Scum-hating septic tank is invented

By CRAIG PIECHURA

Scum is the culprit in any septic

"Scam is the culprit in any septic tank system." Diver Marcotte of 2500 Ten Mile, Siver Marcotte of 2500 Ten Marcotte of 2500 Ten

cotte spent most of nus earry years working on human pipes. He was city physician for 18 years and before that worked as a chest specialist and general practitioner. But Dr. Marcotte suffered a severe stroke in 1985 that put an end to his medical career. Recuperation was a slow morees.

process.

First he regained control of his left

"I WAS GONE FOR a while there," said Marcotte, dressed in a lab coat down in his workshop. "I had to go back to the first grade to study the first grade primer. And I had a hel-luva time in the second grade, don't

you know. I'm in pretty good shape today as long as I don't try to do stupid things."

During the recuperation process, Dr. Marcotte would trek downstairs to his tool bench and worksop. He'd constantly tinker with pipes and electric motors trying to come up with a septic tank that didn't need to be pumped out regularly.

Necessity, as usual, was the mother of Dr. Marcotte's invention. The septic tank at his home was inadequate. Early prottypes of the 'Marcotte System,' reflect on a two interlocking, and the septic tank at his home was inadequate part of the motor of the

method.

The Marcotte System uses three 1,000 gallon septic tanks instead of one. Inside each tank are a series of four-inch plastic pipes that have a slit

four-inch plastic pipes that have a slit cut down the side. Waste from the house goes down a pipe and dumps into the first of three septic tanks through an intake open-ing. Gaseous seum fleating on top of the water in the first tank falls through the slit in the four horizontal pipes that are hung from the top of the tank at water level.

SLUDGE SETTLES to the bottom of

the pipes and is washed into the sec-ond tank, but not before it passes through a maze of baffles that helps release gas and prevents soum from accumulating.
"This innovation changes scum into sludge by Hotation," Marcotte explains proudly, "Gas is released in the air and goes out through the vent on top of my roof."

It's important to know that in Dr. Marcotte's eyes, scum is a bad guy and sludge is a good guy. Bacteria is good.

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It is most in the doctor explains, because if enough is allowed to accumulate on top of the water, it will kill the bacteria necessary to break down the swage into gas, water and nutrients. With heavy scum, the water turns tock and kilb sacteria because methane gas produced in fer-mentation cannot escape through the beavy scum.

If allowed to decompose properly,

mentation cannot escape through the beavy scum.

If allowed to decompose properly, water and nutrients are discharged into the septic field, not "gunk." Gravity draws the water into second and hind tarks where the decomposition continues and the smell becomes more bearable. Every tank has about half the waste as the pre-vious one. Consequently, Dr. Mar-cotte's septic fields are shorter in length.

Dr. Marcotte is waiting for word from the U.S. Patent Office on his invention. But after installing nine such systems in the area, and securing "experimental approval" permits from both the city and Oakland

County, he's convinced it has wide applications.

applications.

"THIS COUNTRY is still primitive in how it treats its waste," said Dr. Marcotte. "We should treat our sewage right here, not on West Jefferson. It's raining right now and those gates are open at the sewage treatment plant; raw sewage is being dumped directly into the Deturia River." Frank Roch, of 2895 Ingleside, Southfield, is a believer. He's had the Marcotte System installed at his home for three years now and hasn't had a bit of trouble with a there experiencing couldes bendaches with a conversional state of the conversion of the sewage from the bendaches with a conversion in a fault in the bread-winner in the bread-w

"I'd recommend this system to any-body having trouble," Roch said. "And Doc is the man I'd recommend they

Doe is the man 10 recomment they see."

The three-tank system at the home of Roch cost \$1,500 to install.

All Hoffman, city plumbing inspector, says close to 10,000 homes in Southfield are serviced by septic tanks. And, although it's too early to tell how Marcotte's septic system will stand up over a period of years. Hoffman says "he certainly seems to know what he's doing."

Hearing compliments like these puts a twinkle in Dr. Marcotte's eyes.



Dr. Oliver Marcotte holds the culprit that can foul most septic tanks. The former Southfield city physician has devised a new waste disposal system that he says ends worry about scum. (Staff photos by Gary Friedman)



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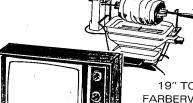
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