

Old-fashioned rain barrel has several purposes



PRIME TIME
ROSE WEBER

Remember the old song about "hollering down my rain barrel" and "sliding down my cellar door?"

John Sekuteraki of Troy doesn't have a cellar door, but he might let you holler down his rain barrel.

Dixie Highway in Springfield Township holds a conglomeration of what seems like all the leftover parts, tools, containers and a million other odds and ends in the entire area.

It had 60-gallon white plastic barrels — some of which had contained soft-drink concentrate — which seemed to ideally suited for the purpose.

The barrels have tight-fitting lids with two screw-top fitted

holes. With the many days of no rain this month and then the ban on watering because of the water main breaks, the rain barrels were greatly needed.

Sekuteraki is in the process of converting his new barrel to replace the old garbage can. My husband has our barrel mounted inside a privacy fence behind the garage and hooked up to the downspout with white plastic

pipe to catch half of the garage roof water. This barrel is going to be connected to a soaker hose that runs along a line of evergreen trees across the back of the yard. "I think an overflow barrel would be handy in cases of rainfall like we had in the thunderstorms. My old barrel filled up very shortly. I have to see how I can fit a second barrel in," Sekuteraki said.

It is important to drain the bar-

rel before the first frost in winter. Sekuteraki turns it away from the gutter opening so it doesn't catch what rain or snow melt there is in the winter. If allowed to accumulate water, the barrel could split open with the pressure of ice.

Sekuteraki is a naturally curious and inventive person. He used those talents before he retired from the General Motors Research Center in Warren.

"The rain barrel's purpose is to

be a little reservoir of water when we might have a little drought," he explained.

Rose Weber is a freelance writer covering items of interest to and about seniors. You may leave a message for her, from a touch-tone phone, by calling 853-2047, mailbox 1887. You also may call her at 646-6992 or write *The Observer & Eccentric*, 808 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

"First of all, it comes in handy at that location. It is right next to an area with lots of bushes and flowers under a 20-inch roof overhang. So they don't get much water when it rains," Sekuteraki said.

Plants close to houses with a wide roof overhang typically need a great deal of artificial watering because the overhang prevents rain water from reaching the area.

Sekuteraki elevated the can four feet off the ground using some old bricks and topping them off with 16-by-16-inch patio blocks for a stable foundation. This maintains a little pressure so the water runs easily out of a hose inserted just above the bottom of the can.

"I put in a short hose, 10 feet or so, with a little valve at the end. I can then fill a pail to water plants in other areas and shut it off when I don't need water to run out," he said.

The water is collected in the barrel through an inverted lid on the top. Sekuteraki drilled a number of holes in the lid to let water into the barrel. The lid also serves to strain out any leaves or needles from nearby trees as well as bugs.

Also, the lid does keep a little water in it so the birds can come for a drink or use it for a bird bath. He also uses rain barrel water when he only needs a cup or so to use on plants he is nurturing. "So it has several purposes," he added.

The first barrel was so successful, Sekuteraki started looking for a larger one. His friend and my husband volunteered to go out to the Whoopee Bowl to see what was available.

The Whoopee Bowl north on

Full Circle workshops start Friday

Full Circle, Center for Holistic Studies, will present its first series of Midwestern summer workshops on the mind, body and spirit from Friday through July 4 at Kingswood School Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills.

Participants are registered from at least five states for the series which begins with "Bringing Characters Alive on the Screen" featuring Sharon Dilworth, MFA, on Friday. There will be a series of workshops each of the next two weekends. The workshops were organized by Sheila Karabees, founder and director of Full Circle. For information, call 1-810-541-3033.

Check goes to hospital

The Crittenton Hospital Auxiliary recently donated \$68,000 to the hospital, presenting a check to Gordon Ridley, hospital president and CEO, at the auxiliary's annual spring luncheon.

During the year, auxiliary members earn money through the operation of the Gift Shop, popcorn cart in the cafeteria, cider and doughnut sale and jewelry sale.

During 1993-94, auxiliary members volunteered a total of 35,476 service hours. The Crittentons, the teen volunteer group, gave 5,602 hours.

In addition to presenting the donation, board members were installed at the luncheon. They are Bev Conklin of Rochester Hills, president; Barbara Jones of Rochester Hills, president-elect; Judy Hebert of Shelby Township, Gift Shop treasurer; Anne Tancroft of Rochester Hills, treasurer; Tamara Pope of Rochester Hills, corresponding secretary; and Claudia Riemer of Rochester Hills, recording secretary.

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