

Flood from page A1

Jones and another 100 residents have been wrapped up in legal machinations since they decided to sue the city to recover damages in 1998. They allege the city was negligent in building and operating the sewer system, and that caused illnesses, loss of use of their homes, property damage and a loss of home value.

Where from
Hills City Manager Steve Brock stressed the money spent on Eleven Pines came not from sewer funds but from a separate and distinct water fund. The money was collected from the northwest pressure district, where the property is located.

Jones wants to know why officials aren't using funds collected in her neighborhood to fix an 11-year-old problem.

A life-long resident of Farmington Hills, Jones bought her home 14 years ago, before laws had been passed that require a seller to disclose sewer problems. By the time she found out her basement would flood during heavy rains, the sellers had moved out of state.

Since 1989, she's been struggling to get answers and action from city officials who have, she says, offered no solutions. In addition, much to Jones' chagrin, they've approved new housing developments, further taxing the sewer system.

Her basement has flooded half a dozen times. The family has lost furniture, Christmas decorations, classic record albums, clothing and other belongings. While replacement costs mount, however, the concern foremost on Jones' mind has been her family's health.

"It's 18 inches of raw sewage," Jones said. "It shoots up through your sewers."

While the goopy, smelly stuff will clear out on its own, depending on how saturated the ground is, some folks pay to have it pumped out. The Jones family has been driven out of their home as long as four days because of it.

They've had their home professionally cleaned after each episode, but even that provides no guarantee against mold contamination, according to Connie Morbach, vice president of Troy-based Sanit Air. Spores take hold on any cellulose materials that become extremely wet, she explained.

Moldy situation
So what's the big deal about a little mold?

In a report filed with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services last year, doctors in Kansas City, Mo. reported the death of an infant in a home found to be contaminated with stachybotrys and other toxic molds. The DOH has produced guidelines for exposure to mold contamination.

Concern for her family's health, along with the hundreds of hours she has already invested in the fight, keeps Jones going through hours of court depositions and stacks of documents she's had to compile.

"At this point, I have so much time invested, it's a matter of principle," she said. "If I win \$25,000 in this lawsuit, it won't change anything."

For Jones, the most frustrating thing has been the lack of help from city officials. While their "Sorry this is happening" are all well and good, she said, they keep allowing people to build homes and increase the burden on the sewers.

Brock has also been frustrated with this issue. Even though the city took measures to separate the sewers in Jones' neighborhood years ago, problems have recurred during rainstorms.

"When you have extensive,

heavy rains, no system is designed to handle all that rain," he explained.

Hands tied

The lawsuit residents have filed also ties the city's hands to a degree. Brock said the city would like to get into the homes to investigate.

"We're at a loss to explain why Mrs. Jones and her neighbors are still having problems, but because of the current situation, it's problematic," he said. "We want to work with our residents. The lawsuit has compromised our ability to do that."

That's not to say all efforts

'At this point, I have so much time invested, it's a matter of principle. If I win \$25,000 in this lawsuit, it won't change anything.'

*Jeanne Jones
—Flooded resident*

have stopped. Oakland County has been conducting a detailed study of sewers along the Farmington/Evergreen lines, he said. Brock said funding might come from an increase in sewer rates, but officials would contact state and federal agencies to learn what assistance is available.

septic system.

The cost of fixing the problem, if it can be fixed, would be shared by the county and city. Brock said funding might come from an increase in sewer rates, but officials would contact state and federal agencies to learn what assistance is available.

Not cheap

But it just isn't cheap to replace aging sewer lines, and the problem isn't just in Farmington Hills. Residents from Beverly Hills and Birmingham also filed suits last year. Birmingham reportedly settled with residents and sought government grants to improve their sewers. The communities of Grosse Pointe and Westland spent millions of dollars in settlements that ended similar lawsuits in their communities.

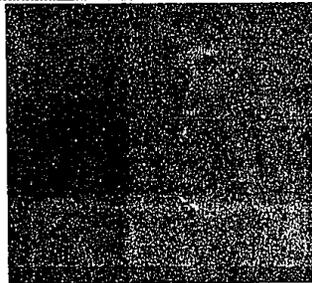
In published reports, county officials have estimated that increasing capacity by 60 million gallons would cost in excess of \$180 million.

"Some of the solutions being kicked around now are very costly," Brock said. "You have to look at what's reasonable or practical."

Jones doesn't see the reasonability of watching her basement fill with raw sewage every time heavy rains fall. And she doesn't see the practicality of waiting for a solution.

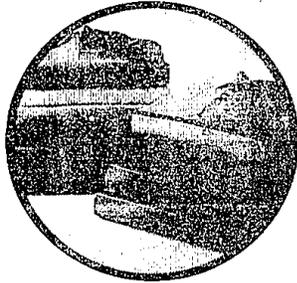
"Some of these people have been enduring this for 25 years," she said. "I won't."

spring's first look



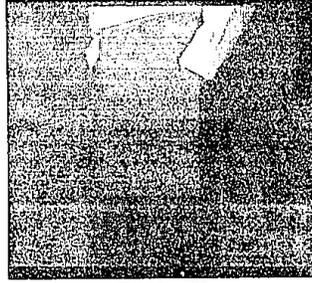
50% off

Selected Women's Items. Nylon/Spandex. Sizes 34-38 R.C. Reg. \$2.00-\$4.50, sale \$1.00-\$2.25. in select sizes.



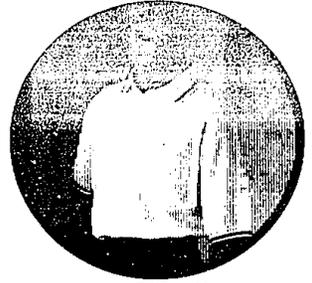
50% off

Boys' polo shirts from Fleece Kids and Clothing Co. Cotton. Sizes 4-20. Reg. \$8.00-\$20.00, sale \$4.00-\$10.00. in select sizes. All sale items except footwear & accessories.



50% off

Fleece-trimmed polo-shirt or patterned pants. Polyester/cotton. Sizes 32-40. Reg. \$15.00, sale \$7.50. in select sizes.



50% off

Selected Women's & Gray pants, full and women sport shirts. Sizes 34-40, 32-40, 32-42. Reg. \$5.00-\$5.00, sale \$2.50-\$2.50. in select sizes.



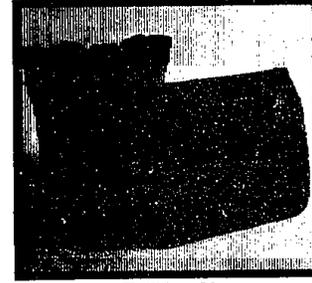
50% off

Ladies' and petites' sport dresses. Sizes: Jessica Howard jacket dress, in natural, linen. Sizes 6-16. Reg. \$8.00, sale \$4.00. in select sizes.



50% off

Activity cap-sleeve or three-quarter-sleeve knit. T-shirt. Polyester/cotton or cotton/polyester. Sizes 5-10-4-10. Reg. \$8.00, sale \$4.00. in select sizes.



50% off

Le Dome leather handbags. Reg. 102.00, sale 51.00. in accessories.



50% off

Unisex 'Kappa'. Reg. 70.00, sale 35.00. in women's shoes.



50% off

Parson Signature stretch tops and cotton pants. Sizes 5-10-4-10, 4-16. Reg. 24.00-\$27.00, sale 12.00-\$13.50. in select sizes.

Mercy High parents to host party

Parents of seniors from Mercy High School are sponsoring an alcohol and drug-free all night party on graduation evening, June 1.

Please mail donations to Mercy High School, 28900 Reeves Mile Road, Farmington Hills, 48338; Attn: John Gernasy.

Make checks payable to Mercy High School or call 476-8000 ext. 238.

take an extra
15% off
any single sale item
*10% off small electronics, cosmetics, fine jewelry and shoes
good Thursday, March 16 and Friday, March 17, 2000 only.
Some items & brands may differ.
PARISIAN

PARISIAN

15% off
your first day's purchases when you open a Parisian credit card.
See an associate for details.

Shop, eat, drink, make your purchases to properly purchase merchandise.
CALL 476-8000 ext. 238 for more information. PARISIAN operates a Liquid Post-Paid open Shop. 10-6, Mon.-Sat. 10-6.
PARISIAN is not a bank. PARISIAN is not a credit card. PARISIAN is not a bank. PARISIAN is not a bank. PARISIAN is not a bank.
PARISIAN is not a bank. PARISIAN is not a credit card. PARISIAN is not a bank. PARISIAN is not a bank. PARISIAN is not a bank.