

Saving the stream

Once again, residents pitch in

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

For seven years now, hundreds of Farmington-area residents have pulled on their work boots and gloves, working to resuscitate a choking Rouge River.

Early June is Rouge Rescue time across the western end of metropolitan Detroit.

This year's local cleanup site was just off Tuck Road, north of Eight Mile, adjacent to the Botsford Community Health Center on Folsom Road.

About 300 volunteers were expected on Saturday to help remove debris and smaller log jams from the branch of the Rouge River which flows through this area. City workers and equipment did the heavier lifting and hauling.

T-shirts and a free lunch were also provided.

"I'm disgusted at the shape these rivers are in," said Carl Struble of Redford Township who was at the Farmington Hills site with his 12-year-old nephew, Matt Struble of Farmington Hills. "I used to play a lot on the river (at about age 15 or

14) Once I floated down on a fuel oil tank."

Both the Wayne and Oakland County Health Departments provided a health advisory sheet when volunteers registered. Friends of the Rouge distributed these sheets.

Portions of the Rouge are contaminated by overflows from combined sewer discharges, unintentional municipal or industrial spills, and other pollution.

Joining the cleaning crew were Farmington Hills city officials like Mayor Jonathan Grant, council members Nancy Bates and Aldo Vagnorzi, City Manager Bill Costick, and other Hills city employees.

Council members Masha Silver of Farmington Hills and Bill Lobo of Farmington also turned out.

"It's the perfect day to do it, to go for a walk in the park and clear up the area so it's nicer for us and the little animals that live there," Silver said. "I know it helps. Look at all the trash that's taken out. It gets people together to work in the community. I wish people would be like this all year."

Lisa Zielinski, a Farmington Hills resident and registered nurse at Grace Hospital in Detroit, has invited people to accompany her for the Rouge cleanup ever since she came down alone in 1988. Said Zielinski: "This was my best experience. Everyone was so nice and friendly. Every year I recruit somebody."

Ed Johnson was among Zielinski's group. Now a foreman at New Horizons in Madison Heights, Johnson once worked at the New Horizons in the area. New Horizons, which serves the mentally and physically disabled, has five locations in metro Detroit.

"I love the stream," said Fred Harrison of Farmington Hills. "I have 1,500 feet of the stream on my property. I've been there for 52 years. If there's even a twig there, (on the stream) I throw it out."

David Lemmon, who will enter Clarenceville Middle School this fall, came up to the registration tent for "a pop and a new set of gloves."

Cleaning the Rouge is a family project, Lemmon said. "I've come here for four years. Two years ago, we found a basketball, a beach ball and croquet bats."

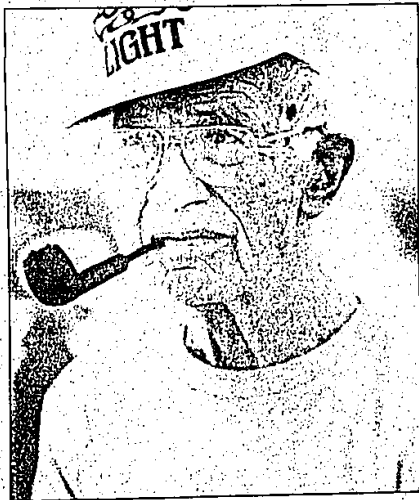
According to Clean Water Michigan, an environmental group, combined sewer overflows (CSOs) dump at least 20 billion gallons of raw sewage and industrial contaminants into Michigan's lakes, rivers and streams each year.

This represents 2,000 gallons for every man, woman and child in Michigan and enough contaminated water to fill 800,000 swimming pools.

Clean Water Michigan states that only 36 of 588 CSO "outfall points" in Michigan have what the state considers "adequate" control programs. Untreated discharges contain fecal coliform bacteria, cadmium, lead, mercury, phosphorus and other contaminants, the group claims.



Bunching together: Every year for the last four years, Lisa Zielinski of Farmington Hills has organized a small group of friends to participate in the Rouge Rescue, which takes place in the city's southeast corner.



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMMON

Five decades of commitment: Through the years, Farmington Hills resident Fred Harrison has seen many changes in the condition of the Rouge River. He was on hand Saturday for the Rouge Rescue.



Breezing through: Geary Tudball (right) runs a buzz saw through the thick logs at the head of the project. Several hundred volunteers gathered at the Botsford Continuing Health Center at Folsom and Tuck roads.

Pre-prom posing



All dressed up: Farmington High School senior Carrie Walter stands with her date, 1991 graduate Scott Dolosh, for a picture on the lawn of Warner Mansion in Farmington. This is the third year that seniors, and their dates and families, were invited to socialize and have photographs taken before attending the prom at the Roostertail.

Children's author visits library

Children's author Jean Little will visit Farmington Hills this week in a program sponsored by the Oakland County Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Blind since birth, the well-known author has written 18 books and become a university instructor.

Seats are still available for a 10:30 a.m. program scheduled for Wednesday, June 10 at the Farmington Hills Branch of the Farmington Community Library on 12 Mile Road, where the county facility is located. For more information call 553-0300. She will also speak that evening before a sold-out audience of the Detroit Area Chapter, Women's National Book Association.

Blind since birth, well-known author Jean Little has written 18 books and become a university instructor.

Her visit is part of a statewide tour called "A Little Insight" designed to offer the unique perspective of a blind author. From May 30 to June 10 she will visit Farmington Hills, Detroit, Gaylord, Kentwood, Marquette, Petoskey, Rockford and Traverse City.

She was born to two physicians in Formosa in 1932, the second of four children. Although blind from

birth, she was never "the handicapped child." Her mother taught her to read before she attended regular school, and she spent countless hours in the library.

She received her bachelor's degree from Victoria College at the University of Toronto in 1955 and taught children with motor handicaps for several years before starting to write full time. She currently lives in Ontario, Canada.

Little received the Canadian Children's Book Award in 1962 for her first book, "Mine for Keeps." In 1985, she earned the Canadian Library Association's "Magna's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird."

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Hermes and Dionysos. Monument to Aeschylus (detail), 1860, bronze. The Detroit Institute of Arts