

# Farmington Observer

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## Senate fights renters' expense

By JACKIE KLEIN

Apartment rents outpacing tenants' incomes is one of the most desperate situations facing Michigan residents, particularly senior citizens, according to State Sen. Doug Ross, Oak Park Democrat.

On this premise, Ross, whose district includes Southfield, Lathrup Village, Farmington and Farmington Hills, has introduced a renter's inflation protection bill now in the Senate Finance Committee. The measure, also being examined by the House Consumers Affairs Committee, will be considered this fall, Ross said.

"In these times of continuing inflation, rental costs are becoming a severe burden for many, especially senior citizens," Ross said in an interview Monday. "Although the federal government recommends that a household spend no more than 25 percent of its income on housing, one third of renters who applied for property tax credit in the state last year were paying more than 40 percent of their income for rent."

The proposed renters inflation protection act, Ross contended, would guarantee that no senior citizen would ever be forced to pay more than 40 percent of his or her income for rent, no matter how much it went up.

UNDER THE proposal, if a senior citizen's rent rose above 40 percent of his income, the state would fully refund to the senior the amount above 40 percent. A non-senior citizen would be eligible for a refund of 75 percent of the amount above 40 percent of the renter's income.

"With the current disproportionate share of total income devoted to rent, people are often faced with either moving into substandard housing or cutting back on expenses for other necessities," Ross said.

Analysis of 1977 state income tax returns indicates that nearly 70,000 households applying for property tax credit were paying at least 40 percent of their income for rent, Ross said. These 70,000 households represent almost one third of all renters who applied for property tax credit.

"Those who bear this burden are almost exclusively low income households," Ross said. About 94 percent of the general public and 89 percent of senior citizens paying 40 percent or more of their income for rent earn less than \$6,000 a year.

"IN ALL too many cases, moving isn't a reasonable alternative. At \$6,000, a household is spending 40 percent of its income on rent."

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## Horsing around? No way!

In these days of high-powered patrol cars, an old-fashioned, horse-propelled sheriff's posse is usually equated with something out of an old "Gunsmoke" script. But, whoa there... a sheriff's posse is alive and functioning in Oakland County. Comprised of 30 volunteers from all walks of life, the posse is a division of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department and has been in existence for nearly 30 years.

Posse members meet every Thursday evening to conduct drills, such as the one above — where volunteers are being taught to keep their horses from panicking in the face of distractions. For the story and more pictures, turn to Page 10B. (Staff photo by Mindy Saunders)

## Old Man Rouge

By MARY GNIEWEK

There's a bit of Huck Finn fantasy in every winding river, and the Rouge is no exception.

Yep, the Rouge — really. There's more to it than industrial wastes spewing into its depths and old rubber boots floating through its tributaries.

For instance, did you know that besides plant life, fish including bluegill and bass call the Rouge home? Or that the river runs through 40 communities and drains 467 square miles in Wayne, Oakland and Washtenaw Counties? Or that water quality is improving?

Those tidbits come from Marcie Colling, the new administrative officer for the Rouge River Watershed Council, of which both Farmington and Farmington Hills are members.

Mrs. Colling, 36, describes the council as a problem solving and comprehensive planning organization for the governments in the watershed (river basin).

It was formed in late 1977 and 20 municipalities are members. The council is awaiting approval of a federal grant to assist in educating member governments in water quality control, flood plain management, sewage disposal problems, and other factors related to water quality.

"Quite naturally, political boundaries do not follow the boundaries of a river system the size of the Rouge," said Mrs. Colling, an environmental scientist with a degree from the University of Michigan.

"AN AREA WIDE council is essential in providing an overall non-political view of the problems and development of the Rouge basin."

The council was formed under state law. It acts as an advisory board but many of its members are active within the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). The council itself is part of the area wide Water Quality Board, a committee within SEMCOG.

The Rouge basin flows south from Birmingham, winding through West Bloomfield, Southfield, Farmington, Livonia, Dearborn and into the mouth of the Detroit River.

Rouge-watchers say the best examples of proper river maintenance (which means letting the river run in its natural course) are through Edward Hines Park in Dearborn Heights and Linden Park in Birmingham, because they're built on natural flood plains.

The worst environmental abuse of the Rouge occurs at Southfield's Pernick drain ("too big and too deep") and channelization for six miles in Dearborn from south of Michigan Avenue almost to the Detroit River.

"Channelization stops flooding, but it makes the water move faster and then it doesn't have a chance to purify itself," Mrs. Colling said.

The quality of the Rouge ranges from poor in Dearborn, where Ford Motor Co. sits on its banks, to mediocre and good in Oakland County.

"Forty-two industries discharge into the river, but many of those wastes are just cooling water, which doesn't harm the river. The biggest polluter is the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department," said Mrs. Colling.

In accordance with the federal Water Quality Act of 1972, the state is working toward ridding the Rouge and other bodies of water of pollutants by 1985.

"I think we can get most of them out," Mrs. Colling said.

WATER QUALITY depends on water level, weather, run-off, and dumped sewage.

"There are point and non-point sources of pollution. Point sources are from industry and sewage pipes. Non-point are hard to control. They include run-off from farm land rich with chemicals, sand and silt from construction sites, and car oil and gas run-off."

"In this area, non-point run-off causes

es the biggest problem, and it's hard to control," she said.

In its year and a half existence, the council has been instrumental in helping write the Water Resources Management Plan for Southeast Michigan, and in solving the problem of a massive log jam which threatened to cause

serious flooding.

"A river like the Rouge is invaluable to the communities through which it passes," Mrs. Colling said. "We should all be concerned about the actions we take on the health and recreation opportunities of the people who share the river."



The Rouge River naturally twists its way through Farmington on the long winding journey to the Detroit River — one county and several municipalities away. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

## Hills posts agenda

FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL

31555 Eleven Mile  
7:30 p.m., July 16

• Special meeting to consider the introduction of an amendatory ordinance to zoning code which would allow low income senior housing and low income family housing on the northeast corner of Freedom and Drake.

### Public Hearings

• Consideration of introduction of amendatory ordinance to rezone parcel of land at Freedom east of Power from RA-3 to RC-3.

• Cost hearing for Northbrook Lane Sewer C-133 Special Assessment District Resolution 5 and notice of intent, resolution 6.

• Consideration of introduction of amendatory ordinance C-62-V, Article XI, section 1100 and 1101, ordinance C-62 of the Zoning Ordinance regarding the preamble and principal uses permitted in the business district.

• Application for permission to incorporate the Economic Development Corporation, for the City of Farmington Hills.

ment Corporation, for the City of Farmington Hills.

• Consideration of resolution approving the articles of incorporation of the Economic Development Corporation of Farmington Hills.

### New Business

• Consideration of waiving sewer assessment on two 50 foot lots pertaining to Sidwell 23-02-302-039 and 23-02-302-036 special assessment C-119 Greening and Eastfield streets.

• Consideration of pay-back for water on Harlan from Farmington Road to Lyncroft.

• Consideration of advancing money for Linden street sewer so that the project may proceed in the minimum amount of time.

### City Manager Report

• Consideration of continuing the barricade of Valley Road at Northwestern Highway. Trial period was established earlier this month.

• Recommendation to participate in the cost of landscaping right of way at Eight Mile and I-275.

## Author featured on 'If It Now'

Professor Melvin Urofsky, author of "We Are One" will be interviewed on the July 26 broadcast of "If It Now."

"If It Now" is the weekly radio presentation of the Jewish Community Council of metropolitan Detroit. The program will be heard at 12:40 p.m. on WDET-FM radio.

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### FAREWELL TO BROKEN EAGLE

CBers lost a friend recently with the passing of George Kaubi. To read his story, turn to Page 6A.