

You've got a big family? Take a look at this clan

By CHRIS CROSS

It's hard to imagine having a family of 30,000. But for the Ramallahs, being scattered throughout the United States does not mean the group isn't close.

The "Ramallah family" is a three-generation group of people whose elder members have immigrated to the U.S. since the late 1890s from Ramallah, Palestine, and have kept close contact with each and every member.

Fred Harb, his wife Clair and their four children have made their home in Livonia, along with more than 100 other families of the Ramallah clan.

Large groups of Ramallahs have also moved into homes in Westland, Redford Township, Birmingham, Farmington Hills, Garden City, Plymouth, and Dearborn, as well as other cities across the country.

Harb says he's proud of his heritage and is concerned about losing touch with it. "That is why," he said, "we keep our ties."

"WE ARE proud to be Americans, but we are just as proud to be Palestinians," he said while his wife added, "America has treated our people very well."

To preserve the Arab culture and retain relationships with the Ramallah family members, the group has established a national federation and various local clubs.

The Detroit area club, which includes the Livonia residents, puts out a bi-monthly magazine entitled, "Hathihie Ramallah." A national convention is held each year, and a directory is continually updated to include the names and addresses of all 30,000 members of the Ramallah family.

The 1980 national Ramallah convention will be held in Birmingham, Ala., where about 2,500 people are expected to attend.

"I know everyone in this book," Harb said, as he skimmed through the Ramallah directory. "If there is a death in the family, everyone knows about it; if there's a wedding, everyone comes," he said. "We had 600 people at our wedding 15 years ago and 500 just at the engagement party."

BUT WHY did the Ramallah people come to the

Hills recreation officials named to state board seats

Farmington Hills parks and recreation officials Doug Gaynor and Jef Farland have been elected to positions on the Michigan Recreation and Park Association board of directors.

Gaynor, director of parks and recreation, was elected first vice president. Farland, recreation superintendent, won a two-year at-large seat.

Gaynor has served as treasurer of the association for two years as well as on various other committees. Farland, for the third consecutive year, is chairman of the scholarship committee.

That committee provides professional assistance

for college students working toward professional degrees in park and/or recreation administration.

Both board members will be installed at a special ceremony during the annual awards banquet at the winter conference of the association. It will be Jan. 22 in Detroit's Plaza Hotel in the Renaissance Center.

The Michigan Recreation and Park Association, a private non-profit professional organization, was founded in 1935 and will celebrate its 45th year at the annual conference.

New sales rep

Patrick McCabe of Farmington Hills has been appointed sales representative by L.J. Hymel, vice president-marketing for Wyeth Laboratories, a division of American Home Products Corp. A graduate of Mercy College, McCabe holds a degree in psychology.



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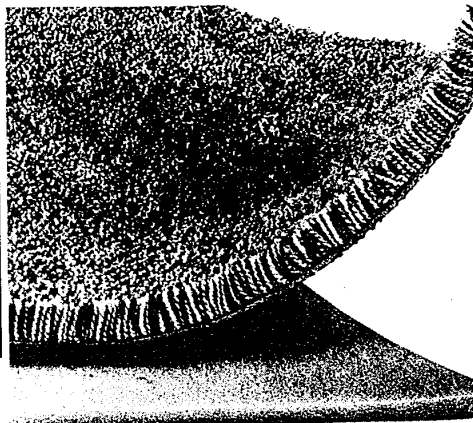
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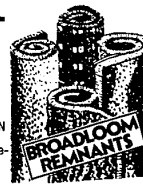
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