

Clarenceville buses get perfect grades

By Marie Chesney
Staff writer

There's 17 buses in the Clarenceville School District bus fleet — and every one of them is in perfect working order.

"It's the first time in the history of our school district that every bus passed 100 percent," said Ralph Skrocki, finance director of Clarenceville, which includes northeast Livonia, southeast Farmington Hills and northwest Redford.

For two days last week, an inspector from the Michigan State Police went over each bus almost inch by inch. His checklist had 178 items, and each bus had to be checked for each item.

Skrocki attributes the fine showing of the bus fleet to the district's new mechanic, Tim McGinty.

"Grover Lewis (transportation head) use to get ulcers before the inspection," Skrocki said. "Then he

got Tim, a fantastic mechanic. He's one of the best."

Back in the late 1980s, inspectors had less than 25 items on buses to check. Today the list totals 178. With 17 buses, that adds up to a whopping 3,074 mechanical parts that must be in good working order.

"This is a rare occasion for us," Skrocki said.

Buses that have serious defects get red tags. Those that have minor flaws are yellow-tagged, and districts have 30 days to correct the problem.

Buses that pass all 178 items are green-tagged. Today, Clarenceville's 17 buses are dressed in green.

Items checked range from gauges to lights to steering wheel to even the amount of rust on the bus's body.

"You can't have any rust or holes," Skrocki said.

Name the park contest begins

By Joanne Mallazewski
Staff writer

No doubt about it. The name Pelz-MDOT for city-owned acreage south of I-696, west of Farmington Road, just doesn't cut it. That's why you — Farmington Hills residents only — will have a chance to help name the park.

In fact, you have until 4:30 p.m., Friday, May 1, to enter a "Name the Park" contest, sponsored by the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services.

All you have to do is give a suggested park name and a brief explanation — 35 words or less — why you want that particular name. You can enter as many times as you wish.

Your entries must be mailed to "Name the Park" contest, Department of Special Services, 31555 11 Mile, Farmington Hills 48336-1165.

The winner will be announced June 8. A \$30 gift certificate courtesy of Giooppolis restaurant and a \$50 gift certificate for any Farmington Hills recreation program will be the prize — along with the knowledge that you named the park.

THE PELZ-MDOT name has bothered some members of the Michigan Department of Transportation, from which the city bought the MDOT portion of the acreage. The Pelz portion of the property comes from Jack Pelz, who sold the city the land.

This isn't the first time a contest has been sponsored to help name one of the city's parks. When the city was confronted with the then-Spicer land on Farmington Road, between 10 and 11 Mile, a contest took place in 1985 and the winner named the area Heritage Park.

The Pelz-MDOT ad hoc committee is working on a plan — based on a city council resolution — for an entrance road, nature trails and picnic areas in the park. Battles, however, continue to be waged whether the park will see more development following the existing eight-year parks and recreation special millage.

Meanwhile, work continues on plans to replace wetlands of about two acres on MDOT from 12 Mile Road, where a boulevard is being built.

Historic presentation set for April 26

"Antique Gardens — 1840-1930" will be presented 2 p.m. Sunday, April 26, at the Spiceland House in Heritage Park by noted historic gardener, Scott Kunst of Ann Arbor.

Kunst, an adjunct professor of period landscape gardening at Eastern Michigan University, will use slides from historic sites in Michigan as the

presentation sponsored by the Farmington Hills Historical District Commission.

His slides of historic sites of the Middle West and Eastern seaboard also will be used to illustrate principles of enhancing property with flowers, and shrubbery appropriate to the period of the homes.

Kunst has been a consultant on gardens established at Meadowbrook Hall, the Wright brothers home and the Sarah Jordan Boarding House in Greenfield Village, as well as the 1905 Charles Platt Garden at the Saginaw Art Museum. He writes regularly for the Old House Journal on topics such as early varieties of iris.

19th century roses and period garden furniture.

"You'll find Mr. Kunst's program fascinating even if you don't live in a historic home," said Ruth Moehlman, chairwoman of the Farmington Hills Historical District Commission. The presentation is open to the public. Admission price is \$5.

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