



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CANNON

Baggin' It: Workers from the 16th District Court's voluntary work program scoured the boulevard along Eight Mile Road Saturday as part of the Clean Team Campaign, designed to beautify the border road.

Clean-up campaign gets court-ordered help

BY MATT JACIMAN
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It doesn't have the same glamour, but like the celebration of Detroit's 300th anniversary, the cleanup of Eight Mile Road crosses community lines and unites people for a common purpose.

Dubbed the Clean Team Campaign, the annual effort brings businesses along Eight Mile and volunteer groups out to pick up trash, cut grass and weeds and beautify the corridor.

"It's in their best interest to make their storefronts look good for their customers, their employees, and we try to make it

fun for them to do that," said Shorlan Douglas, executive director of the Eight Mile Boulevard Association, which sponsors the cleanup.

The 8-year-old association represents 13 communities - including Livonia, Farmington, Farmington Hills and Redford Township - along a 27-mile stretch of Eight Mile in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. The organization is funded (budget for this fiscal year: \$228,439) through grants, contributions and membership dues.

The week-long Clean Team Campaign continued through Friday. Crews from Livonia's 16th District Court voluntary

work program, which gives non-violent offenders a chance to avoid jail sentences, participated Saturday and Sunday.

Court workers bagged trash along the Livonia side of Eight Mile between Haggerty and Inkster Road.

"We're always happy to assist the community in special projects they may have," said Karen Chaatung, director of the court's work program.

Other participants in the cleanup include Farmington Hills firefighters, the Hills planning department and the young adult committee of the south Oakland County chapter of the National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People, which was in charge of cleaning up the Eight Mile median between Inkster and Telegraph.

The association has a "prize patrol" handing out trinkets to cleanup workers, Douglas said. Workers are also eligible for a raffle for other prizes. The association follows up in September with its annual beautification awards.

The Speedway gas station at Eight Mile and Middlebelt, though not a member of the association, is doing its part all this week. Employees have volunteered to come in a half-hour early, or stay a little late, for the cleanup, said station manager Steve Young.

The big push at the station was Saturday, Young said.

"I think it's a great idea for them to be doing this," Young said. "Makes everybody a lot happier when they drive down here."

For more information about the Eight Mile Boulevard Association, call (248) 559-8633 or visit its Web site, www.eightmile.org. E-mail address: mail@eight-mile.org.

Conscientious

Raitt said her group is extremely conscientious about cleaning up after and monitoring their dogs. She can't say how diligent other dog owners are after her group leaves.

Though some dogs may not be leashed, they respond to voice commands, Raitt said.

"All of us have baggies," said Raitt, who has two dogs. "We are concerned about leaving anything on the field. We have unwritten rules. We are very conscientious. We all know one another. We are all parents. We can't patrol it seven days a week."

The district isn't violating zoning ordinances by not preventing dog owners from walking their pets. In effect, the school district determines the guidelines and enforcement, according to Lee Blizman of the Farmington Hills zoning department.

However, she said, "Tacit consent isn't necessarily permission." Some people assume silence means consent.

Farmington Hills Councilwoman Vicki Barnett, a strong advocate of a dog park in Farmington Hills, said she knew this group met at the school. "They were clandestine," Barnett said. "They have no where else to go."

Other fenced fields are locked, she said. Barnett understands the issue of liability and will continue to pursue a dog park in Farmington Hills. There are enough volunteer organizations to provide upkeep of a dog park, including groups like Paws for a Cause and Boy and Girl Scouts, she said.

"We need to find the land," Barnett said. "We need to be sensitive to residents. The school property is the only property which is properly fenced and controlled."

Dogs from page A1

sense and hygiene.

Following complaints from parents and neighbors last fall about dog and goose droppings on the North Farmington High School fields, the district put dog owners on notice.

"Our children play here. No pets allowed inside fenced area," reads a sign on the North Farmington High football field.

"Our children play here. Please keep your pet on a leash and dispose of animal droppings in a sanitary manner," reads the sign on a North Farmington High School practice field.

The subject came up recently when the Farmington Observer ran a column by Judith Doner Berne, former managing editor of The Eccentric Newspapers.

Berne visited the soccer field at North Farmington High School about 8:30 a.m. one Sunday, invited by Jane Raitt, a West Bloomfield dog owner who is spokeswoman for Parks for Urban Pups, Inc.

Other West Bloomfield residents and Farmington Hills residents were also there with their pets. The dog owners stay from 8:30 a.m.

Cheryl Cannon, who is assistant superintendent of business and finance as well as school operations, said she found a couple copies of the column on her desk July 23. Now school officials are abuzz with concerns.

Raitt will bring up the school district's concerns when the Parks for Urban Pups steering committee meets Sunday at Bravo Coffee House on 14 Mile and Farmington Roads.

Good neighbors

Farmington School Superintendent Bob Maxfield stresses that athletic fields are primarily home to sports activities like Little League and soccer games. Puppy play groups aren't its designated use.

"We want to be good neighbors," Maxfield said. "We want dogs to be kept on a leash. We have the issue of do we want the field to be known as a Sunday morning gathering place?"

Dog owners have congregated at the school site on Sunday

mornings for at least a couple years.

The district was unaware of this, according to Cannon. A dog owner herself, Cannon says even the best cleanup effort still leaves some residue behind.

"We wouldn't want some child falling face first into it," she said.

Say "dog park" in Farmington Hills and bells of controversy start to ring. A group of citizens has been lobbying the city for months, unsuccessfully, to create a dog park. Dogs aren't allowed in Farmington Hills parks.

Make-shift dog park

In her column, Berne referred to the soccer field at North Farmington as a "make-shift dog park." On the day she visited, about 20 residents and 30 dogs were there. Some owners have two dogs, Raitt said.

Berne commented by phone that she, personally, saw no sign on the Farmington Road side of the soccer field. She and Raitt, too, said they would take another look, though Raitt knew a sign was at the football field.

"There is a sign on the soccer field near the opening and the driveway," Cannon said. "It's where they are putting up those fences."

Berne wrote: "The field is fenced but has gaps that an early-bird dog owner has filled in with bright orange plastic temporary barriers."

Cannon said those "gaps" are for humans to pass through to get to the field. Several months ago, a runner who wanted to use the track called police because she worried about the presence of dogs and dog waste, Raitt said.

In trying to get their point across in print, the school district acknowledges exposure may bring more attention to the area.

"We want to be good neighbors," Maxfield said. "The bigger issue is not having the field become known as a Sunday morning gathering place." "We don't want dogs running loose," he said. "We want to discourage it. If we have to make a

Garage fire destroys \$30,000 classic Mustang, damages Hills home

A nearly restored 1965 fastback Ford Mustang valued at more than \$30,000 went up in flames July 26 during a garage fire.

The Farmington Hills Fire Department was called to the blaze at 6:11 p.m. Inspector Michael Kish said preliminary findings are that the fire started when fumes from paint used to touch up the Mustang ignited.

"They were preparing it for the Woodward Dream Cruise," Kish said.

After getting the call, firefighters could see a cloud of smoke a mile away from the home at 28254 Shady Lane. Upon arrival, they saw an attached garage in flames.

The garage was destroyed by fire and two adjoining rooms of the house were damaged in the blaze.

Kish said there were four adults and one child in the home; none was injured in the fire.

Two other cars in the three-car garage were also destroyed in the blaze: a 1972 Porsche and a Mitsubishi Eclipse. The Mustang belonged to a friend of the homeowner.

Fifteen firefighters and four trucks responded to the fire.

Firefighters returned to the station within two hours.

— by Kevin Brown

BUSINESS NEWS



Power player: Anthony F. Farley Jr. (right), chairman and chief executive officer of DTE Energy, congratulates (center) Roger Stephens for winning an Alex Dow Award. Also pictured are Melanie McCoy, plant manager St. Clair Power Plant, and William Roller, vice president for power generation.

Energy award

Roger Stephens of Farmington Hills has been honored by Detroit Edison with one of its most distinguished employee awards for extraordinary performance.

Stephens received the Alex Dow Award for providing prompt and successful service to the company's Power Generation organization for generator and turbine related issues.

Stephens has led the engineering effort to keep the power generating equipment in the power plants in highly reliable condition. A typical day requires stop-

ping at multiple plants and addressing the problems or developing the next long-term improvement or maintenance projects.

Named in honor of Detroit Edison's second president, the Alex Dow Award has been given annually since 1946 to either current or retired Detroit Edison employees in recognition of outstanding achievements related to innovation, emergency action, improved company operations, extraordinary performance and for outstanding humanitarian achievements in the communities that Detroit Edison serves.

Correction

A story published in the Thursday, July 26 Farmington Observer incorrectly reported the number of seats up for grabs in the Farmington Hills local election Nov. 6.

Three city council seats and the mayor's race will be decided by voters on that day.

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