The Farmington Observer

Suburban Life

Loraine McClish editor/477-5450

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Long blue edge

Author explores another coastline

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Travel writer Doris Scharfenberg has discovered another long, blue edge to cling to — and the result has been another authoritative guide book to Great Lakes geography.

"The Long Blue Edge of Ontario, A Vacation Guide to Canada's Great Lakes Coasts," published in June by Eerdmans Publishing Company of Grand Rapids, is the result of Scharfenberg's 5,000-mile auto journey along the province's freshwater coastline from the Quebec border to western Lake Superior.

Scharfenberg visited and then wrote about Michigan shore life in "The Long Blue Edge of Summer, A Vacation Guide to Shorelines of Michigan," which was published by Eerdmans in 1982.

Her latest trip, which was accomplished in a 1979 Pontiac called the Grey Ghost, took her from the St. Lawrence River to Thunder Bay by way of Toronto, Niagara Falls, Windsor, Lake Huron, Georgian Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Superior's north shore.

"I stayed as close to the shore as I could, using whatever road took me closest," said the 58-year-old Scharfenberg from her Farmington Hills home last week.

"I visited hundreds of towns. I couldn't begin to tell you how many. And then there were the lighthouses and forts."

The research took about six months of on-and-off travel, and the book took about as long to write. "My life is a study in interruptions," Scharfenberg said with a laugh.

'I was surprised at the heavily English ambiance you find in some of the towns... the English tearoom atmosphere. It was more than I expected.'
—Doris Scharfenberg, travel writer

THERE WERE surprises aplenty along the way for Scharfenberg, a well-traveled native Detroiter.

"I was surprised at how much there was to see," she said. "The little towns along the north shore of Lake Erie were very pretty. I'm always astonished that they grow tobacco there.

"I was surprised at the heavily-English ambiance you find in some of the towns . . . the English tearoom atmosphere. It was more than I expected.

"And I was genuinely astonished at the 30,000 islands in Georgian Bay. Must have kept someone awfully busy counting them."

Scharfenberg said she was exposed to "a slightly different of view" of North American history on her journey through Ontario, which was founded by British Empire loyalists who fled the American Revolution.

"We think we won the War of 1812," the author said. "They think they won it.

"We're very proud of our revolution and our George Washington and our stand against the British. But that stand wasn't universally popular. They (Ontario citizens) do hang on to their British heritage.

"There's still traces of that attitude, although it (United States independence) doesn't stir the feelings like the Civil War seems to in some parts of the States."

THE BOOK has been "well accepted" by Canada's Ministry of Tourism, although one problem has surfaced.

"There's been a misconception that I keep running into," Scharfenberg said. "Some Canadians ask why did they hire an American to write this book.

"Well, I have to explain that nobody hired me to write it," said the author whose maternal grandparents were Canadian citizens and lived on an Ontario farm. "I just wrote it in the hopes of making some money from the sales of it."

And, anyway, Scharfenberg isn't really making a living from her travel writing. "I'd be the most skinny person you ever saw if I tried that," she said. "No, I do it just for the love of it."

Scharfenber's Michigan book, which had its beginnings as a long feature story for a Detroit newspaper in 1979, was "very well received" and resulted in her being named an Ambassador of Michigan Tourism by former-Gov. William Milliken.

The book now is sold through the state Department of Natural Resources.

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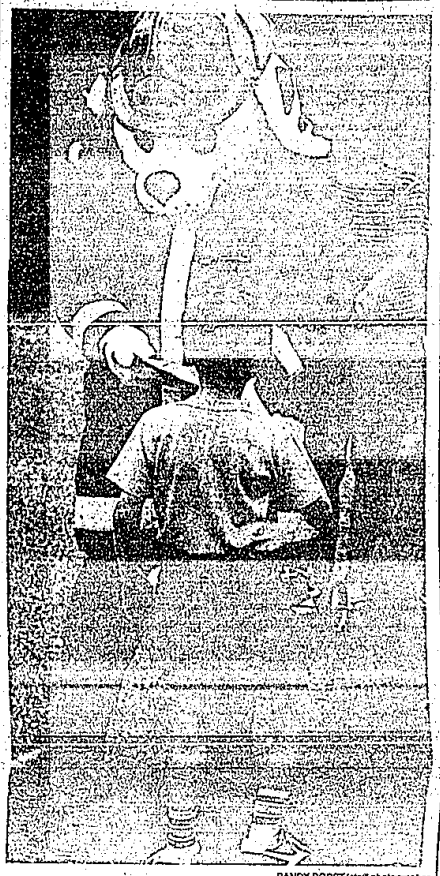
RANDY BORST/staff photographer

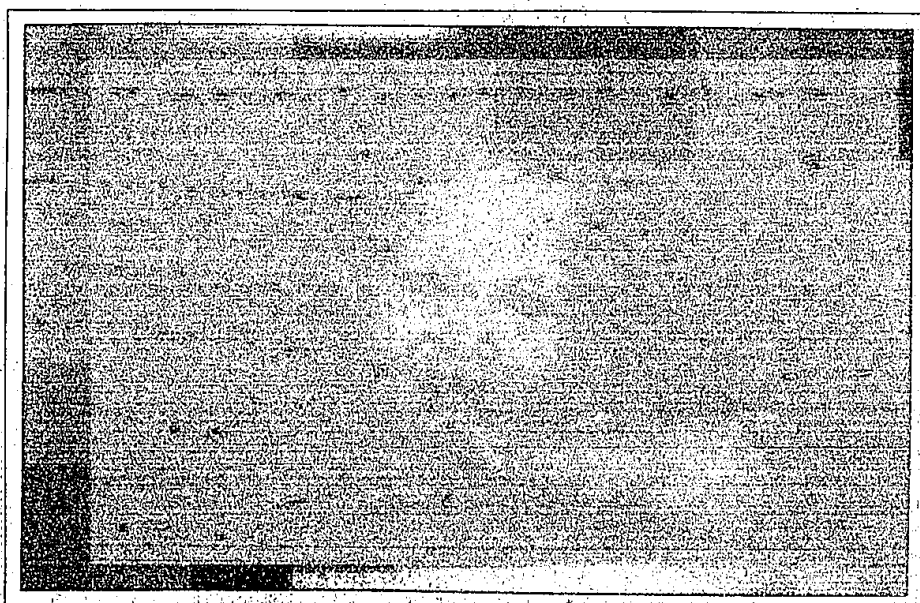
Doris Scharfenberg relaxes in her Farmington Hills home which also serves as an office.

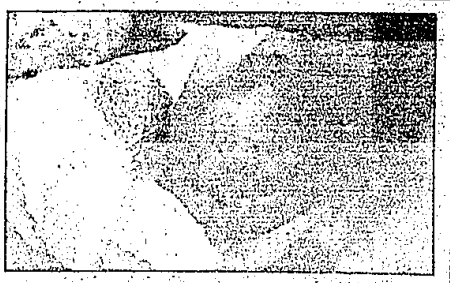


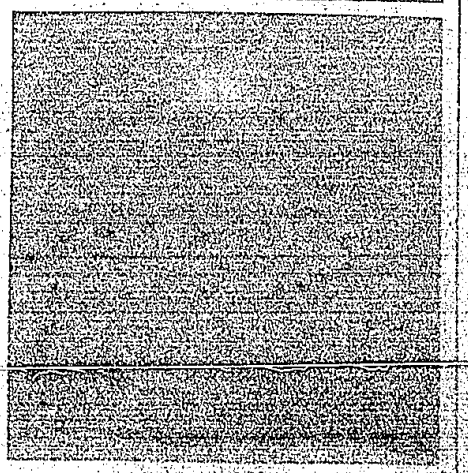
RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Dog days

Sparky the Dalmatian from the Farmington Hills Fire Department hands out fire safety literature during the recent Kid's Day in the Farmington City Park. Kid's Day was part of the Farmington Founders' Festival, which also included a parade and fireworks display.







Beautiful babies!

These babies are all under a year old, but already they're earning their way in the world. They were the top three winners in the sixth-annual Baby Beautiful contest sponsored by the Farmington Area Jaycee Women. First prize was awarded to Alex Welch (above), who was born Sept. 18, 1983. He won a photo package from Focal Point Studios. Maggie Simonski (top right) earned second place. Maggie, born May 28, won a child car seat from Bob Saks Cidamobile. Third place went to Calvin Moore (right), who won a "Loveable Teddy Bear" donated by Melnick's Curiosity Shop and a gift certificate from Pixieland. Calvin was born Dec. 3, 1983. The contest was part of the Jaycee Women's child safety awareness program in connection with Buckle Up Babies (BUB), which attempts to alert mothers to protect their little ones with infant car seats.