

Max Ellison

Poet and storyteller here for Valentine Day party

Children's librarians from both the Farmington and Farmington Hills Branch Libraries say "Happy Valentine Day" with a program they have planned for the entire family.

Parties are scheduled at both libraries featuring a unique Michiganian, Max Ellison, who writes poetry, tells humorous stories and paints in watercolor. He has authored a number of books and many poems, but he is best known for his way in telling a story.

The party starts at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 10 in the Farmington Hills Community Library on 12 Mile Road, and at the same time on Thursday, Feb. 12 in the Farmington Community Library on Liberty Street.

Hosts are children's librarians Denise Albrecht, Jill Locke, Sue Long, Deb Masson and Tina Theeke.

There is no charge for the guests, but reservations are requested. Those wishing to attend may call the Farmington

Branch at 474-7770, or the Farmington Hills Branch at 553-0300.

ELLISON was born in 1914 into a poor family of farmers and grew up in an isolated rural area laid to waste by loggers and lumbermen, but as it turned out, it was rich material for him.

His formal education — in a one-room schoolhouse in Frog Holler (a place near Traverse City), ended in eighth grade, but his poetry, colored with images of history, folklore, nature and the simple greatness of common people, bespeaks a man who qualifies for a doctorate in practicality.

He has worked in Kentucky horse stables, as a hog farmer, janitor and factory worker. He has found poetry in all of these experiences.

In prose and poetry he has chronicled the essence of a stablehand who

quotes Shakespeare; the emotions of parents at their daughter's wedding; the unspoken respect between a father and son on a camping trip; the senseless death of a young soldier.

FORMING poems in his head began early for Ellison, an outgrowth he believes, of terrifying boyhood shyness. It wasn't until years later that he began writing his poems down. Some of his early poems were written to pass the time while driving a garbage truck.

Now he writes his poems while crisscrossing the country in his yellow Volkswagens, packed with books, stones he is collecting for a fence, and the watercolors he began painting about a year ago.

He also writes by kerosene lantern in the rustic cabin he built himself on the foundations of his old schoolhouse.

He lives in his Frog Holler cabin simply, hauling his own water, cutting

his own wood, drying fruit and vegetables for the winter. He invites those who hike the mile through the woods along Shanty Creek to come inside and sign their name on the wall.

Ellison's main source of income comes from his recitations, the sale of his paintings and his published works. He is author of "The Underbark," "The Happenstance," "Double Take" and two small paper bound volumes of poetry.

THE MAN who says he could not even deliver a message for his father without breaking into tears, now spellbinds and fascinates audiences mostly throughout the Midwest. He brings them an appreciation for the language, the imagery and the life that surrounds them.

He claims to have memorized enough poetry, his own as well as others', to recite for a straight six hours.

Sometimes known as 'the wandering minstrel,' he's been traveling and reciting for the past 20 years.

In 1973 he was the U.S. representative to the International Poets Festival, sponsored by the Distinguished Visitors program at University of Massachusetts.

In 1975 he was the keynote speaker at a five-state convention of the Eng-

lish Honorary Society at Kent State University.

He is a regular guest speaker at children's literature conferences.

Joining the hosts for the Valentine Day parties will be members of Friends of the Farmington Area Libraries who will serve complimentary refreshments.



Max Ellison, a poet and storyteller who recently turned watercolorist, comes to both branches of the Farmington library for a Valentine Day party suitable for all members of the family.

Members sought

Beautifiers rev up with plans, programs and projects for '81

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

Farmington Beautification Committee (FBC) begins the new year with plans for its first membership drive to be held in the spring in conjunction with its annual beautification seminar.

"The seminar will be free and open to all area residents, the same as it's always been," said Jackie Steuer, a long-time member of the committee who is now serving as its secretary. "But the drive will be aiming for more participation from service clubs, home owner associations, and local groups to help us with our goals for the year."

The seminar, scheduled for April, will be structured so guests can sit in on one or both of two informational sessions.

One session will deal with "Energy Conservation Garden Plantings" which will tell participants how to plant trees for shade and cooling, or where to plant trees for protection from the winds, for example.

The other session will give the basics of gardening.

"We learned from our flower and shrub sales that many of our shoppers, anxious to have a bit of color around the yard, don't have the vaguest idea of how to plant a tulip bulb."

"This is a from-scratch lesson on the basic basics," Ms. Steur said.

THE GOALS for 1981 stem from a list given by Earl Billing, director of the city's Public Services Department, who regularly gives suggestions on what's needed in beautifying projects about the city.



JACKIE STEUER

After the tulips bloom in the beds on Grand River and Shawassee and the plot on Farmington Road and Grand River this spring, maps will be made for replacements of those that have been damaged, for replacing this fall.

Most of these replacements are made necessary because of a new water main, new telephone cables and a new sprinkling system that have been put in these areas during 1980.

Development is under way now for new plantings to go into the small triangle park at Shawassee and Grand River.

All "Welcome to Farmington" signs and their immediate surroundings at four spots in the city will be spruced up.

Money has already been pledged to the city by the committee for the planting of a hedge on the west side of the Historical Marker Gardens on Oakland and Grand River, and to assist in the development of gardens on the grounds of the newly-purchased Warner Mansion.

THESE PROJECTS will all be undertaken as the committee simultaneously carries on its regular annual events and activities.

Every year the committee sponsors its free seminar on some aspect of beautification, runs a clean-up campaign, gives awards to businesses which have made a special effort to make their properties attractive; and plants a tree on Arbor Day.

Revenue comes from the annual May flower and shrub sale and a year-round sale of Keep Farmington Beautiful T-shirts.

This is carried on by the 10-member committee and those who are on the committee's "Friends" list.

"Friends of the committee are people we know who can be called on to help for a special project but don't have the time to be members of the committee," Ms. Steur said.

"Sometimes friends will be a Boy Scout troop or the entire Jaycee membership, but for the most part we get help hodge-podge."

Our membership drive will bring together all the people in the city who have a willingness to work together in a desire to keep our community looking good," she said.

STEWART MEREDITH is chairman

of Farmington Beautification Committee for the season which marks its 13th year of service to the community.

The committee is a member of the Beautification Council of Southeastern Michigan, which acts as a network for an exchange of ideas between beautification committees, commissions, garden clubs and like-minded groups.

"Last year part of our clean-up campaign was lifted from another community and other groups in turn have adopted our T-shirt idea as a means of making money," Ms. Steur said.

For its efforts, the committee was given a plaque from Keep Michigan Beautiful, one of only five plaques of their kind awarded in the state, for a clean-up campaign.

The campaign here went under the theme "Clean Up, Clean Up, The Republicans are Coming."

During the same Keep Michigan Beautiful program, the local committee took an award for the staging, programming and general handling of the Farmington Beautification Awards program, lauding local businesses in their beautification efforts.

ALONG WITH these awards, Carol Kurth took a personal award for individual efforts made in beautification areas.

Ms. Kurth is the only original member of the committee. She has served as a committee woman for the past 13 consecutive years.

The beautification seminar will begin at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 8 in Farmington Community Library on Liberty Street.

Week for Jaycettes proclaimed

Jaycettes, under the theme "Together we can make a difference," are celebrating Feb. 8-14 as U.S. Jaycette Week. An organization of 45,000 women between the ages of 18-35, the Jaycettes provide development and leadership training to young women.

Nationally, the Jaycettes support Muscular Dystrophy Foundation, governmental affairs, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and St. Jude Children's Hospital.

Locally, the Farmington area Jaycettes are active in programs at Sarah Fisher Home, Marilline Hall, Oak Hill Nursing Home and by regularly supplying food baskets for the needy.

The local club sponsors an arts and crafts sale every November, gives a yearly vocational scholarship to a high school senior who is headed for a vocational career, and runs a Baby Beautiful Contest in the spring.

Recently, members donated new playground equipment to Farmington City Park.

The Jaycettes were originally formed as an auxiliary to the Jaycees. Membership includes, but is not limited to, is not limited to wives of Jaycees. Many of the members are career women who belong to Jaycettes to satisfy their own need to serve others.

The Farmington Jaycettes celebrate the week by giving an invitation to young women to attend their next meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17 in Farmington Community Center.

Chapter president Marian Bliznik can provide details by calling her at 477-6528.



Looking ahead

Oakway Symphony Orchestra folks are no slouches when it comes to going out and developing an audience. The four pictured received a warm welcome from a large Twelfth-Mall crowd when they gave a mini-concert there recently. Ruth Burczyk (seated) played the first movement of a Grieg concerto. She is the soloist for the next concert at 3 p.m. Feb. 8 at Southfield-Lathrup High School. Ernest Jones (standing left) was guest conductor. Heidi Heyler, Miss Michigan, sang "Climb Every Mountain" and led a sing-along, and Francesco Di Blasi, the orchestra's permanent conductor was on the podium for the remainder of the program. Tickets for the Feb. 8 concert will be available at the door. The high school is on 12 Mile, east of Evergreen.

Winter Sale



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