

# Happily ever after? Romance fades as realities emerge

By CAROL MAHONEY

Divorce rates go up and up, but does society really do anything to help marriages survive? Al Lacki doesn't think so.

Take the husband who must commit all his energy to his job each day, then hit the road for another hour before he gets home.

"He's hardly in a position to give," said Lacki. "And if his spouse is being drained in the same way, all the nurturing they have to give has already been given."

Lacki, a certified marriage counselor and a licensed psychologist, and his partner Al Cavanaugh, also a psychologist and counselor, have formulated a series of programs designed to help couples strengthen their marriages.

Lacki and Cavanaugh recently opened the Marriage Growth Center in Troy with the belief that people are concerned about improving their marriages.

"OUR INTENTION is to reach people before a situation gets to a crisis point," said Cavanaugh. He pointed out that although marriage is one of the oldest institutions, it is the one people are least prepared for.

"We want to help people understand what marriage is all about and give them a chance to really live their marriages," he added.

He explained that couples need time out to reflect on "what is happening, to consider their basic values, and not let themselves be driven along without understanding why they are together."

Married and the father of two children, Cavanaugh said, "Most people do make a correct choice of a marriage partner, but their own emotional conflicts get in the way of recognizing this."

"So often such information is only shared when someone comes in to see a professional in a crisis," warned Cavanaugh.

"Some information about basic communication skills is what we are all about," said Lacki.

The two counselors said they spent five months formulating the materials for the six programs they offer.

UNLIKE MARRIAGE encounters which involve a weekend of intense, private communication between husband and wife, the programs offered at the Marriage Growth Center do not require that both partners attend or that they be already married.

"We address ourselves not only to people already married who are interested in growing as a couple, but also to people planning to be married," said Lacki.

Among the topics covered in the programs are communications in marriage, the challenge of marriage, the realities of marriage (trust, sex, money, goals), making your marriage work, raising emotionally healthy children, and marriage spiritually.

"The programs are a kind of summary of what we think are the basic issues," Lacki said.

He pointed out what used to be the criteria for a successful marriage. In addition to the fact that it endured, the partners either didn't think they needed a marriage counselor or never went to one.

"Things were happening in those marriages," Lacki said, "but for cultural or religious reasons people didn't deal with them."

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## Concerts celebrate Christmas

Two concerts on Sunday, Dec. 16 will provide music appropriate for the approaching holiday season.

The Madrigal Club of Detroit, now based in Southfield under the Southfield Arts Council, will present a Christmas program at 8 p.m. Sunday at Bloomfield Hills Baptist Church, 3600 Telegraph, Bloomfield Hills. Tickets, \$3.50 and \$2.50 for children and senior citizens, will be available at the door.

The Bel Canto Ensemble, a group of vocal and instrumental artists under the direction of Sergio Pezzetti of Southfield, will present a 7 p.m. program of sacred music at St. Regis Catholic Church, Lincoln and Lahser, Birmingham.

The Bel Canto Ensemble, formed in 1976, is composed of all soloist singers who study the Bel Canto technique with Pezzetti. Their program will feature two premieres. One is the "Gloria" written by Pezzetti for the ensemble in honor of Pope John Paul's recent visit to the United States.

The other is an American premiere of "Filiae Jerusalem," a sacred cantata based on the Song of Solomon by Ildebrando Pizzetti. Other works on the program will be a selection of Handel's "Messiah," Bach's Cantata 57, the Marcella Oboe Concerto and Christmas carols arranged by Pezzetti.

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