

Intern logs hydrants by walking the Hills

BY KEVIN BROWN
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Is it a Mueller, an East Jordan or a Waterous?
That's what college sophomore Lindsay Christiansen found herself wondering, when she spotted a fire hydrant recently while vacationing at Cedar Point.
But you can't blame the 18-year-old Farmington Hills resident for having hydrant brand names on the brain. She spent the whole summer walking from hydrant to hydrant, in the rain and the withering heat, from Haggerty to Orchard Lake to Inkster Road, from 14 Mile Road to 12 Mile and down to Nine Mile and all the side streets in between.
And there are still a few hundred hydrants left.
Christiansen, daughter of Jeff Christiansen in the city assess-

ing department, was hired to use a \$10,000 global positioning receiver to record the location of each of Farmington Hills' estimated 4,600 hydrants.
To do her summer job, Lindsay dons a yellow backpack with the device inside. An antenna with a saucer-shaped top rises above her head. It elicits a range of comments:
"Marvin the Martian. I've heard that. Or, 'Beam me up, Scotty,'" Christiansen said.
The antenna top was attacked by birds and once got hung up a tree branch.
A hand-held device with a key pad connects to the backpack. On the keypad, she enters information on a series of screens, while standing near each hydrant. The device is powered by batteries that resemble VCR tapes.
During the hot stretch, her


shirt would get soaked through with perspiration. Before heading out those days, Christiansen would drink a bottle of water in an air-conditioned city-issue car.
"The rain was worse than the heat and cold," Christiansen said, adding she liked the physical aspect of the job.
Pete Baldwin, deputy Farmington Hills fire chief, said the effort to log the city's hydrant locations is part of an Oakland County-led data sharing effort.
Bob Carra, Farmington Hills Geographic Information System analyst, said the data collected is ultimately logged on a digital map. When layered over other digital maps depicting roads, sewers and other systems, "It allows you to look at things spatially," he said.
Satellite coordinated readings of each hydrant are accurate to within a meter.

"It allows us to create maps that can be printed out. The fire department can know when they respond to a fire where the nearest fire hydrant is. It's good to know where all your assets are," Carra said.
Baldwin adds, "It gives us an idea of what side of the street they're on, and how far from the house, to help you decide whether to stretch 1,000 or 4,000 feet of hose."
On occasion, hydrants are partly buried by sod built up around the base, or obscured by landscaping. "If the hydrant is too low the wrench won't fit," Carra said, adding this information is passed to the city engineering department.
"She records how many ports there are, the brand name, the (water) main size," he continued. "She has found many hydrants not listed on the maps."
Christiansen, who is attending Oakland Community College, plans to study marine biology.


Walk a mile
in her
shoes:
Lindsay
Christiansen
has been
tracking
every
fire hydrant
in Farmington
Hills this
summer. She
uses a
device that
employs
GIS tech-
nology.
STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BROWN




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OBITUARIES

CLIFFORD J. STENMAN
Services for Clifford J. "Cliff" Stenman, 68, Howell, were held Aug. 28 at Brighton Assembly of God Church in Brighton with the Rev. Bradley Trank officiating. Burial took place at Fairview Cemetery in Brighton.
Mr. Stenman was born Dec. 29, 1932, in Windsor, Ontario, and died Aug. 23, 2001, at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia. He worked as a machinist and owned and operated Metal Craft Impression Die for 30 years. He was also a member of Brighton Assembly of God Church in Brighton.
He is survived by his wife, Ruth; sons, David (Anne), Alan (Kathy) and Bryan (Beth); brother, Ralph; and six grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to Brighton Assembly of God Church, 7770 Whitmore Lane Road, Brighton, MI 48116. Arrangements were made by Heene-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington.
CATHERINE M. DURKEE

Services for Catherine Marie Durkee, 90, were held Aug. 26 at St. Fabian Catholic Church in Farmington Hills with burial at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Detroit.
Mrs. Durkee was born Jan. 8, 1911, and died Aug. 22, 2001, at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia.
She is survived by children, Anne (Walter) Dauer, Thomas (Patricia) Durkee, Mary Helen (Marty) Williams and Cathy (Ken) Price; 16 grandchildren; and 19 great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her husband, Myron.
Memorial contributions may be made to the Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament.
Arrangements were made by O'Brien/Sullivan Funeral Home in Novi.
SAMUEL FALVO
Services for Samuel "Sam" Falvo of Redford were held Aug. 29 at St. Valentine Catholic Church in Redford.
Mr. Falvo died Aug. 26, 2001.

He owned and operated the Gulf service station at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Livonia which was later renamed Marathon. He also served as a Sea Bee in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Mr. Falvo was active in the Boys and Girls Club of Detroit. He coached Little League, RTAA, Barney McCloskey, and Westside Seven teams over the years and was a member of the VFW Romanowski Post. He also enjoyed attending his grandchildren's school and sporting events.
Mr. Falvo is survived by his wife, Dorothy; daughters, Denise and Sandy; son, Mark; grandchildren, T.J. Atkins, Jeremy, Justin, Danny and Cody Jagosz, and Sam, Ted, Sean, Gabrielle, and Catherine Falvo; sister, Katie; and many nieces and nephews.
Arrangements were made by Harry J. Will Funeral Home in Redford.

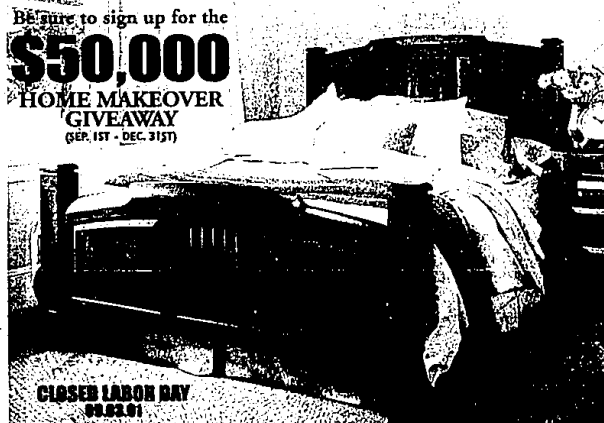
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