

Dangers To Health

Rats, Human Waste, Hepatitis

By LYNNE LUTHER

Disease is one of the biggest enemies of the poor and the depressed area in Farmington Township's Section 36 has its share of health hazards.

A couple of years ago, two children were infected with hepatitis within a few days of each other.

The culprit for this fortun-

ately isolated hepatitis outbreak was believed to be raw human waste lying dormant above ground.

THE SEWAGE collected in ditches and at times ponded in low spots in front and side yards. Children playing outside easily came into contact with the highly infected ditch water outside.

(Following is the third in a series of articles written by Lynne Luther examining problems in Section 36 of Farmington Township. The series will continue this weekend with an account of things mothers are doing to help themselves.)

Mrs. Jeanette Trisdale, of 28700 Independence in Section 36, points an angry finger to the ditch across the street from her home, damning the muddy, stinking water that

"no one has bothered to do anything about."

On the next street over from Mrs. Trisdale's house, a group of mothers has met in the home of Mrs. Barbara Hoskins of 21611 Roosevelt.

Several mothers from the neighborhood met with representatives from the Oakland County Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) searching for ways of bringing in low cost housing and generally raising their standard of living.

SEVERAL TOLD stories in the dimly lit dining room with an old picture of Jesus Christ hanging on the wall. Most of the homes visited had at least one religious picture on the walls, no matter how run-down.

Most of the families in Section 36 are of Southern origin. Mrs. Betty Holbert says she came to Farmington 13 years ago from Alabama with husband Wiley, a worker at the Ford plant in Wixom.

The Holberts have always rented their houses until they decided to buy their homes in Farmington Township at 21203 Cass.

"Wiley has a lung disorder and leg disease," she says. "Ford Motor gave him a week off and, instead of resting, he goes back to work. Last year, he was off six months with bronchitis."

Mrs. Holbert returned to work a year ago when "we were about to lose our home." With the help of the OEO's Legal Aid office, she was able to obtain enough credit counseling to allow the Holberts to keep their home.

MRS. HOSKINS, an attractive 32-year-old brunette and mother of four, is a native Farmingtonite. Two of her children live with her while two live in Kentucky with grandparents.

"Their dad's people have 'em," she says without bitterness. Her divorce became final a year ago, again with the help of the OEO Legal Aid office.

Mrs. Hoskins is unemployed but receives \$280 a month in Aid to Dependent Children payments. But by the time rent on the uninsulated house is paid plus rubbish pickup, lights, gas, telephone and water bills are paid, "we are always in the red."

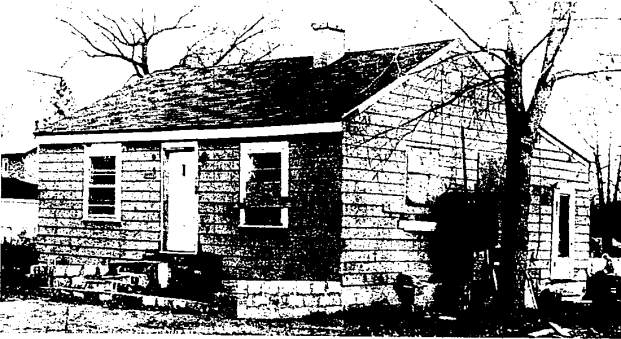
MOST MOTHERS interviewed by the Farmington Enterprise and Observer concur that "wages for unskilled workers aren't hardly worth working for."

Mrs. Marilyn Gendron explains their reasoning: "What's the sense in working for the minimum wage of \$1.25 when you have to pay a baby sitter \$1 an hour anyway?"

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CONTRASTS—The substandard homes in Section 36 of Farmington Township stand in contrast to many nice homes in the area. Some very close to condemned homes and homes slated for condemnation. This white frame house sits peacefully on Averhill just south of Independence. (Evert photo)



ANOTHER CASTOFF—No one lives in this boarded-up house on Whittington Street in Section 36. What once was a nice, inhabitable home has been neglected and left to die. (Evert photo)



LINDA LEWIS shows where rats chewed through the basement wall. She and six brothers and sisters, including a three-month-old baby, live at 21121 Waldron. Their mother, Mrs. Marilyn Gendron, said the rats probably breed in a discarded septic field behind her home. (Evert photo)



RIDING INTO SWAMPLAND—Mathew Smith is one of many children in the area who play in swamps there. (Fran Evert photo)

Elks Collect Toys

Farmington Elks annual "Toys for Tots" drive for Christmas toys for needy children is in full swing.

Toys gathered by the Elks will go to orphan homes, hospitals and underprivileged children in the Farmington area.

Anyone wishing to contribute discarded toys can do so

by bringing them to the Elks Club, 23663 Orchard Lake Rd., Farmington. Just ring the bell at the front entrance and someone will be glad to help you.

Also in the Christmas spirit, Farmington Goodfellows are asking for help in locating families who might be in need of assistance this Christmas. Rarely does a

family in need request it themselves; it is generally a neighbor or a friend who informs the Goodfellows.

Anyone knowing a family that might be a candidate for Goodfellow aid should contact Robert Burton at 851-4700. He is chairman of the Goodfellow investigation for Christmas 1970.

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