Chatterton, Janice Feldman, Cherie Keith and B. June Semack from the Hills.

Michael Brennan, Brenda Garrett, Mark Leidlein, Joyce Martell, Marilee Prescott, David Smith, William Van Vleet and Frank Zalar from Farmington and Lavina Ortmann from the Hills graduated Magna Cum Laude.

Graduating Summa Cum Laude are Joan Grindel, Leona Klein, Kathleen Lieberman, Janet Matthews, Cynthia Niemi, Laurel Oral, Toni Peetoom, Linda Shaheen and Gerda Treglow from Farmington and Debra Eidi, Geraldine Freedman, Roslynne Greenberg, Harriett Klein and Diane Silver from the Hills.

GM sales suffer loss

General Motors dealers delivered 149,574 passenger cars and commercial vehicles in the United States during July 11-20, down 21.8 percent from last year, according to Robert D. Burger, vice-president of marketing.

Year-to-date sales are up 9 percent in passenger cars and 16.2 percent in commercial vehicles from last year.

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