

Remembering the urban railroad

Bit of history dies with John Clark

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

In 1911, the only way a Detroit could make it out to rural Farmington was by using the Detroit Urban Railroad. In those days, the tracks ran through the middle of town and the system was used to transport farm produce as well as vacationing city dwellers.

It was in those days that John Clark's association with Farmington began. His enjoyment of Farmington and its people ended only with his death on July 8, 1979.

Clark came to Farmington in 1911 to be the superintendent of the Orchard Road division of the D.U.R. That was seven years after he was hired by the Detroit Transportation System in 1904.

Along the way he met and married the boss' daughter, Ada Bollen. In 1913, Clark brought his bride to Farmington. They lived in a home in the then spanking new subdivision of Warner Farms. He and his wife had two daughters, Jean and Janis. As the young family settled into

Farmington, the D.U.R. was enjoying its glory days. In 1974, Clark reminisced about those days. He liked to note its efficiency.

"They talk today about rapid transit. We had them all beat. The limited left Detroit at 5 p.m. and got to Northville in an hour and one half."

"THE CARS ran seven days a week from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. The 11 p.m. car would wait on opera nights long enough for the people going to the opera to catch their car. We'd wait if the opera was late," he said.

It was a time when 10 Mile was called Conroy, 11 Mile was Lock's Corners, 12 Mile was Stevenson and 13 Mile was called North Farmington.

Grand River wasn't paved yet and the town didn't have very much in the way of organized sports activity.

Clark helped remedy that situation. After 1915, he organized the town's first basketball team. The men played in the Masonic Auditor-

um. Their court was lit by gasoline lamps.

After basketball season, Clark helped form a traveling bowling league with teams from Redford, Farmington, Plymouth and Northville. In 1926-27 he was a member of the Michigan Doubles Champion team of the American Bowling Congress. He scored two perfect games while with the team.

He earned between 200-300 medals and trophies for his excellent bowling scores, according to his daughter Mrs. Jean Howarth, of Howell.

He was a member of the Southeast Lawn Bowling Association in Florida during his later years. Up until last year he continued to tour with the group.

AFTER HIS retirement from the Detroit Street Railways in 1952, Clark continued his interest in community and social affairs.

He was a founding member of the Farmington Exchange Club. With his cigar in one hand and a joke for everyone he met, Clark became a

familiar figure at Exchange Club meetings. He was the last living founder of the club.

Retirement didn't prevent him from exploring the future. He was full of plans for the future.

"He was someone who thoroughly enjoyed life. He was the eternal optimist. He was always planning some new trip," his daughters said.

Last summer he went to explore Alaska.

When he wasn't visiting new places he re-visited favorite haunts. Usually winter found him in St. Petersburg, Fla. Since 1914, summers were reserved for his cottage on Skeleton Lake in Muskoka, where he took in a little fishing.

As the years past, he enjoyed the company of his six grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

"He enjoyed his family and fishing with the kids," said Mrs. Howarth.

Services for Clark, who would have been 92 on July 17, were conducted on July 10 at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington. Rev. James Nelson officiated.

Residents battle city to install stop sign

By MARY GNIEWEK

Residents who live near Edgewood Elementary School in southeast Farmington Hills hope to settle a two-year-old beef with city officials soon.

If they don't, they say they will continue to attend city council meetings, write letters, and circulate petitions until they get stop signs installed in their neighborhood.

Sandra Curtis began the crusade after a car plowed down the fence that surrounds her home at the corner of St. Francis and Emmett.

That accident was followed by several others: eight according to the Farmington Hills engineering department, 14 according to St. Francis neighbors.

What neither group disputes is that more than 400 kindergarten through sixth grade students attend Edgewood School, on St. Francis between Emmett and Sedalia. The streets are major routes for school buses and walking school children.

Some of the accidents have involved

students. The neighbors think four-way stop signs on St. Francis at Emmett and Sedalia will improve the situation. But city employees believe posted yield signs on those corners are sufficient.

"We've been to city council meetings for the past three sessions, and we'll continue to bug them until we get what we want," said Pat Lane, who hosted a group of concerned mothers at her home on St. Francis last week.

"WE ASKED for a six month trial period, but that didn't work."

Mrs. Lane said the group has 100 percent support from the Section 36 Homeowners Association. All the women feel there is renewed hope in recently appointed City Manager Lawrence Savage.

"It's doing a good job," Mrs. Lane said. "He's been down here and he knows what it's like."

The women say they are "at wit's end" with the Hills engineering department.

"Back in October, 1978, when I pre-

sented the city with a petition signed by 117 people, the response I got was that the streets were as safe as possible," Mrs. Curtis said. "Then there was another accident shortly after that."

Accidents the women remember include a car out of control on St. Francis and Emmett that finally came to a stop in a backyard, a car that crashed through the fence of Botsford Hospital, and two Edgewood students hit on St. Francis this year. They've also seen ripped lawns and ruined cyclone fencing and smashed steel beams on roadside mailboxes.

"The city acknowledges the problems exist, but they don't see the need for stop signs. Over a year ago, I was shown an order by someone in the engineering department for school signs to be erected under the yield signs, we still don't have them," Mrs. Curtis said.

"These are young children walking to school. Even in summer, with recreation programs in the playground, they deserve safety."



Guess where the school is hidden. Edgewood Elementary is to the right of the yield sign, across the street. Because it is in the middle of a residential street (St. Francis between Sedalia and Emmett), residents say it — and students — are hard for motorists to spot. That's why parents are continuing a fight with city officials for installation of a sign. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

THE ELDREDGE FAMILY needs a home. Howard and Ruth Eldredge were burned out of their home at 2925 Oxford in Farmington Hills recently. The elderly couple is looking for someone to help them find new housing. The Farmington Area Commission on Aging is working to find the couple a house, but it needs help. Hopefully, a new home can be found before Eldredge, 81, is released from the hospital. To help, call Michael Dornan, Farmington Hills administrative assistant, at 474-6115, or any member of the Farmington Observer staff at 477-5450. Farmington, Angles knows you have a lot of heart. A fund has been set up at Manufacturers National Bank. Here's another chance to show it.

DOG OWNERS, BEWARE the dog warden with the Farmington Public Safety Department is once again tracking down dogs without a license. So make sure your four-legged friend wears dog tags. Remember, even Roger Moore has a license.

BUCKLE UP YOUR baby in a love seat. The Buckle Up Baby Love Seats are available again to rent from the Farmington Area Jayettes. Recent publicity in the Observer caused a rush on the car seats, according to the Jayettes. All 50 of the car seats for children were put to use. Now nine of them have become available again for rental. To put your baby in a safety seat call Gail Raben at 478-2945.

CONGRATULATIONS to Howard Wagenberg, son of Mr. and Mrs. Irving Wagenberg of Farmington Hills. Wagenberg recently received his doctorate degree in podiatric medicine from Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine. He is a graduate of North Farmington High School and received his masters from the University of Michigan. He is a member of the Phi Alpha Pi fraternity and has earned a place on the dean's list. He will be in residency at McNamara Community Hospital in Warren.

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT for a public hearing concerned with rezoning property on the northeast corner of Freedom and Drake to allow low income senior housing. The meeting with the Farmington Hills City Council takes place at 7:30 p.m. at city hall, 31555 11 Mile near Orchard Lake Road.

IT'S A TALE of two cities. Seems both cities are laying claim as the home of potter John Glick. The phone company and Glick both list Farmington as his hometown. But the people in the Hills insist he belongs to them. It must be nice to be wanted.

INSIDE FOUNDERS: Here's more news on the festival:

- Ice cream Social: From 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. July 22 on the Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church grounds. This event was originally scheduled for July 29 but has been moved up to coincide with Sunday in the Park.
- Ice cream sandwiches will be 75 cents; pop 25 cents; brownies 25 cents.
- Pet show: during the Sunday in the Park, local

pet owners will get a chance to show off their animal buddies. Each contestant can enter only one category in the show. A friend or another family member can enter the same animal in a different category. Entry forms for the show can be obtained from any Farmington Plaza merchant or the chamber of commerce office in the Masonic Temple building on Grand River and Farmington Road. Entry forms must be turned into Pets 'n' Particulars, 22930 Mooney, across from the Farmington Plaza by July 21 at 6 p.m.

Pets must be kept on a leash or in proper containers at all times. Age limit for contestants allows children up to 14 to participate. Contestants must handle their own pets. Parents will not be allowed into the show ring.

Trophies will be awarded for first, second and third place winners. All contestants will be given a certificate of participation for their efforts.

The dog most closely resembling Charlie Brown's Snoopy will be given a special trophy.

Categories include: most evenly matched set of pets; pet with the waggiest tail; most talented pet (with 30 seconds to prove it); pet with bushiest tail and largest pet (horses included in this one).

Other categories are: most articulate pet (speaks the best); smallest pet (ants or other insects are excluded); most unusual pet; most original costume for pet and owner and ugliest pet.

The show is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. on July 22.

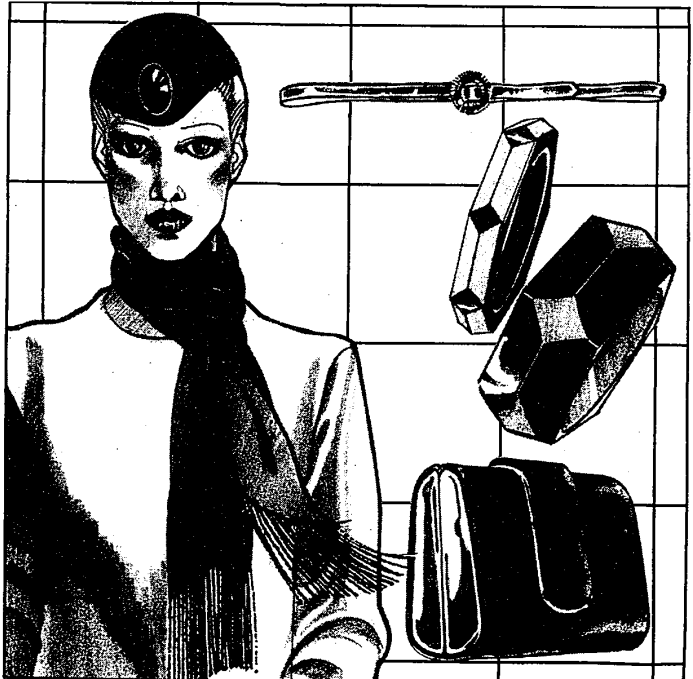
• **Art-In:** Rapidly becoming a Founders Festival institution, the Art-In will once again be featured on the grounds of the old Farmington Junior High, Grand River and School. In addition to materials to use in completing their works of art, children will be able to see a puppet show starring Piggy and Bunny, who are hits on the Artistart Preschool's puppet circuit. Show times are 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., July 25-28. Parents, give those tired kids a break while you browse. Have some art.

• **A TIP OF THE ANGLES TOPPER** to Leslie Goldman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Goldman of 27220 Arden Park Circle, Farmington Hills, who participated in a week-long flute seminar at Michigan State University recently. The 1977 graduate of Clarenceville High School is studying applied flute at MSU. She is the principal flutist for the Symphony Band and the co-principal flutist for the chamber orchestra. She also plays with the Woodwind Quintet.

TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS

To connect with the Farmington Observer use the following numbers:

- Staff — 477-5450
- Delivery — 591-5500
- Classified Ads — 591-0900
- Display Ads — 591-2300
- Legal Ads — 591-2300



THE HOTTEST ACCESSORY LOOKS ON EARTH are straight from HEAVEN, via SANDRA SCHNEIDER. Divinely devilish in pitch black and fiery red, fall's most explosive color combo. Raunting the new geometry with outrageous shapes like diamonds, ellipses, squares, hexagons. Constructed handbag in black suede with red metallic leather trim, \$85. Long silk scarf fringed with jet beads, \$95. Narrow belt in red metallic leather with jet-beaded buckle, \$25. Black silk muffin hat, \$67. Oval brooch, (shown on hat), \$20. Hexagon bangle bracelets, \$17 and \$28. In The Woodward Shop Cache at Hudson's Twelve Oaks only.

THE
WOODWARD
SHOPS
HUDSON'S