

editorial opinion



It's a pleasant face that matches that pleasant voice callers hear when they contact the Farmington Observer office. Gail Elford gets the honors for National Secretary Week. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

We're saying it with words to thank our Gail Friday

Thank the Almighty for secretaries.

This past week us management-types paused to honor those persons who make the world go around.

Whether you call them secretaries, receptionists or executive assistants, whether they're male or female, secretaries are those persons who everyday save befuddled bosses from damnation and eternal ruin.

Take Gail Elford, for instance. Southfield Editor Mike Miller and I are lucky enough to work with the 18-year-old Southfield High School graduate.

By the way, she is the voice you're most likely to be received by when you give us a call. She handles just about everything in this office. Typing, filing, taking classified advertisements, carrier collections, ordering supplies, screening calls and generally keeping the office afloat.

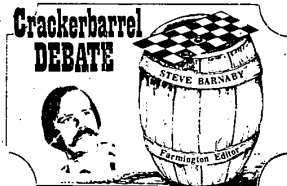
In short, she keeps us in line. I jokingly refer to her as the boss. But let me tell you, with a person around like Gail, a million worries are dissolved.

When I get lazy, she tells me about it. When I get sloppy, she discreetly leaves me a note to "get in shape." Gail is the kind of person whom you pray exists. A good secretary is worth his or her weight in gold.

She easily handles the most obnoxious cases who walk through the door. When something breaks down, she makes sure that someone out there in fix-it land gets their behind over to our office and gets it repaired.

Gail isn't the type of person you relegate to making coffee. Actually, the work she does is too important for her to waste time "waiting on us." If you're a prima donna, as many journalists tend to be, you won't be after working with Gail.

She reads every edition and lets us know what is good and bad—no words minced. The nice thing to know is that she's correct in her assessments 99 per cent of the time.



I honestly can say that I've never met a person who possesses so much maturity at such a young age. Gail puts to rest all that talk about youth who don't give a damn. She cares and especially cares when caring is needed the most.

Her dream is to someday create her own conglomerate. "Elford International," she calls it. I have all the confidence in the world that someday soon, we'll see that logo on stationery—Gail Elford, chairman of the board, of course.

A mini-search into her background reveals that while in high school, Gail was a member of the yearbook staff as well as the school newspaper. She also was the president of her Bnai Brith youth organization.

Some of you may remember her from the days when she played on the high school basketball team.

Being a columnist, I have met many prominent persons—lawyers, doctors, politicians and business leaders. Some have been honored in this column. Others just weren't worth the time.

Because this column is my pride and joy, I try to reserve it for matters and persons which I believe to be worthy.

This week's column, Gail, is dedicated to you as a humble thanks for the fine contributions you've made to this office and for being the wonderful person that you are.

Hors d'oeuvres by Lynn Orr Spring fever strikes

The trouble with spring is spending.

New buds on the trees signal a mass spending urge among the populace. Check out your local malls if you're unconvinced. Shops are swamped.

Charge accounts are running rampant. I've heard the computers can't keep up with the lavish display of plastic.

Getting to the bottom of the spending spree is a puzzle. Where are researchers when we need them anyhow? A nice fat federal grant might give some clues as to what motivates people to walk around with an open wallet.

In lieu of the appropriate psychological testing techniques, I'm hear to offer some rationale for human behavior. Basically, I needed a rationale for myself. When you find yourself mesmerized by TV ads for the Champagne edition Rabbit, you're in trouble.

Theory No. 1: Everyone just wants to get out of the house but the nets aren't up on the tennis courts, the fields are too muddy for baseball, and the expressways already are clogged with cabin fever maniacs. "Going shopping is an alternative."

THEORY No. 2: There may be something to the "a young person's fancy turns to" cliché. The mating season signals the preening of the feathers for all species. New clothes for the ritual are a must. Cottons and polyesters are cheaper than wools, as well. And summer means casual clothes for much of temperate times. Consequently, money goes farther when making summer purchases requiring

more shopping. (This is a wonderful excuse if you work it up right.)

Theory No. 3: It's grasshopper time. Winter-type thinking means squirreling away some cash in case the furnace goes, or in anticipation of higher utility bills. Psychologically we look to the free-wheeling summer as a time when we've got more money to spend. I've serious doubts about the veracity of that kind of thinking—what with air conditioning bills and all—but it seems to work like that. A carefree attitude, however, carries its own dangers.

Theory No. 4: It's about that time of year when the Christmas charges finally are paid off. Red is a more popular color than black, and being solvent may be an unusual, and therefore uncomfortable, situation for many of us.

Put this under the burning a hole in the wallet syndrome.

THEORY No. 5: This one's a corollary to No. 2. The mating season also signals an interest in nesting, as in decorating the abode. Suddenly, wallpaper, furniture, and paint ads look very attractive. Alterations to the outside landscape motivate interior changes.

The spending urge may end up being good for the overall economy, but I have the suspicion my personal economic situation may need an overhaul by June. There's few cures for the spending urge and allowing yourself a minimum in cash.

Gear up, because I think the urge lasts through the fourth of July. That's why all the sales start after the holiday. If you hear my muffler, you'll know I managed to stay aloft.

Citizens can win

Kid time spells danger

By Zina Kramer



Being a child is definitely not easy. The world is full of people constantly saying no. Parents must accept the not-so-easy task of child safety. With so many hazardous situations in a child's environment parents must be alert, cautious and must take some simple preventative measures.

Natural curiosity and lack of experience make children vulnerable. With a few small purchases and some simple precautions, many accidents can be prevented. The tedious task of saying no can be somewhat alleviated.

• Fill unused electrical plugs with dummy plugs. Electrical outlets are a natural for pesty little fingers.

• Make sure stairways are closed off to toddlers. If there is a door leading to the stairs make sure it is locked. If the door has no lock, there are a number of safety closures available at

hardware stores which can only be opened by an adult. If there is no door, there are a variety of adjustable gates on the market.

• Drawers and cabinets can be kept from being opened by small children by installing special childproof drawer and cupboard latches. These are easily installed and can be found in most hardware stores. These latches can only be opened by long adult fingers and therefore protect little ones from getting into detergents, chemicals, and medicines that may be stored away.

• Check your house for sharp corners on furniture or counters. The beautiful glass cocktail table you bought before you had children may spell disaster for the toddler crawling into a sharp edge. Rubber or plastic corner guards are available at hardware stores which fit easily over sharp corners. While you may not find these aesthetically pleasing, they are certainly a fine practical precaution.

• Medicines should always be put away after use. Don't carelessly leave medicines on window sills or counters. Incidentally, leaving pills in a purse which is accessible to children is potentially dangerous.

• Make sure electrical cords are out of sight and out of reach. The cord can

be appealing to chew or pull on. Either means trouble.

• Be sure that your placement of the crib, playpen and highchair are away from dangling cords, electrical outlets, easily knocked over accessories or the stove.

• Do not leave a young child alone in a bathtub or a small backyard wading pool. Let the phone ring. It's probably not important enough for you to put your child in danger.

Studies have shown that accidents seem to occur more often in certain kinds of situations. It is important to be aware of these circumstances.

When children are hungry or tired, they may become less careful or less willing to listen to warnings.

When a mother is ill, about to menstruate, or pregnant, or other family members are ill, proper precautions may not be taken.

When the family is rushed, or the relationship between parents is tense, the chance of an accident is greater. When a child's surroundings change, or when a child is in the care of an unfamiliar person, accidents may occur.

Be careful not to overestimate a child's ability to care for himself. You must alert a child to the dangers about him.

"Between the lines"

by Carl Stoddard

The beer can chronicles

Day one. It began today when my wife brought home a recipe for beer bread—bread made with beer and self-rising flour. She had the flour, but needed the beer.

I found a six-pack of Billy Beer at the supermarket. It's not every day that a beer is named after the president's brother. So in a flight of whimsy, I bought the beer.

Tonight we ate the beer bread and washed it down with Billy Beer. Because the can is unusual, I have decided to save it. I may even use it as the cornerstone of a beer can collection.

Day two. Today I stopped at a small store on the way home from work. In the cooler I found a lone can of Calgary Export Lager beer. I took it home, drank it and added it to my collection.

Day three. It's the weekend and several friends visited tonight. I went to the store again. Our friends are beer

aficionados, so I decided to buy a variety of brands and let them try to guess the brand by taste.

I'm not sure just how many cans we tried tonight, but my collection certainly has grown. Now I have a total of either 11 or 14 beer cans in all. For some reason, I kept on losing count after about eight cans.

DAY FIVE. I forgot to write in my beer can collecting journal yesterday. Actually, I didn't forget. I just had a terrible headache and didn't feel like doing anything.

For a while, I considered giving up my collection. But since I've started it, I see no reason to discontinue it. After all, I tell myself some day those cans might be worth some money.

Day eleven. The collection continues to grow. This collection is the most fun hobby I've ever had. You know what I mean? I got a Foster Lager can, a

Griesedieck Brothers can, a Genesee beer can and a Hudepohl. I got a Miller High Life and a Budweiser can. No collection is complete without the basics.

The way I see it, if you're going to collect beer cans, you've got to collect them all. The only thing is that it's sometimes hard getting down all that beer just to add to your collection. But I'm dedicated and determined.

Day 17 or 23. You should see all the cans. What a collection. This hobby is all right.

Day 37's. Wow. Day 83.11. I forgot to write in this sometimes. How come?

(Editor's note: Mr. Stoddard has left for a short vacation. We regret that he was unable to complete this article at this time. However, he has asked that we inform our readers that he will be turning shortly. He reports that his next column on these pages will be entitled: "How to sell your beer can collection.")

Editor:

I resent the flippant manner in which you dealt with Joe Stroud's anguish.

I, too, felt the anguish, almost as if he were saying to me "I'm really sorry, kids. I really love you, but I met this person and I didn't want it to happen, but it did and now I must go live with her."

*Try to understand. I'm still the

same person, I'm still your father. It pains me deeply to have to do this.

Don't love me the less for it, but I must leave you.

"I'll come back and visit. Things can still be the same, but I must leave." That's what he's saying to me. He knows he will enjoy the suburbs, that can only heighten his pain.

I feel your point is ill taken. I am offended by your self-righteous subur-

banite attitude.

I love Detroit. I admire Detroit. I respect Detroit. I visit Detroit. I feel hypocritical in not wanting to live there.

Detroit offers me more than any taxes I could pay towards maintaining her.

NANCY JOHANSSON
Troy

From our readers

Stroud article was 'flippant'

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Editor

2217 West Nine Mile
Southfield, MI 48075
(313) 352-5400

John Reddy, General Mgr.

Thomas A. Flordan, Executive Editor

George J. Hagan, Advertising Director, Fred J. Wright, Circulation Director