

Rachel Bush, a third grader at Flanders, watches as gym teacher Tom Wind wrestles the Austrian pine from the back of his pick-up. Wind

had picked-up the tree from Steinkopf Nursery after students walked there to see it.

A tree for Earth Day

IT WAS the most beautiful Austrian Pine Pam Ellis' second and third graders had ever seen.

The 23 Flanders Elementary students had earned \$65 to buy the tree from holding a schoolwide bake sale. They bought the tree, planted it, and held a School Clean-Up Day last week in observance of Earth Day, about which they studied for several days.

"All week, they've been recycling in the classroom, and Friday, we're walking to the recycling center," said Ellis.

The students first took a short field trip to Steinkopf Nursery on Farmington Road, where they looked over the tree, gave it their okay, then hiked back to the Farmington school for the planting.

Throughout the week, students learned about pollution and litter and the importance of environmental

awareness. One day each student brought in a bag lunch, from which they counted the non-recyclable items. From their class alone, there were 137 items that could not be recycled.

They also participated in a "litter picture hunt," in which they took a camera into their neighborhoods and photographed environmental problems.

One student, Rachel Bush, found old tires, a typewriter and other items in a woods by her house. "I organized a club so we could clean up our woods," she said.

Principal Frank Delewsky said students had been planting trees and flowers on the Flanders' school grounds for about 25 years.

After Earth Day, the class also plans to visit a landfill and a recycling center in Ann Arbor, Ellis said.



Flanders parent Larry Cole (center) maneuvers the pine to its final resting place in front of the school's parking lot with help

from the student crowd. Larry's son, Mark, is a third grader at Flanders.



Flanders students prepare a hole on the school grounds in which to plant their Austrian Pine as part of the Earth Day celebra-

tion. Second graders Kristin Dicostanza (left) and Aaron Muncey take their turn with the shovels.

After 23 years in teaching, she's still staunch feminist

By Casey Hens
staff writer

It was the late 1950s. And life was giving Marian McCracken the old one-two punch — knocking over her dreams of white picket fences and pushing her into a new world of civil rights and activism.

With her husband diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, the Farmington resident decided to get a teaching certificate and go back to work.

"I knew I was going to have to take care of the family," she said. "The whole dream when World War II was over — you move to your own acre and a white picket fence — the whole dream went down the tubes."

But what seemingly made life tougher proved to be a recipe for strength and a lifelong commitment to human rights.

Her employment as an elementary teacher in the Farmington Public Schools was the beginning of opening her eyes to inequities and injustices and political action on a local level.

After a 23½-year teaching career at Eagle and the former Bond elementary, and years of just living, the 69-year-old mother of two remains a staunch feminist and is proud of it.

TODAY, SHE sits on the board of directors for the National Organization for Women and is past president of the Michigan NOW Chapter. She has been honored with numerous awards, and just last week received a Wonder Woman Award from the Women's Survival Center of Oakland County. McCracken and four others were selected through a countywide nomination process.

McCracken received hers in the area of government and politics "for her lifelong struggle to eliminate racism and sexism both as a teacher of young children and a political activist," according to information from the center.

She's still fighting for rights she



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— Marian McCracken

people

thought were taken care of long ago.

"There's so many good things that have happened," she said. "But the '80s have been very, very difficult. We have problems we never thought we had to deal with. That really reflects the mood of the country."

"Certainly, racism is alive and well."

Recent polarization between pro-life and pro-choice factions has not weakened feminist efforts, but strengthened them, said McCracken. In recent years, NOW's membership has doubled, there is a new student vice president of the Oakland Chapter and U-M Dearborn has a new chapter.

NOW is also looking overseas to the recently liberated countries of Eastern Europe, where it is feared that established religions will go in with old-line views. They're spreading what McCracken calls "global feminism."

"Churches can go back to where they were 30 years ago," McCracken explained. "That's going to be a real problem for women."

The 1990 general election is also on her mind, as she and other NOW activists work to encourage pro-choice advocates to run for various political seats. "There are a lot more women and pro-choice candidates running," she said. "This year is certainly the litmus test."

McCracken's own courage and love of politics may be rooted deep in her childhood. McCracken's mother, "unconsciously" made an impact on her future feminist views by quitting a teaching job during World War I and heading for Washington. "I think there was some courage there," she added.

Today, she holds awards for her efforts from the American Association of University Women, the Older Women's League, the Michigan Education Association and she received a special tribute in 1986 from Gov. James Blanchard and the state House of Representatives.

She is a longtime member of the Farmington Democratic Club and is also active in regional Democratic politics. She has been a member of the National Board of Coalition of Labor Union Women, Metro Area Gray Panthers, Detroit Area Nuclear Weapons Freeze and the Michigan Abortion Rights Action League.

She is also active with the Michigan Women's Studies Association and the Michigan Women's Assembly.

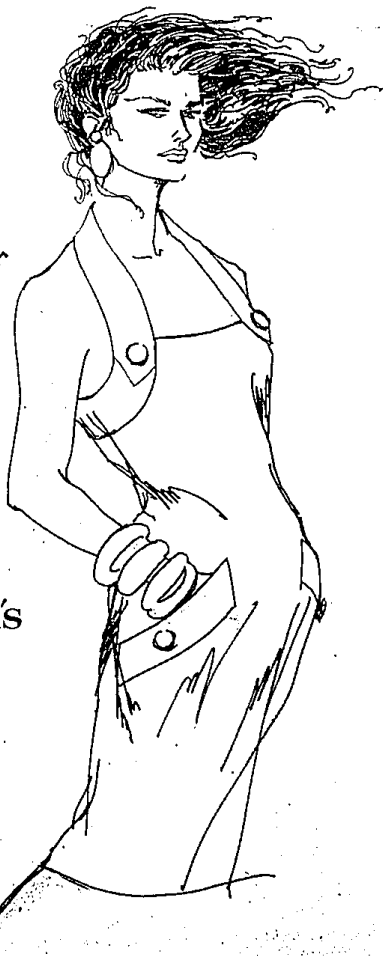
Perhaps the most telling are McCracken's beginnings. She was born on Aug. 26, 1920 — the same day women in the United States won the right to vote.

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