

CHAT ROOM



ELLEN HERSCHER

Thoughts of the garden make her think of spring

In Southern California, where I lived for 35 years, I belonged to a garden workshop, composed of 70 members. Besides fascinating lectures and demonstrations, we enjoyed exploring a variety of gardens, both commercial and private.

After moving to Michigan in 1985, I missed the social interaction and exchange of tried and true garden ideas. My gardening knowledge was gained in a climate quite opposite of that in the Midwest. Temperatures were often in the 80's and occasionally reached 110 degrees. A week's rainfall in Michigan is tantamount to what we accumulated in a whole year in California. I was frustrated with the prospect of having to learn a different method of gardening.

Driving past Heritage Park in Farmington Hills in the spring of 1999, I saw a sign advertising a plant sale put on by the Hill & Dale Garden Club. It attracted my interest, as I turned around at the Longacre House and drove back down a winding narrow road to some gardens near the Spicer House, where the club ladies were selling plants. Having gardened in California for most of my adult life, I am still learning about plants that grow in the Midwest, so I had many questions that I unanswered knowledgeably by Hill & Dale members. They helped me select some annuals that would grow in my garden, and that is shaded by a canopy of trees. Several of them told me about the garden club and asked if I would like to become a member. I showed up at Farmington Hills Library for the next meeting. After three meetings, I officially became a member.

Island focus

As the focal point of my garden, I like using an "island" surrounded by lawn. When I had a sunny garden in California, my island was filled with flowers and herbs that surrounded a prolific Red Baron peach tree. The home we bought in Michigan came ready-made with an island that is filled mostly with shade-loving perennials, a rugged gray rock, and a colorful maple tree.

Our backyard garden is woodsy, incorporating bleeding heart, creeping myrtle, ferns, hostas, and pachysandra — all sheltered by tall sturdy trees. It is picturesque in a natural way, suggesting that much of the landscape is unchanged since the houses were built nearly 40 years ago.

My uncle Giles, who lives on a farm, has given me invaluable advice. In the rich northern Indiana soil, he grows corn, soybeans, zucchini, cantaloupe, tomatoes, onions, and squash. He knows how, when and where to plant crops and the ideal time to harvest, as well as what types of fertilizers are safe and effective. His knowledge comes from years of diligent work and experience.

Cousin Tom, a great source of inspiration, grows unique things such as enormous long-necked gourds that hang from vines growing high on fences. After drying the gourds in paper bags over the winter months, he gives them a rigorous scraping and cleaning; transforming them into mottled decorative pieces to display in large wooden bowls and suspends the gourds from trees as graceful birdhouses. He also grows mouth-watering tomatoes, ripened in the warm sun and other vegetables, such as peppers and beans, that he willingly gives away.

Last fall, my husband and I cleaned our garden tools and prepared the flowerbeds so we will be ready for spring gardening. It will soon be time to amend the soil, buy manure and fertilizer, and sharpen the lawn mower. Looking out at the tall piles of snow and barren trees, I can hardly wait for springtime to arrive. Until then, we can pull over seed catalogues and decide where and what we will plant. Designing the garden can be as exciting as watching it grow.

May your vegetables be delicious and your flowers colorful and fragrant!

Ellen Herscher is a resident of Farmington Hills

War memories vivid after 50 years

■ During this 50th anniversary of the Korean War, a local woman looks back to her childhood torn apart by the ravages of war.



BY HYE JA SON
SPECIAL WRITER

The Korean War has brought me an unforgettable childhood memory. Although I was so young, I still vividly remember what happened. It was a civil war — a treacherous killing act among people of the same race.

My father, a principal of Kwang Joo High School established by the missionaries from the southern Presbyterian church in the United States, was forcefully taken away by the communist North Koreans on July 20, 1950. My mother was left to take care of eight children alone. She often visited my father in the North Korean prison. My mother continuously encouraged us to have patience and hope. She saw how my father held himself with dignity in such horrible conditions and at the same time he showed other young prisoners to have high spirits and keep faith in God.

When the news came to our town that the North Korean communist army invaded south, my father dug a shelter in the backyard for our family. Once bombing started we all went into the shelter quickly. My brothers and sisters, all my brothers and sisters, knew how to help each other. Bombing and gunfire constantly filled the air and made me scared. Once the sky was covered with B-bombers; they dropped the bombs like dead flies. Soon houses and buildings were engulfed in flames. Bombs destroyed a part of my house where we stored a year's supply of food for my family.

After my father was imprisoned by the Red army, my mother took our family to another town called "Chestnut Village" because it was much closer to the prison but still an hour walking

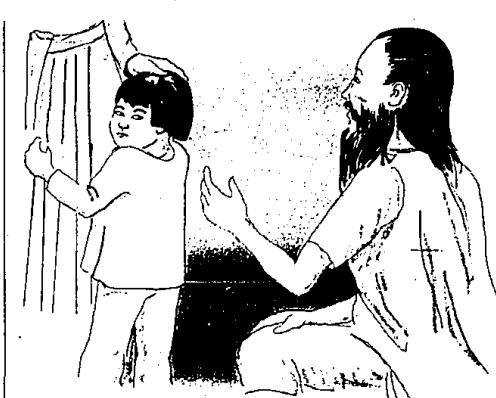


distance, so she could visit my father more often. The village was filled with refugees from everywhere in the country. Because of limited food supplies, everyone was searching for food in the fields. My older brother would go out to the rice paddy and catch grasshoppers and fry them with a little bit of oil. That was a survival instinct to avoid malnutrition.

Always hungry

Food rations were limited so we were hungry all the time. There was no rice or barley. We had some wheat sent by one of our relatives. My sisters and I used to chew the wheat for long periods of time to make gum. I still have vivid memories of hunger.

On Sept. 28, 1950, UN forces landed in Inchon port and the Red army started



GRAPHIC BY HELEN PURCELL

to retreat north. The communists in Kwang Joo also started to move hastily. The Red army made bombs in prison and tried to kill the prisoners in order of prominence. They gathered all the prisoners and called out their names in order. When a name was called, they thought they were going to be freed. Instead they were executed without a word. There was chaos and confusion. When they called my father's name someone said "yes" before he had a chance to respond. That man hastily walked toward the officer of the Red army. My father just sat there wondering what to do. He didn't know at the time that by not standing up when his name was called saved his life. After the army thought all the prominent figures were executed, they threw a firebomb at the prison

and retreated north.

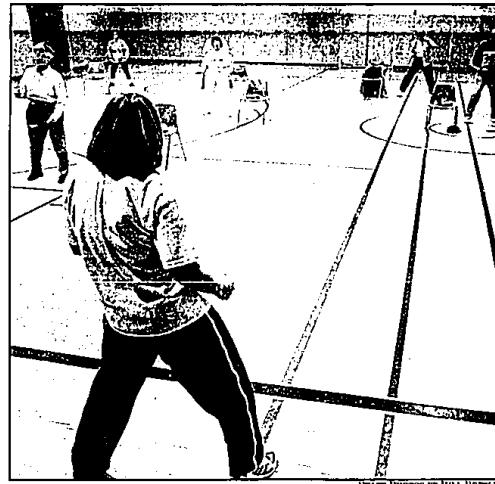
News spread

Once the news spread in Kwang Joo, everyone was running to see their family in prison, to find out whether or not their sons, fathers or brothers were killed or burned. My father's students found him. My father couldn't walk from spending 70 days confined with no walking and also suffering from malnutrition. Those students brought him to our house in Chestnut Village. We couldn't recognize him. His shallow face was grown with beard about a foot long and his body looked like a skeleton. I was so scared to look at him although he was calling my name with a full smile on his face. I was too scared to see him so I turned around and ran

Please see KOREAN WAR, C6

Senior power

Aerobics class keeps them moving



Moving: New instructor Chris Hebert shows the class how to stay fit. See Page C7 for more photos.

Jackie McCarthy is such a fan, she shows up every Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to noon for senior aerobics in the Costick Center.

"We have a new leader and we all like her very much," McCarthy said.

Senior adult programmer Chris Hebert took over instruction of the aerobics class recently and she promises

participants "a tough workout. People sweat."

But, she added, the routine can be geared to all fitness levels and the class is open to all seniors.

"Wear loose clothing, short sleeves, and bring water," she said.

Seniors can drop by or call the center at 473-1830 for more information.



Stretch: Dorothy Sevin stretches with the help of elastic. The drop-in class at Costick Center is open to all senior citizens.

Art events seek input from community

Student contest deadline March 21

The Farmington Area Arts Commission announces the 16th annual art competition for high school students in Farmington.

High school students who live in the Farmington School District are invited to submit works of art, original in concept, for consideration by the jurist at William Costick Activities Center between 5-7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 21.

Art works, no more than three pieces, will be judged and are to be picked up that evening between 8-9 p.m. The Costick Center is on 11 Mile between Middlebelt and Inkster.

Separate prizes will be awarded in each category: two dimensional and three dimensional. First prize is \$250, second prize is \$150, third prize is \$75, and honorable mention is \$50 each.

Entries are to be accompanied by a statement of design source to tell if the



Artist-in-Residence search is on

Nominations are now being accepted for candidates for the Artist-in-Residence and Distinguished Service to the Arts awards for 2001. Each year since 1976, the Farmington Area Arts Commission has recognized the achievements of individuals and groups in the arts by naming honorees from candidates in art, drama, dance, literature and music.

This year will be our 26th year of recognizing excellence in the arts in the Farmington Community. The Artist-in-Residence Award recognizes the talent and accomplishments of an individual who resides in Farmington or Farmington Hills with a cash award, plaque and reception in their honor.

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes outstanding service to the community in the creative arts. Groups or individuals may receive this award for support, promotion, management or

teaching of the arts and are honored with a cash award and plaque at the reception.

All art mediums

Anyone can nominate a deserving Farmington or Farmington Hills musician, writer, art or music teacher, dancer, photographer, conductor, artist, and actor for these awards.

Previously nominated candidates are encouraged to re-apply.

A copy of the form and cover letter is also available at <http://BHBER.COM/artsaward> and at webmaster@ci.farmington-hills.mi.us.

All applications must be received by Monday, March 26, 2001. Please send (or deliver) materials to: Artist-in-Residence Committee, William M. Costick Activities Center, 28800 11 Mile, Farmington Hills, MI 48336.