

# Area residents aid Bosnia refugees

By MARY RODRIGUE  
STAFF WRITER

U.S. troops are in Somalia and so the world's attention is focused on the famine and strife in that African nation. But another horrid war is raging in eastern Europe, an "ethnic cleansing" in what was formerly Yugoslavia.

More than 900,000 children have been affected by this conflict, according to the United Nations. According to reports from relief agencies, more than 1,600 children are dead. Another 30,000 have been maimed. Half the children in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have seen the corpses of people they knew. Two thirds of them think they will die themselves.

In this war, 75 percent of the casualties are civilians.

"Regardless of how shocking the news has become, when viewed repeatedly we become desensitized and assume action has been taken," said Stjepan (Steve) Balog, a local Croatian

## RELIEF EFFORTS

man involved in helping relief efforts.

"Any non-perishable food, winter clothing and first aid supplies would be greatly appreciated. We have established channels for the transport of collected items into these war-torn lands."

Throughout Bosnia, an estimated 2 million will need assistance with heating and food before year's end. Without an immediate improvement, the effects on health will be disastrous.

Romana Habekovich lives in Livonia and teaches Italian at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, but her heart is in her war-torn homeland.

"I've been here since 1974 but my whole family is in Croatia," she said. "They live in Zagreb. They haven't been bombed. We keep in touch."

She is active in the local relief effort drive.

"The children are left with no parents. They are terribly affected. They will carry the psychological scars for the rest of their lives."

"Croatia is facing over 700,000 refugees from Bosnia. They don't have the resources to keep up with demand. Warm clothing, food and money is needed."

One current fund-raising drive under way is an art exhibit featuring works by renowned Croatian artist Ivan Lackovic Croatia. At the Henry Ford Centennial Library, 16301 Michigan Ave. in Dearborn through Jan. 4, the show features works of a dozen Croatian artists. Oils, drawings and graphics are represented among the 72 works on exhibit. Prices range from \$100 to \$1,600.

"Ivan Lackovic Croatia is one of the best known artists who has never had formal art training. His works are well known. And we have many other fine contemporary artists represented here."

The show is sponsored by the

alumni association of the University of Zagreb. Proceeds from the exhibit and sale will go to Croatian orphans, students of the Academy of Fine Arts, and the Institution for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Churches in Croatia.

Earlier this month, Wayne State University's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies sponsored a free symposium to make the public aware of ramifications of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia.

"We are trying to help the victims of this war and also acquaint our fellow Americans with the different relief efforts," Balog said.

The art exhibit in Dearborn is open during regular library hours, Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Friday and Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Anyone who would like more information about relief efforts can call Steve Balog at 313-761-6898.

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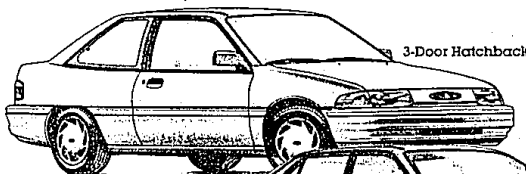
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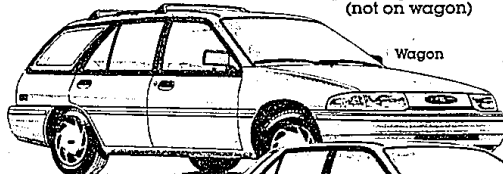
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