

# Hills collector hopes to harness the breeze

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

These mild summer breezes are filled with wasted power.

That's part of the reason Daniel Mullendore wants to erect an old-fashioned wind generator to provide his Farmington Hills home with light.

The project combines Mullendore's concern for fuel conservation and an interest in wind generators that was stirred by his father's old Delco model.

"I just got turned on to the idea," he explained.

As a boy growing up in rural Illinois, Mullendore remembers being fascinated with the Delco

which was engineered to alternate between wind power and battery power.

When the battery was drained, it was rejuvinated by the wind, which also ran the generator.

"I thought it was a pretty nifty idea," said Mullendore.

During the Depression many other farm residents would have agreed with the young Mullendore. For many areas, wind generators were the only method available to conduct enough power to make radio reception possible.

WHILE MANY farms were far from power lines, each farmer could

rig up a wind generator to power the family radio and light the house.

The generators were large enough to use 32 volts and eventually came in one and two motor models.

Eventually, wind generators were used to light up everything from the living room to the chicken coop.

But during the Depression, the Roosevelt administration sponsored the Rural Electrification Authority (REA), which brought power lines to the farm lands.

Instead of installing an individual generator, the farmer could hitch his power needs to a government electric line. The

task of maintaining a wind generator was replaced by monthly electrical bills.

"The wind electric generator industry came to a screeching halt," said Mullendore.

The last company closed its doors in 1962.

But Mullendore remembered his father's trusty Delco generator and, with his brother Michael, began collecting unused wind generators.

Their summer vacations can consist of trips through Montana and the Dakotas asking farmers for the wind generator on top of the old tower in the barn yard.

MANY ARE GLAD to see the old devices go toward an appreciative audience, according to Mullendore.

One of Mullendore's finds, a classic wind generator designed by Marcelus Jacobs, will be used to light his own home.

Jacobs designed the generators during their heyday, according to Mullendore, 36.

The unit that Mullendore will use is designed to be effective in areas which have lower winds. It will produce 500 kilowatts a month. Homes usually consume 1,000-2,000 kilowatts of power monthly.

Converting the house to use the wind power will be a matter of splitting out a few electrical circuits to isolate them from the regular wall plugs. The separated circuits will be run to a separate panel which will be connected to the wind generator.

Although the house will be lighted by wind power, the rest of the electrical chores will be left to the electric company.

There isn't enough wind in Farmington Hills to power an entire household.

Mullendore's project coincides with his belief that power supplies are limited and alternates should be explored.

"THOSE PEOPLE are fools if they think the petroleum shortage is a joke," he said.

"I think they have their heads in the sand.

And it will take browns for them to realize that there will be shortages," he said.

Increased costs of electricity doesn't bother

Mullendore too much.

"People are afraid the companies are making too much money. But they need the money to

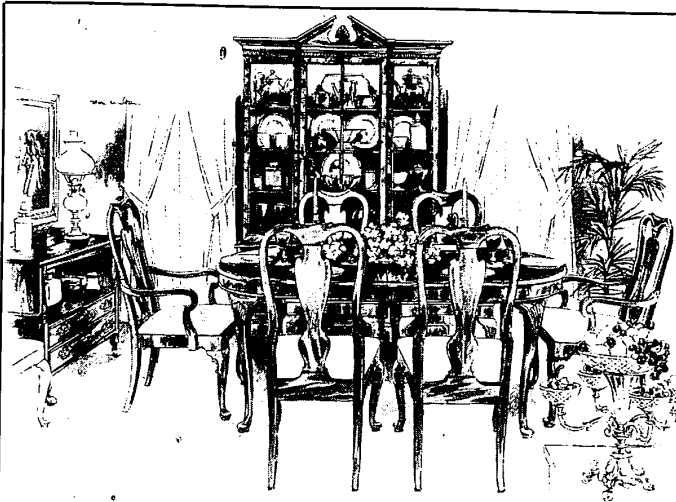
research alternate ways to produce energy," he argued.

One of those alternatives is wind power,

according to Mullendore. That source could be used in conjunction with current electrical production to power homes and conserve energy.



Andy Mullendore looks over his father's collection of wind generator tail sections. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)



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