



Lois Furr, a Bonnet Hill resident in Kendallwood subdivision, watches as a tributary of the

Rouge carries away a pile of firewood across Hearshatone.

Lightning strikes house

Lightning struck a roof peak and traveled into the second-story bathroom of a house in northwest Farmington Hills in Wednesday's downpour, causing about \$35,000 in damage, fire officials said.

Three family members were home but no one was hurt.

"It was a pretty awesome explosion," said Farmington Hills Deputy Fire Chief Peter Baldwin.

Shortly before 9 a.m., lightning struck the peak of the roof of the two-story house, on the 30990 block of Country Ridge Circle, then traveled through the bathroom exhaust fan. It blew a hole in the bathroom ceiling, charred insulation and blew

out a wall socket.

Alarms sounded in several homes in the area, near 14 Mile and Haggerty, but investigators attributed those to a power surge, Baldwin said.

Downpour spawns a big mess in its wake

Up to four inches of rainfall Wednesday — the first day of summer — covered roads, backed up sewers, flooded basements and generally wreaked havoc throughout Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Creeks were at or beyond capacity. Flooding was widespread. Temperatures were short. And emotions ran high.

"It's a big mess," Farmington Hills Deputy Fire Chief Peter Baldwin said. "It's flooding royal."

Kids were making the best of the conditions, whooping it up in roadway lakes on Peppermill, Brandywine and Dunford. A dumpster floated from Woodbrooke Hills Swimming Club onto 13 Mile, near Chesterbrook. The swimming pool at Valleyview Condoms, off Grand River, became submerged itself.

Cars seemed to be floating in parking lots along Northwestern Highway.

Major roads that became impassable included stretches of Northwestern Highway, Orchard Lake Road, Halsted, Middlebelt, 14 Mile, Freedom, Grand River, I-96 and M-102. "A fire truck even became stuck," Baldwin said.

HOUSES WERE surrounded by water on Danvers, Ridgebrook, Dunford, Brandywine and Nine Mile, as well as other areas, particularly to the north. Many subdivision common areas were under a few feet of water. The Rouge spilled over in many areas.

The area bordered by 12 and 13 Mile, Drake and Orchard Lake Road was hit particularly hard. Included are the Westbrooke Manor and Kendallwood subdivisions. "People were walking into the streets with the water mid-thigh," Baldwin said.

Residents of Nova Woods Condos, 13 Mile and Drake, dug a trench to utilities in a common area northwest of the intersection.

Camaraderie was apparent in Kendallwood subdivision, where neighbors were helping others make sure their sump pumps were working.

Several residents of Brandywine in Kendallwood said they were resigned to their street flooding a lot, but still called the downpour the worst in 21 years.

FARMINGTON HILLS police handled several traffic accidents and requests for barricades. Dispatchers were getting 30 calls an hour, triple the normal amount, Sgt. Paul Cavan said.

Farmington Hills firefighters spent much of the day turning off utilities in flooded homes, responding to reports of downed wires and assisting residents where they could.

As if the downpour wasn't enough, someone threw what firefighters believe was a firecracker from a second-floor room window at the Clarion Hotel, 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Road, Wednesday afternoon. There was a big bang but little exterior building damage, Baldwin said.

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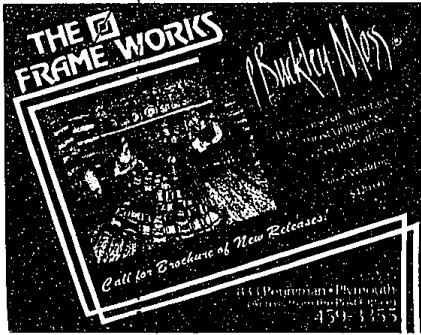
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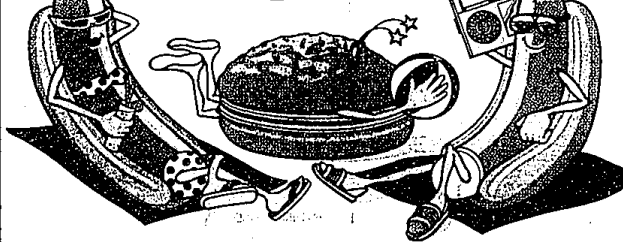
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