



Gardeners and students team up for an all-out effort to revamp the grounds at O.E. Duncel Junior High School. The front lawn gets the first bit of attention, but all 20 acres of the school plot on Twelve Mile has become an on-going project for North Farmington Garden Club, which is still less than one year old.

Keeping Farmington Beautiful starts early for garden clubbers

By LORAIN McCLISH

Members of the North Farmington Garden Club began its beautifying efforts several weeks before the traditional "Keep Farmington Beautiful" month of May with an all-out effort to perk up the grounds of O.E. Duncel Junior High School.

Ann Rodewig, speaking for the 38 women who make up the newest club in the area, said, "The neighbors have done such a beautiful job of landscaping, the school grounds need maintenance constantly just to keep up."

Mrs. Rodewig, and Jan Tiberio, who is philanthropic chairwoman of the garden club, said complete maintenance of the 20-acre plot on Twelve Mile near Farmington Road, would be an on-going project, rather than just a one-time thing for the group.

The junior high school, which once won an award for its design, has had sporadic maintenance for its grounds through the years. Various student councils gave time and money for beautification efforts. "But the work involved is just too much for any other than a constant, continuous upkeep," Mrs. Rodewig said.

"School maintenance men can't be expected to do all the work involved in the line of gardening, and schools don't have, (for example) \$200 to pay just for fertilizer."

"We want so much so soon we're going in all directions pulling these things together, but our community service is one of the important reasons the club functions," Mrs. Tiberio said. "Being a club member has almost become a full-time job."

The members' full-time job at the school, Mrs. Rodewig said, would involve "Everything but mowing the grass. The shrubs there are now 19 years old. There is an unsightly bridge that could be very attractive over a ditch that could use one heck of a lot of work. The continuation of the drain goes across the street (Twelve Mile), and Thompson Brown has done a beautiful job making that look lovely."

The gardeners also found a family of ducks on the school grounds which they hope to coax into staying there.

WHEN THE time comes for new trees to be added to the grounds, the women will follow a design created by botanist Betty Frunckel, a Farmington Hills resident and author on gardening. The design was commissioned by the student council of several years ago.


"And maybe we'll even expand on it," Mrs. Tiberio said.

The women will tackle the grounds in the front of the building first, adding only flowers that bloom in the spring and fall for the enjoyment of the students.

"That might be a while, though, because those flower beds are now almost solid grass," she said.

Between trips to Duncel, members will be out in force, when the National Convention of Federation Garden Clubs hold its convention in Detroit's Renaissance Center June 5-7. Their contribution, as a new club, was making rope baskets which will serve as table favors at one of the convention luncheons.

North Farmington Garden Club is sponsored by Hill and Dale Garden Club, another Farmington-based group.



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Spring cramps the fancy of one young pianist

(June Rado, a Farmington Hills resident who has captured several writing awards from Oakland Community College, writes about the frustrations she felt as a young girl dreaming of becoming a concert pianist. A 17-year-old, Mrs. Rado has collaborated with

composer Charlene Slaby to produce a number of major works that have been produced locally. The partners' most recent accomplishment is "Earth Psalms," which was sung in concert by the Madrigal Club of Detroit late last month.)

By JUNE RADO
A music student in the springtime is a hurried creature.

School concerts, musicals, vocal and instrumental scholarship auditions, piano recitals, any one or all of these can afflict the fledgling performer.

To be anywhere in age from 10 to 18 is asking for it; bad dreams, sweaty palms, the same compositions repeated until parents grow pale with nervous control and little brothers and sisters whimper in corners.

This scenario was written long ago. My part in it, though passed, has left me with a permanent grudge against Spring.

During the high winds of my 15th year, I was being contained by nuns who conducted an academy for young ladies in New York. I felt that during the summer I had aged, much like wine in a cask, and out of my maturity waited the conviction that I should become a concert pianist.

My practicing took on the fearsome dedication I imagined to be proper to my new discipline.

I SAW MYSELF not as a lumpy school girl, conquering scales and arpeggios by brute force, but as a being essentially sexless (although my heroes, Arthur Rubenstein and Vladimir Horowitz, were masculine. I could not forego my gender) and entirely capable of drawing from the piano the lyrical and torrential sounds caged in its black hull.

I had been released from such pieces as "Poupée Valsante" and "Sprites of the Glen," the latter a technically useful but nasty little affair crammed with glissandos, staccatos, and knuckle-knocking grace notes.

Early on, my sprites had thundered to and fro, for I hated them a goodly part of the time. Eventually, by virtue of my dogged application and sturdy physique, they flattered, tripped and twirled so very delicately that each time I played the piece, I suffered the urge to swat.

I practiced like a fury and by spring had achieved a tenuous grasp upon Chopin's "Scherzo," the second one in the book. At no time was my teacher's approval easy to earn or certain to continue once it had been given.

The "Scherzo" plus Sister Outhbert's approval confirmed by condition of incipient genius. Genius itself would be forthcoming when I was 16, like a fur jacket or a ruby birth ring.

THE PRACTICE rooms, in which we embryo musicians inhabited for three to six hours a day, ranged in horseshoe formation around the back of the recital stage. I had reason to know that stage, each splinter in it, the air above it a swarms of fits, starts and tremblings. There we rehearsed at the two concert grand pianos and there we performed, relentlessly presented to restive audiences of parents, teachers and sister students.

On school days, we wore uniforms:

Black serge designed like pleated tents with white canvas collars and cuffs. When I practiced, I rolled up my serge sleeves (I fancied the workmanlike look of it). My arms, when clothed, puckered from elbow to wrist as if that part of me had been snatched in the nick of time from a hot iron.

My black slippery neckties regularly earned me demerits for tardiness at pre-dawn chapel. Knotted man-fashion, the ties were tucked into narrow black belts which confined the tents to our immediate vicinities.

We wore black oxfords and black lisle hose, thwarting the pull of gravity with garter harnesses which thrummed and twanged under our regimental cotton slips.

When we were let loose in art-like files for monitored walks around the block, we wore black pork-pie hats, premeditated to subdue even the prettiest among us.

UPON MY arrival at school as a freshman, the other girls had immediately marked me as an unfortunate, this I knew. And I knew why: I could

not yet dance, nor could I with first-hand knowledge contribute to the explorers' discussions of boys and dates—past, hoped-for and imaginary.

I could, however, extract a line crash from a ciano. I had weight and had merely to lean forward in order to obtain sounds of cataclysm. I learned to save such displays of power for appropriate passages, aided in my restraint by Sister Outhbert, whose weight all went to her voice.

Onstage, she could be heard at the faraway double doors to the auditorium, howling the count above the "Scherzo's" thunder; closer to, her roars of disgust at mushy pedaling generated sympathetic vibrations among the piano strings.

The guardian of our practice hours was Sister James Anthony, a gentle ancient, in that so-Christian ambience strangely Buddha-like in shape and repose of spirit. Day in, day out she sat, calm as cream, a prisoner of arthritis, who clipped stamps for the foreign missions.

All of us brought back sacks of used envelopes to give to Sister James Anthony, along with our devotion. Because of her infirmity, she could not rise to remonstrate with us when we lagged, or when we eased quietly into forbidden gardens of pieces unassigned at lessons.

But her eyes, a milky blue, made



JUNE RADO

themselves felt with the pull of twin moons on the tides of our nerve endings. We ebbed and flowed at her command.

IN THE springtime, the racket of 15 pianos operated at any given time by 15 neophytes of the Muse was such that classroom windows across the courtyard were heard to slam like valves of cannon.

I saw Sister Ethelrida Augustine (Continued on page 2B)



AAUW calls for used books

Used books are starting to pile up now in the downstairs room of Farmington Hills Community Library, but American Association of University Women in the area are looking for more. Opal Holmes (at left)

and Marjorie Conover start the sorting process, while other members of the association are placing well-marked containers throughout the area for the deposit of more donations for the annual sale.

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