

In days of yore these were implements of war.



Barbara Popa lunges past the parry of her daughter Annette.

## Mother-daughter join to foil their opponents

By HOWARD RONTAL

Fencers are a breed of their own, says Barbara Popa, a 24-year-old fencer whose slender figure and like movements will blur in the flux of a foil.

Mrs. Popa of Highland Lake, Farmington Hills, and her daughter Annette are

fencing enthusiasts, members of the Amateur Fencing League of America and the Fencing Academy of Michigan which trains at Schwabach, Grosse Pointe.

You either like it or you don't, said Mrs. Popa, who has liked it since she was very small. She started fencing in

1968, adding it to a large array of athletic interests which include skiing. She hopes and expects to keep fencing for the rest of her life.

Although she claims that she "wasn't a natural at it," Mrs. Popa is now a C grade fencer in a classification system that runs A, B, C and unclassified.

FENCING IS an imported sport. Its origins are in Europe and it retains the economy of movement that distinguishes it from the American sports like football and baseball.

Fencing also differs from other sports like tennis, said Mrs. Popa, in that the fencer leads with his arm and the body follows. In tennis the swing is started in the body and the arm follows.

Size doesn't mean as much in fencing. Large, heavy people may offer a bigger target, but if they're quick, mobile, have good speed and timing, making the touch will be just as difficult as it would be on a smaller fencer.

The sport bears little resemblance to the display of swashbuckling pirates in old films in which the good guys skewered the bad guys after a sweeping set of lunges.

Fencing is a matter of inches. The fencer rolls his wrist in a parry and the opponents blade slides by. The defender can feel the air stirring.

In an instant he counter attacks. The movements are so small and hurried that the uninitiated find it hard to believe that each motion has been codified, practiced and repracticed in endless sessions of drill and training bouts.

Fencing instruments are divided into three types: foil, epee and saber. Each has its own techniques and target areas. The epee and saber are heavier, thicker shafted than the foil, and consequently require greater strength and a little more guts.

"When you get hit with an epee, you know it," said Mrs. Popa. Michigan is one of the fencing centers of the United States. Wayne State University

and University of Detroit both have national collegiate championship teams.

In this year's Midwest tournament fencers from Michigan placed as finalists in all divisions.

A Farmington resident, Bill Gowing, a former member of the Pan American Fencing Team and the vice president of the Amateur Fencers of America.

Annette has been fencing for a year and a half. Like her mother, it seems to run in her blood.

"When my mother fenced I watched her and thought it was interesting. She recently placed fourth in an all male tournament.

Annette, who attends Allameda Elementary School, will fence in the under 16 event at the Gauntlet competition to be held at Cranbrook School, Bloomfield Hills, in November.

## Senior citizens make plea for more services from city

Senior citizens crowded the Farmington City Council chambers this week and waited their chance to lambast or praise council members for their handling of senior activities.

Although the hearing to receive comments on the city's proposed use of 1977-78 Community Development Funds attracted their age group, the regular board did listening to seniors' pleas for a larger recreational facility and a faster tax service.

The City of Farmington proposed to use the funds for a senior citizens telephone reassurance service. Some seniors thought this would include a bus service.

The reassurance system involves a chain of telephone calls to persons to ask them if they haven't slipped and hurt themselves. Mayor John Richardson explained.

"It's not anything to do with transportation," he said.

"THE TELEPHONE reassurance system would set up a network of calls to check up on people who someone doesn't live on the floor for three days before being discovered," he said.

The system would cost \$100 for the form and the service, which could possibly be operated by the Farmington Area Recreation Commission (FARC) and \$100 to City Manager Robert Deadman.

The service would not have service come under a new tax designated for seniors.

"You want to pay for the service," said Farmington resident Margaret Hamilton.

There is no difficulty in getting a cab before 9 a.m. when persons are on their way to work, Deadman admitted.

"We took on the cab service every month," he said. "We get a print out of all the calls, the cabs wait on during the month and all persons on the lot and ask them if they had any complaints."

"We got very few complaints from them," he said.

He said Mrs. Hamilton wasn't satisfied with the explanation and asked about the feasibility of a daily ride bus service.

"I tried the cab service," Mrs. Miller said. "It was a cold day and I waited and waited and waited. I waited two hours. I called and called them. They told me that they couldn't do anything. I told them that I had had a heart attack and that I wasn't supposed to wait in the cold like that."

That's what she said. "I'm afraid to take a chance. I tried it a couple of times since then, but I wouldn't try it in the winter."

"THE CAB SERVICE" was chosen over daily ride because it could be operated at half the cost, according to Deadman.

Most daily ride services have folded, he said. "They are subsidized by state and federal funds. Those subsidies are starting to dry up as the state cuts its own budget."

With the exception of Ann Arbor's program, the programs are folding. The service takes care of the same portion of the population as the cabs but at a higher cost," he said.

Seniors conducted an impromptu lobbying session during and after the hearing to convince city councilmen that larger senior recreational facilities are needed.

Presently, the seniors are using the American Legion Hall, 3175 Grand River, as a senior citizens' center. Farmington has a 15-year lease on the hall.

"We're a victim of our own success," Richardson said. "We'd be in trouble if we didn't have the hall."

But we must hear from the Hills on this. If a larger recreational facility is to be built, it would have to be in conjunction with the Hills," he said.

Recreation knows no borders," said Richardson.

Mrs. Hamilton suggested the stairs in the Legion Hall were an obstacle for people in walkers and wheelchairs.

We recognize the stairs are a problem," Richardson said.

"The Legion let us use their hall for five days a week," Deadman explained. "Most halls won't be available to us for five days a week."

"It's unfortunate we don't have a site in the city that's large enough," said Councilmember Richard Tupper.

If Farmington Hills does come across on a site, it would only be logical that Farmington people take advantage of those facilities as well," he said.

## Drivers get break in parking accord

There will be fewer cars cluttering the downtown Farmington shopping area—at least until January 1.

Farmington and the Farmington School Board have agreed to allow shoppers and park and ride patrons to use the Training Center lot, on Grand River and Thomas.

Farmington School Board Trustee Gary Lichtman initially balked at the idea, saying that city use of the lot could interfere with school parking.

Farmington City Council saw the old Farmington Junior High School lot as a handy place to park the cars of Detroit Department of Transportation (DOT) bus service patrons.

This office has contacted the Detroit Department of Transportation to determine the feasibility of establishing a park and ride lot in downtown Farmington," City Manager Robert Deadman reported to the council this week.

We have surveyed the Farmington Junior High lot, located on the east side of the junior high school for possible use in a park and ride system," he said.

If the present buses to Farmington were to depart from their present route to pick up passengers from the junior high lot and then return to their present route, the proposed system would add approximately one-third of a mile to the run," Deadman said.

About six cars are parked daily in the lot on school system business, he said. If the city striped the lot, about 50 cars could park there.

The city offered to remove the snow from the lot, clean the area and stripe it in return for its use.

Deadman estimated that it would cost the city \$400 a year to maintain the lot.

"The lot isn't in all that good of a condition," Deadman reported. "It could use some repair but we should look at the system before repairing it."

The back lot, which is not in use, is in terrible shape," he said.

The school board will allow the City to use the lot, until Jan. 1, when the authorization will be reexamined.

The board and administrators were under the impression that the lot would be used mainly for shoppers. The Jan. 1 dead-

line would enable the school system to monitor the lot during the holiday rush.

Business Manager William Prisk recommended the city be allowed to use the lot.

We don't have as much need for the lot as we used to," he said. "And the city will take over maintenance."

Our only hold on the land is that we own the eastern 10 feet of the lot, which is adjacent to the building.

I expect the school district will receive correspondence on the eastern end of the lot. The city may want to use it," Prisk said.

The City should keep the entrance and the exit clear because the building handles handicapped children, Trustee Dr. Mervyn Ross cautioned.

But Lichtman was concerned about city parking edging out parents and teachers.

Farmington Training Center serves areas other than Farmington. The school may use the parking lot behind the building, but what about parents who don't know this? I'm talking about parents who come to the school on a parent-teacher activity, like delivering a bathing suit, and who want to whip up there and out?" he asked.

FTC uses a portion of the building, Lichtman pointed out. The board had the option to look for other users for the building.

Where will the other users go?" he asked.

In our haste to move forward, I hope we don't overlook some thing of future importance," he said.

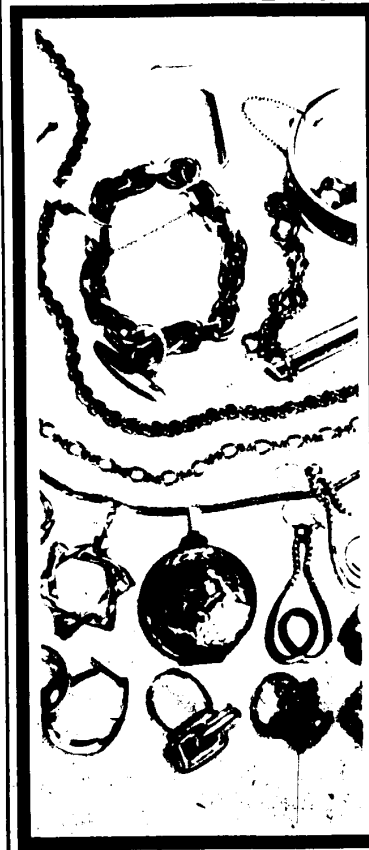
"I have no objection to the entire proposal if we reach an understanding about the constituency to be served. I don't feel the basic constituency we serve should be overlooked as the city of Farmington could have another parking lot," he said.

Prisk reassured Lichtman that the parents and teachers use the back lot because the door near Grand River is usually locked.

They usually park in the back between the old building and the new," he explained.

The school board had given permission to the Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) to use the lot, but the system was established in Farmington Hills.

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