

Volunteers gear up

Suburbanites make Freedom Festival roll

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Local residents have joined bankers, bikers, business people, boat racers, deejays, entertainers, firefighters, medical personnel, professors, runners, the U.S. Marine Corps and Japan Airlines to participate in the 1982 International Freedom Festival.

Billed as the largest international summer festival in North America, the festival will draw record-breaking crowds to Detroit and Windsor for the event that was officially kicked off last Friday.

Friendship and freedom are being celebrated through July 4 with everything from tugboat races to tomahawk throws.

AMONG THE participants in this year's festival who hail from the Farmington area are Cary Friedly, Nancy and Robert Whitehead, Dick and Jeff Rogers, Brian Voss, Rosemary Dougekos and Greg Mason.

With the exception of Friedly, coordinator of the Freedom Festival's Hart Plaza office, the volunteers offered to work as drivers for the shuttle committee.

The free shuttle is set up for entertainers and various dignitaries who park free at the Ren Cen during the festival and require transportation to Hart Plaza.

Other drivers include Southfield residents Mayer Gordon, Connie Sake, Paul Fisher, Sharon Bricker, Len Laviolette, Caron Minowitz, Mindy Leitman and Rodney and Sharon Spencer and Troy residents Gloria Hajj, Chuck Fligor and Linda, Laurie and Donna Hammond.

LIVONIA RESIDENTS working during the week-long service are Tom Pontichiaro and Jim Boston. West Bloomfield volunteers include Susie and Paul Carl and Cindy Housepian.

Other area people helping out are Mike Kuffel of Plymouth, Pete Fernandez of Redford, Richard Pratt of Canton, Eric Wolf of Birmingham and John Anderson of Rochester.

Many took vacation days from work to drive the vans donated by Ford Motor Co. for the festival.

"It's really nice to have so much sharing between the people of greater Detroit and Canada," said Freedom Festival backstage coordinator Rena Shanaman of Troy.

"Looking out from backstage at all the people enjoying themselves during the show at Hart Plaza last night with the Ren Cen in the background—that's what the renaissance of Detroit is all about. I want to be part of it."

"I'D NEVER BEEN to a Freedom Festival," said Cary Friedly, a commercial pilot on medical leave.

"I decided volunteering would be the

best way to see one, and so far it's been lots of fun."

During Detroit's recent Grand Prix, Friedly served as assistant race manager—a title reflecting two "promotions."

"After I volunteered to work on the Grand Prix, I came in to work wearing roller skates and using crutches. I broke my leg pretty badly in an aircraft accident. When they (Grand Prix officials) saw me, they made me director of transportation," he said with a grin.

Dick Rogers, who used a vacation day to work as shuttle captain from 10 a.m. to midnight Monday, talked his son Jeff and seven others into volunteering as drivers.

"WHEN I got the call asking me to supervise, I thought all the drivers knew what they were doing. But I had to find all the drivers," said Rogers, a Redford Township native.

"I talked to a few friends, and all of them said yes. Our intention is to have fun, not to work."

One yes came from 18-year-old Harrison High graduate Brian Voss, who on Monday accompanied friend and volunteer Jeff Rogers, a Harrison senior who arranged to take a day off from cooking at Sambo's restaurant in Warren, to work a shuttle shift.

Said the elder Rogers, an employee with Chevrolet's financial department

in Warren, "Some of the folks (who ride the shuttle) are a little ragged from driving downtown and trying to find parking. We try to be pleasant and lift them up a little if they're down."

MONDAY'S PASSENGERS included personnel from country radio stations WCXI and WWWW as well as Larry Lee Atkins and the Hanging Tree,

the Country Fever Boys with Boothill Band, the Shotgun Willie Band and Jack Mollette and the Borderline Express.

All performed Monday in a show broadcast from Hart Plaza's Signature Room.

According to the latest reports, the shuttle is operating about as problem-free as Columbia, the space shuttle

launched Sunday by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Like the space shuttle, there are earthside problems, but they're working things out satisfactorily.

Anyone interested in volunteering for future freedom festivals and other events Detroit may contact the Detroit Renaissance Committee at 259-5400.



Jeff Rogers (left) and his father Dick plot the course the shuttle buses will take between the Ren Cen and Hart Plaza. Dick Rogers is the supervisor of the shuttle service. Both are residents of Farmington Hills.



Air Force-bound Brian Voss, a Harrison High School grad, sat behind the wheel for eight hours Monday as a volunteer for the International Freedom Festival's shuttle service.

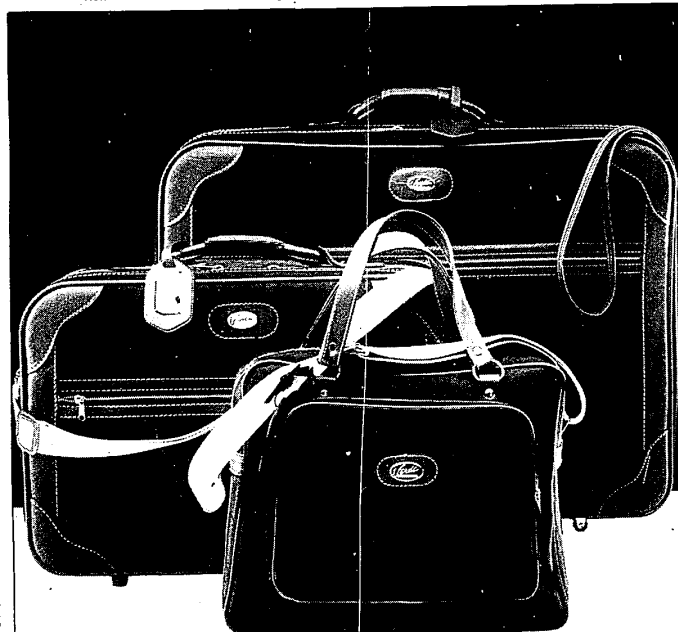


International Freedom Festival backstage coordinator Rena Shanaman (left) of Troy and Judy Greig check out last-minute details in Hart Plaza before the start of afternoon entertainment.



Gloria Hajj of Troy offered to serve as co-supervisor of the Freedom Festival's shuttle service along with Farmington Hills' Dick Rogers Monday. Only six of the 60 shuttle drivers live in Detroit. The remainder hail from cities as far away as Ann Arbor.

Staff photos by Randy Borst



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