

Builder chucks business to seek adventure

In a little more than two years, Richard Bratton, 47, of Farmington Hills went from a major Detroit industrialist to Peace Corps volunteer.

Bratton built his six-firm construction empire over 26 years starting from ground zero.

"The harder I worked the luckier I got, but at age 45 I decided it was enough," Bratton said. He then sold most of his firms and retired.

"At that point I had sold everything I wanted to do. I had skied, sailed and flown planes. had been everywhere, done every-

thing and bought everything."

After retiring, he bought a 42-foot sailboat and sailed the Atlantic by himself for 18,000 miles over a period of 364 days.

"I told my wife Rita that I would be gone for a year but she got uneasy so I came back a day early," he said.

AFTER BEING HOME FOR a short time, he and his wife set out on a four-wheel drive camper for "the end of the world," Tierra del Fuego, on the south-eastern tip of South America. They got as far as Panama when they decided on a

said trip to Honduras. There, they were caught in a hurricane and flood and their camper was swamped in six feet of water.

They spent over a week in a jungle village, sleeping on hammocks in a mud and straw hut.

"It was there that I got involved with Peace Corps volunteers. I showed them how to build toilets for the villagers," said Bratton who is a self-taught engineer without a degree.

"We both got involved with the village people. My wife taught the mothers to weave while I built toilets. I decided the

people-to-people involvement was fun," said the adventurer who never made it to Honduras.

He and his wife returned to Farmington Hills in March 1975 and joined the Peace Corps a few months later.

Bratton actually decided to join the Peace Corps when he was sailing alone. It was an opportunity to do the things that he really liked to do—things that he couldn't do in his own country.

The couple are now stationed in Sungai Petani, in Kedah, a northern Malaysian state. Mrs. Bratton teaches English in primary school while her husband teaches construction techniques at the MARA Vocational Institute.

The institute is one of six government-funded MARA training centers in the country. About 300 students take two-year courses in architectural and structural drafting, building construction, carpentry, furniture making, plumbing and painting at the Sungai Petani school which is about three years old.

Bratton looked around the school for a few weeks and found that it needed "everything I knew, plus some." The students were building a canteen on campus at the time. After one look he knew it would collapse.

They had erected a 40 foot by 80 foot roof on top of six poles that were just set on the ground and fastened with little pieces of scrap steel. It would be against all the laws of physics for it to stay up and it promptly fell down—which made things easy for me. It established my credibility.

With that he had a free hand to teach modern theories and techniques.

"This was all new to them. They thought that you could build a large public building using the same concepts as they used to build a small village house," he said.

"The school brought in some of the best teachers in the country, but they weren't qualified to teach some of their subjects."

"I was given the go ahead by the chief administrator to redirect the school's teaching approach from theoretical classroom instruction to practical on-the-job training," Bratton said.

Previously, they were concentrating on all theory, but there is only so much theory you can impart on a carpenter. Now we find it highly successful to give the on-the-job training four days a week.

Bratton attributes the success to the ambition and foresight of the chief administrator.

"I AM HIS TOOL. He wants the school to expand and I'm giving him what he needs to accomplish it. And he's giving me what I need—students I am also training the teachers to train the students properly through on-the-job instruction."

"I think the greatest contribution I can make here is in giving the teachers proper training and getting them beyond theory into practical application."

The main on-the-job project has been a school dormitory which the students constructed under the supervision of Bratton and four other Peace Corps volunteer teachers. Bratton coordinated the efforts of a Peace Corps plumber, painter and two architects to train the students to build the dorm.

"The dorm was originally designed like a kampong, a small village house, so I had to redesign it with the help of the Peace Corps architects," he said.

"We did the thinking and the students did the drafting. I was in charge of the construction although I try not to be in charge of anything. I let the students do it. I didn't know how to pound a nail in properly so I had to show them how to use a hammer. I ended up working right along with them."

The building was completed last January. It enabled Bratton and the other volunteers to give more than 200 students practical experience in construction, carpentry, plumbing, drafting and painting.

Bratton says the students had no idea what their efforts were contributing to, but now that the building is completed, they can see the end product.

"I make it an absolute point to tell the students that they have built themselves a beautiful building. I tell them that it is not

my building. It is yours and you are the ones who are going to repeat and repeat it. They grow those feet in front of me."

Shortly after construction on a second dormitory was started.

"When using extremely complicated construction methods, you have to have adequate skill levels among the builders. The students have increased their skill levels to the point that with competent supervision they are capable of building a complex structure."

THE SUCCESS OF THE dormitory resulted in a \$1.5 million contract for the students to construct a junior college building about 32 miles away.

Bratton said, "We are trying to take this school and make it a viable institution. When the students finish here in two years, they have had real professional training. My goal is to build a team of teachers—a functioning, viable team who can teach the students to build a team that can function without me because a leader who is not replaceable is not a leader. A leader to me builds an organization in depth so that he can turn around and walk away."

Bratton will complete two years with the Peace Corps next June. He was born in White Bluff, Tenn., but grew up in Detroit where he attended Southeastern High School. He joined the army at 18 during World War II, served for two years and returned to Southeastern where he graduated in 1947.

Mrs. Bratton was born in Detroit and graduated from Hazel Park High School in 1947.

The couple have four grown children. Richard and Robert G. Robson and Rochelle Kern.



Now a Peace Corps volunteer in northern Malaysia, Richard Bratton of Farmington Hills gave up a large Detroit building business. He is

pictured with his construction foreman on a campus dormitory being constructed by his students in an on-the-job training program.

China mayor makes run

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

While most residents have been mulling over their choices for U.S. Senator, another important race awaits Farmington resident Henry Yee.

Yee, owner of Forbidden City restaurant is running for re-election as mayor of Canton.

"I'm elected. I'll have a Chinese New Year dinner at Forbidden City," he promises in political fashion.

Yee ran for Canton mayor three times before he was elected.

"The old die-hards used to elect older men," he recalls.

Now, as mayor, I keep an eye on the Chinese community. I watch so that none of the younger ones get into trouble."

He stumbled into the restaurant business by accident, he said.

PREVIOUSLY A REAL ESTATE broker, he once rented an office to an older Chinese man who offered Yee a partnership in his restaurant. Yee became owner of the restaurant and its debts.

"I worried my way out," Yee remembers.

He eventually opened the Jade Palace on Third and Bagley in Detroit.

Yee recalls that the Palace was an early hours haunt for downtown reporters, Detroit Lions players and other players from visiting teams.

They would huddle around a pot of spaghetti and talk for hours, says Yee.

IT WASN'T UNUSUAL for Yee to feed about 40 after hours guests in Italian dinner in the kitchen of his Chinese restaurant.

I didn't know how to make spaghetti but the Italian members of the team would help me," he remembers.

They'd go out for a couple of drinks, but after the bars closed, I'd open up and make spaghetti for them."

Yee and his partner, Scott Scherrer of Farmington Hills, are presently involved in bringing dancing to the Forbidden City. A 20 foot by 20 foot oak dance floor will be installed at the establishment on August 10.

Lenny Drake, who built himself as a one man trou, will provide the entertainment.

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Cop gives advice in fighting rape

By YVONNE DEVIN

There is still a lot of false information floating around on how women can protect themselves against rape.

Trooper Louis Hall of the Michigan State Police corrects some of the misinformation with some positive advice of his own.

"Go along with the assault until there is a chance to safely react. The only thing that will help a woman out of a rape situation is her mind. There isn't anyone else to lend a hand," he said.

Given the right set of circumstances, any woman can fight back. She must be prepared to defend herself.

"A woman must think her way out of the situation and each individual incident is different," Hall said.

UNDER THE NEW MICHIGAN Criminal Sexual Conduct Code, the woman doesn't have to come back battered and bruised to show forcible rape, he added.

Saying that feelings of fear or intimidation with or without a weapon may be enough evidence Hall laid steps for a woman to follow after rape. "Don't change clothes or shower. The clothes can be submitted as evidence. Call the police."

"Get an examination by a physician of your choice right away. The state doesn't pay for the examination."

The three investigative tools that police use are the crime scene, a polygraph and a doctor's examination.

The victim is asked to take a polygraph because we don't want to talk to the guy without a warrant. If the guy is arrested he may deny the rape and then we ask him to take a polygraph. He may refuse or he may pass the test," Hall said.

If the accused does pass the polygraph test, the prosecuting officer may demand charges or to a lesser charge like assault and battery, Hall explained.

"The rape may occur," Hall said, "because of a misinterpretation of what a woman wants. This is not to lay fault on the woman or the man," he said.

There were about 200 reported rape cases in Oakland County last year. Wayne County, however, leads the state with 2,300. According to FBI figures, only one in every 10 rapes is reported.

Hall said there are a variety of reasons why a woman may not report a rape. "Maybe she's guilty because she thought

she brought it on. Maybe she's ashamed and doesn't want to go through the hassle. She may not have been injured and may just keep the whole incident to herself."

THERE ARE COUNSELING CENTERS available to rape victims and not all police are aware of them, he said. Police should be educated so they can refer victims to the centers.

"Legally," said Hall, "rape can occur in marriage. There must be a legal separation in order for a rape victim to prosecute her husband. If a husband is going to rape his wife, they should be divorced. In 90 out of 100 cases a wife who has called and complained about her husband raping or beating her will not sign a warrant."

He said, "I tell them that if they want to get to the root of the problem to consult an attorney and get a divorce."

While rape may seem to be on the increase, the police officer suspects it is only that more women are reporting it. Women are more educated to the court process and the new law.

There are now four different degrees of rape. Circumstances taken into account are the type of incident, whether the suspect was in a position of authority over the victim, the victim's age and the relationship, if any, of victim and suspect.

The new law also prevents defense attorneys from questioning the rape victim about previous sexual experiences except as they apply to the case at hand.

Hall concluded by saying, "Police are much more compassionate of rape victims now."

Twin city votes tallied

(Continued from Page 1A)

land County the vote was 2,173 to 1,888 in favor of Kato.

Brotherhood received 2,882 in his legislative community.

IN THE FOUR LOCAL races for county commissioners, only the 25th District had more than one candidate vying for the post.

Farmington Hills Councilman Robert McConnell defeated two other Republican challengers, collecting 380 local votes and 829 district-wide votes.

Pharmacist and golf club president Ed Morry of Union Lake was third with 58 local votes and 477 total district votes.

Sylvia Baize of Walked Lake finished second with 538 county votes, 129 of those coming from Farmington and Farmington Hills.

On the Democratic side in the 25th County Commissioner race, John Jack, a Mill-ford contractor, went unopposed and collected 1,286 votes. He will now face McConnell in the November election.

All other local county commissioner races were unopposed as Republicans Lillian Moffie in the 15th, Dennis Murphy in the 24th, and John McDonald in the 27th all won the right to be placed on the November ballot.

They will be pitted against Democrats Susan Moiseev in the 15th, Susan Hane in the 24th and John Campbell in the 27th district.

The only county commissioner race affecting both Farmington and Farmington Hills is the 27th, in which McDonald received 1,243 local votes and Campbell 971.

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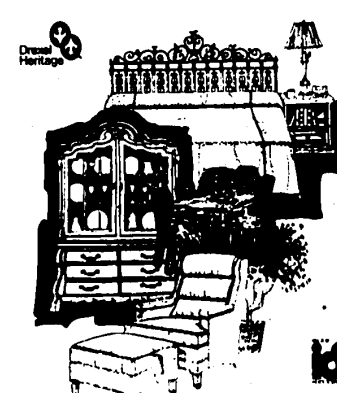
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