

## The lively needle

# Column writing sure is exciting!

When I was in the fifth grade, I was 5½ feet tall. Before vitamins, that was big! Boys in dancing class came up to my hip bone when they came near me at all. I've never thought of myself as short.

But newspaper deadlines can rearrange one's self image. My shrinking began the week before Labor Day. On the day my column was due, Daughter Number One decided to do a little shopping. She'd been "doing a little shopping" for about a month at that point — all of it in preparation for bursting forth as a college freshman.

Motherly murmurs that said college was not in the middle of the Gobi Desert and that shampoo might be available outside Michigan (tell on deaf ears. Daughter disappeared as soon as she could — in my car.

And didn't come back. The copy was supposed to be delivered before noon. By 1, I was frantic. By 2, the editor had called. Something had to be done.

SO I WENT for my bike. Which had a flat tire. I looked for the bike pump. It had died.

The neighbors' cars were all in use. The neighbors' pumps were all defunct. It was now 3 p.m.

I asked 13-year-old son if I might use his bike. He hesitated — more, I suspect, from fears of a bashed bike than from thoughts of a mangled mother. But reluctant consent finally was given. I set off for the newspaper office, copy in a needlepoint bag decorated with butterflies, and me on a pea-green many-speeded boys' bike.

Which immediately went out of control. My son is at least an inch shorter than I am, but he must be half legs. I could hardly reach the pedals, much less touch the ground.

The thing whirled down the hill out of control while I feverishly back-pedaled, trying to find the brakes. After a multi-point landing in a patch of weeds, I remembered that this gadget



By  
MARY  
KAY  
DAVIS

had hand brakes. I didn't know much about that kind.

RE-MOUNTING the bike proved to be a problem. Getting my rear leg over the bar in the privacy of our back yard was one thing. Lifting it beside a busy road was quite another. Teenaged drivers laughed so hard they almost hit

light poles. Middle-aged gentlemen slowed down to help, considered how they'd look assisting, and speeded away. I finally made it up by myself.

I rode on the sidewalks, tippy-toe, looking for soft places at intersections since total collapse seemed to be the only way to get of the thing. There are a great many intersections between our house and the office. There is very little soft padding near any of them.

At long last I reached the office and shakily parked beside a small blond boy of about 11. He was carrying a shiny white newspaper bag. Paper boys' length of service can be accurately gauged by the amount of dirt encrusted on their bags. This kid was brand new.

He looked wonderingly at my sweaty face, grass stained knees, and butterfly bag. And said, "Gee lady, do you have a route here, too?"

Feeling all of two feet tall, I answered, "Sure kid." And we went into work together.

**The recipes  
are coming!  
The recipes  
are coming!**

Watch for them Monday, October 1,  
right here in your hometown  
newspaper

## Consumer mailbag

# Caution still urged on hair dyes

Are hair dyes safe now?

shorter your period of exposure, the less your risk.

the national Regional Coastal Information Center Network, which represents a cooperative effort of the Great Lakes Basin Commission and the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network. The area served includes the eight Great Lakes states and adjoining parts of Canada.

terrific wrapping paper for children's birthday gifts. The stock market page is great for Dad. This type of recycling saves cash as well as precious natural resources.

Diane M., Southfield

I'm doing a report on the Great Lakes. Can you help me find current information?

Fred C., W. Bloomfield

The Regional Information Referral Center is just the place to help you with your report.

Great Lakes Information is part of

Write to Great Lakes Information, 3475 Plymouth, P.O. Box 999, Ann Arbor 48106.

Eco-Tip: The Sunday funnies make

Consumer Mailbag answers your questions on consumer and environmental issues. Address mail to Concern, Inc., Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy 48068.

## Productive fighting topic

A couple who have learned to fight productively will lead a three-hour workshop called Communication for Couples from 7:30-10:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 14, at Oakland University in Rochester.

The program is the first on the fall schedule of programs at the Continuum Center for Adult Counseling and Leadership Training, which has headquarters on Adams Road and Butler, on the east side of the campus.

Jim and Judy Hoppin of Southfield will co-lead the workshop. Mrs. Hoppin is a counselor and trainer on the Continuum Center staff, and her husband is

workshop coordinator.

"Three hours is just a beginning, but it can let people talk about things they don't usually discuss," Mrs. Hoppin said. "Jim and I talk to the group about barriers in our own communication, such as making assumptions about what the other one is thinking and feeling, or perhaps not talking about what's important because we want to avoid anger."

Mrs. Hoppin began to take programs at the Continuum Center about six years ago, when her youngest child

started school. Hoppin joined her a year later because he was intrigued by what she was learning. They now regularly work together in the Communications for Couples and some other programs.

For information about Communications for Couples, contact the Continuum Center for Adult Counseling and Leadership Training at Oakland University in Rochester or call 377-3033. The workshop will be repeated Nov. 30. Program fee is \$15 per couple.



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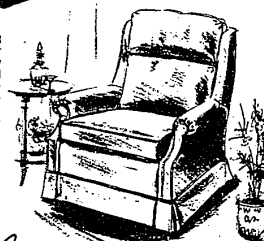


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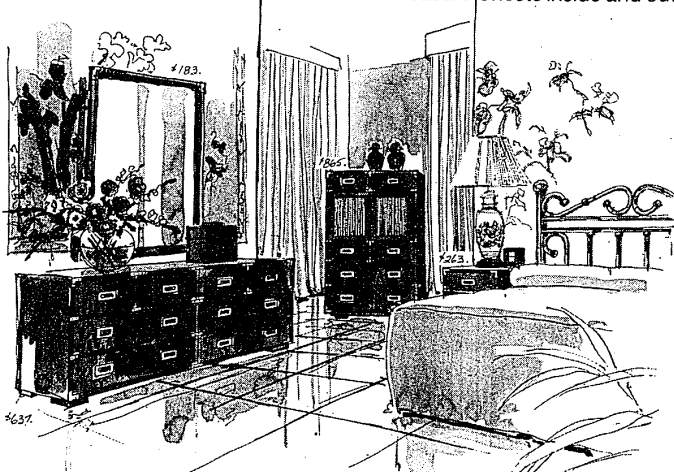


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