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At Orchard Ridge

Naturalists battle activity center



William Luckinbill and his son, William Fred Jr., sit on the window sill in what once was a bedroom shared by his daughter and two nieces. The room recently was gutted by a fire that has made the family's flat more of a mess than a home. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

The Farmington Area Naturalists are questioning Oakland County Community College's (OCC) plans to construct an activity center on the edge of Orchard Ridge's maple beech forest.

The naturalists fear that the construction of the community activity center will destroy the campus natural area, containing a large growth of trilliums, flowers on the state's protected list.

The club will meet with college officials during the school trustees study session, Sept. 8, at the George Lee Administration Building, Uppoke Road near Woodward at 8 p.m.

Richard Thompson, provost of the Farmington Hills campus, decried that the center will infringe upon the natural area.

The building will be very close to the trees," he admitted. "That's what got the people so upset."

The center, containing a pool, class rooms and a gym will be constructed south of the A-10 complex and over a campus road which runs across Farmington Road to Orchard Lake.

Preliminary plans by architects Harley, Ellington and Ferrer, of Southfield, provide for a one or two story building covering about 6,000 square feet. Built on a slope, the rear of the center will be about 12 feet high and the northern portion will be 20 feet high.

"WE'RE AWAITING the results of a study which will catalog everything that exists in the area," Thompson said.

University officials selected the central site in July, but haven't committed themselves to a specific place within that area.

The naturalists club is afraid that the \$2.9 million project will be built too close to the forest.

"One of our members brought out a brochure that shows the site they have chosen," said Ann Rodewig, president of the club. "It goes across the campus road to the edge of the woods and the nature trail."

"The students worked hard to plant flowers in the area and to make the road by scattering wood chips. It seems to us from the drawings that it would go into the woods," she said.

Mrs. Rodewig suggested that the site drawings could be misleading and that construction might not damage the area.

"It depends on how far back the building goes," she said. "You can't tell if it isn't going to go that far back, then we're wrong."

"If they show us that the building isn't going to go near the woods, well fine," she said.

One of the club's members remembers that the 1696 freeway was rerouted to avoid the forest.

THE GROUP is concerned because the trail is one of the few natural areas "opened" to area residents.

"There aren't many public trails in Farmington," she explained. "This one is accessible. There are more wild trilliums there than any other place in Farmington."

The activities center is part of a college-wide building program by OCC, Thompson said. The 169-acre campus contains 13 buildings.

Because it will be built on a slope, the building will conserve its own heat and will allow the forest to be seen by students in neighboring structures, Thompson said.

"The campus wasn't overpopulated with a natural setting when we moved in," he remarked. "Most of the plants were put there by the students and the campus. We have a high commitment to the environment."

A flood plain in the northeast section of the campus prohibits construction in that area, he said, in addition to being an economical project, the school would need the approval of the Department of Natural Resources before construction.

The flood plain would have to be drained before building.

TRAGEDY

Family left homeless

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

A fire has left William Luckinbill of Farmington Hills with 77 cents and lots of problems.

He thought he had his hands full coping with a bad back and a rejection slip from the compensation office.

Then, on Aug. 27, while he was working at a gas station near his home, fire gutted a bedroom shared by his daughter and two nieces. Smoke and water damaged the rest of the flat above a storage area on Twelve Mile Road near Drake, which was home for the family of seven.

Mrs. Patricia Luckinbill was talking on the phone to Wooddale Elementary School secretary about enrolling her daughter, Cheyenne, 5, in school, when she saw smoke coming from the bedroom shared by Cheyenne and the Luckinbills' nieces, Kantha, 5, and Deann, 7.

"Oh, my God, I have a fire," she managed to say before she dropped the phone.

"She got to the bottom of the stairs and then she realized that she had only four children, there," Luckinbill related.

ONE OF THE couple's 3-year-old twin boys, William Fred Jr. and William Patrick, was missing.

Mrs. Luckinbill fought the smoke to return to the flat to find her son.

"There was so much smoke she couldn't see anything," Luckinbill said. "He didn't cry or make a sound. She found him when he hit against her leg."

"We're lucky the boy was found."

Mrs. Luckinbill has been all since the fire. "I think it's stroke inhalation," her husband said.

After the fire, he discovered that his landlady had sold the building to a Bible school which plans to demolish it.

Although his landlady hasn't asked him to move, he wants to rent a home in Farmington.

Luckinbill, a truck driver for Motor Car Transport, Co. was laid off during the model-changeover season. He transports new cars from the factory.

ALTHOUGH THE fire left the family with 77 cents in cash, Luckinbill is reluctant to take a full-time job. He wants to be with his sick wife and he hates to relinquish the five years of seniority he has accumulated at the transport company.

"I don't want to forsake my wife," he said. "If you love someone, you have to help them."

Friends, relatives and Luckinbill's landlord have aided the family.

He wants to stay in the Farmington area. "People have been really wonderful," he said.

By Farmington couple

Oriental skills are imported

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

After teaching the Japanese to make hamburger, Mrs. Mary Bowman is teaching Americans oriental style painting.

She studied painting in Japan after she discovered she was bored with a house that took five minutes to clean.

I wanted to keep busy," she remembers. "I studied calligraphy, flower arranging, painting, and the tea ceremony."

Mrs. Bowman and her husband, a professor of education at Central Michigan University, will teach Japanese painting, calligraphy, flower arrangement, history and culture during an 11-week course at Bond School in Farmington Hills beginning Sept. 13.

She was committed to a year at a Japanese seaside resort town when her first husband learned a grant to study marine life and forests in the country.

"I had one room with very little furniture. After three kids and a large home, my housework took up only five minutes," she said.

Two of her children attended American boarding schools in the U.S.

different then. We were the only Americans in the area."

STUDENTS IN the 11-week course, which can be taken for CMU credit, will learn how to use chopsticks and will eat Japanese food.

We'll have tea and rice in the middle of the three-hour course," Mrs. Bowman said. "It'll be a nice break."

Students will also learn the fundamentals of Japanese painting.

The spirit of the painting, it's mood, the clarity of the brush strokes and the use of white space all help make up a good Japanese painting," Mrs. Bowman said.

Her enthusiasm for Japan prompted her to take her husband to the country.

There are some things that most people don't know that are helpful if they visit the country," Bowman said. "Most people know that they have to remove their shoes before entering a house! But did you know that you have to change your slippers inside the room?"

"You have to pull on a different pair when you enter the bathroom and when you enter the guestrooms. They have a whole row of slippers in your room."

Not only is footwear provided by the innkeeper, so is a robe called a yukata, which can be worn inside the hotel and out on the town.

Each hotel has a yukata of a different design," Mrs. Bowman said, picking up where her husband left off.

Near each of the inn, you can see whole groups of people wearing the same design.

"It's free advertising for the hotel," her husband added in an amused tone. "You can see businessmen strolling outside the hotel wearing the robes."

The robes' double as signs during the day. "They put them on Y-shaped sticks during the day. It looks like a line of people standing on the roof," Mrs. Bowman said.

She stretched out a bold striped yukata. "They're shaped just like the sticks," she said.

Japanese hotel patrons seldom take the robes as souvenirs.

"That's stealing! It's just not done there," she said.

Maverick station robbed 3d time

The Maverick gas station at 32663 Grand River was robbed at 8:30 p.m. Aug. 27 for the third time.

Set Chip Sander of the Farmington Police said one suspect is a "white male, 20-25 years old, with shoulder length dark hair, a large nose and a ruddy complexion." A second suspect, 18-22 years old, remained in a car used in the robbery and took no part in the heist.

Station attendant Tony Alessio told police that after pumping \$945 worth of gas into the suspect's vehicle, the driver said, "Give me your money."

The suspect held his right hand beneath his shirt, directing what appeared to be a weapon at Alessio. Alessio then turned over approximately \$221 to the suspect, who jumped into a rusty yellow 1968 Ford LTD and sped away eastbound on Grand River.

Another attendant at the station, David R. Petri, in the men's room at the time of the robbery, chased the car in his own vehicle in a futile attempt to obtain the license number of the Ford.

HER THIRD CHILD, a 5-year-old daughter, accompanied her parents to Japan. She attended a Japanese school and took the language fluently," Mrs. Bowman reported. "She's a great imitator of the language."

"Studying and teaching kept her busy while her daughter was in school."

I studied calligraphy with a 77-year-old teacher. That's a magic age in Japan. They can do anything they want after 77. It's considered part of their second childhood," she said.

"They don't have to do anything," agreed her husband, George Bowman. "Once calligraphy and art lessons were under way, she persuaded a neighbor to teach her the tea ceremony."

"Many times we'd go into games of Japanese. But she managed to teach me," Mrs. Bowman said.

In turn, she taught the housewife English and demonstrated American recipes.

Her cooking class featured egg salad, sandwiches, spaghetti, hamburgers, chicken soup and salads.

"This was in 1968 and I couldn't always find the right ingredients. I couldn't find stewed tomatoes anywhere. Things were

inside

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Mrs. Mary Bowman of Farmington Hills displays one of her Japanese-style paintings. She studied the art while her first husband was studying in Japan. (Staff photo)