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entries to a few sentences, but many gushed well over the 100-word limit. Some decorated their entries with hearts and ribbons. A few included pictures. And while most of the entries were from women, the men often penned the most romantic words.

Barbara's entry was short, sweet and went straight to the heart.

The couple

Bill and Barbara Rutecki met 20 years ago when their parents rented side-by-side cottages in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

"We were both attracted to each other and it took off from there," said Barbara.

While Bill travels a lot for his job, Barbara is content to spend evenings home with their four children: Nicole, 17; Teresa, 16 (a budding writer who helped her mom write the winning entry); Max, 14, and Gus, 10.

"We have four children, so an

evening out for just the two of us is very, very rare," said Bill.

"Once every 10 years we try to get out," said Barbara, laughing. That's why Barbara bought a new dress — "You bet I splurged!" — and why her special glow came from more than a glass of Chianti Classico. That's why her eyes sparkled every time she looked at Bill. This was a special evening for them, and they were enjoying every minute of it.

"Please express our thanks to the Observer," said Bill.

The rest of the evening went perfectly, even though when the Red Wings announced the winners of the Lessons in Love contest they flashed the camera on the Eccentric winners while announcing the Ruteckis' names.

Barbara and Bill arrived home shortly before midnight. Their children were waiting for them. They wanted to hear all about our evening," Barbara said.

She had lots to tell.



The big night: Barbara and Bill Rutecki are ready to embark on their special night as Dawn Jackson, manager of International Limousine in Westland waits for them.

Railroad from page C5

war. About 90 percent of U.S. soldiers were transported around the country on rail lines, Boros said.

"Most of our population has never been on a train now," he said, adding he will show timetables for just one of Detroit's three rail stations, showing the number of trains coming and going.

Keeping the engines moving was just part of the railway picture. Boros said he had been a fireman for 10 years before he ever set foot in any of the "back shops," where engines and cars were maintained. Every piece had to be stripped down and inspected to make sure the engines were in running order.

"It was a huge complex. I stood there, and I was in awe," he said. "You have no idea what it takes to keep these things running."

Shoveling coal was quite a job — he'd have to move about six tons in an eight-hour day, for a salary of \$7.43. But when it came time to test his athletic abilities as he prepared to enter the military, Boros found it paid off.

With other recruits, he was ordered to do sit-ups and push-ups. "I did 127," Boros recalled. "I could do sit ups all day. I was in top shape."

He attributes his 48-year



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREXLER

Fireman: Richard Boros worked for railroads for 48 years. He'll share his inextinguishable knowledge with local railfans on March 5 as part of the Blue Circle lecture series, "Trains, Planes & Automobiles: A Historical Odyssey".

career to a very simple factor: "It was my profession. I enjoyed it and it was exciting. You could be around the railroad a thousand years and never know anything."

Tickets for the Trains, Planes

& Automobiles series are available at a cost of \$39; seating is limited. They can be purchased at Big Apple Bagel or Books Abound, or by mail in care of Blue Circle, P.O. Box 1008, Farmington, MI 48332. For more information, call (248) 478-6500.

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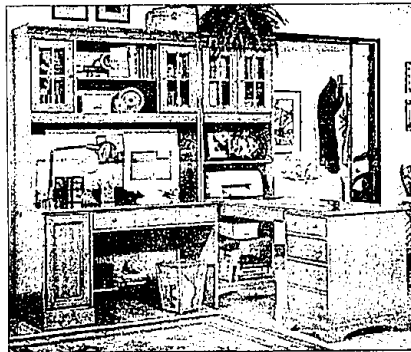
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