

Saying thanks a special way

By Mary Rodriguez
editor

A 12-foot heart with a special message greeted Dr. Milton Weiss at his Redford dental office Monday morning.

Painted on the side of his office building at the corner of Schoolcraft and Beech Daly, it was his wife Linda's idea of a first anniversary greeting card. A newspaper ad and flowers delivered to the doctor added to the gift.

Mrs. Weiss had a special reason to choose the gift she did. Suffering from immune system breakdown, she can't leave her chemical-free home in Southfield to shop for the more conventional anniversary greeting cards. So she opted to special order the gift by special phone (minus chemical fibers in the mouthpiece).

"I got sick on our honeymoon," she recalled in a telephone interview. "Up until then, I lived a very normal life."

As a manicurist in a hair shop, Mrs. Weiss had spent years inhaling fumes from hairsprays and other beauty shop chemicals. It all caught up with her during her Florida honeymoon, where the pesticides commonly sprayed in the trees and hotel rooms took their toll.

Returning to their Southfield home, the couple found themselves replacing everything from the furniture and carpeting to the furnace. Food and all household products had to be chemical-free.

Visitors aren't allowed to wear makeup, hairspray, cologne or anything but natural fiber clothing in her house.

"I get out once a week to go to a health food store," she said. "But it's really a chore. It's worse than taking a baby out. I have to have a charcoal filter and an ionizer in the car. And

then if I pass anyone smoking a cigarette or wearing perfume on the street I get ill."

Mrs. Weiss says her problem, also called petro chemical allergies, is anything but rare. After an article about her condition appeared in the Southfield Eccentric and Redford Observer last July 22, she received 200 calls from area people suffering the same problem.

There is hope for the future, though.

"The prognosis is one to four years for the immune system to rebuild itself," she said.

Already some of the 50 foods she found she was allergic to aren't giving her unpleasant reactions anymore.

"I can eat cheese again without it giving me a sore throat and swelling," she said.

Mrs. Weiss and her husband have written a book called "Resource Guide to Chemically Free Living". Among other things, it's a consumers guide to natural fiber clothing, furniture, rugs and organically grown meat. The book will be published next month and available to the public by February, 1983, she said.

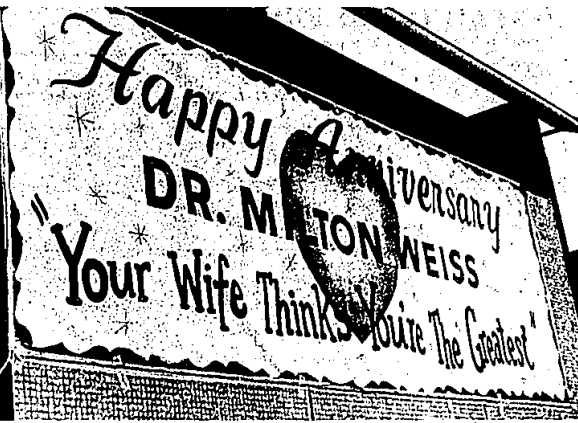
The Weiss's belong to a national organization called Human Ecology Action League (HEAL) which helps them deal with their chemical-free life-style.

"My husband has been just great about all of this," Mrs. Weiss said. "I wanted to show him my appreciation. He called right away when he saw the sign and again after he saw the ad in the Observer."

A final surprise awaited the dentist when he returned home Monday night. His wife had invited six friends over (all dressed in cotton jeans, no makeup or hairspray) to celebrate the couple's first anniversary with a 100 percent natural ingredient cake.



Dr. Milton Weiss arrived at his Redford dental office Monday morning to find this message from his wife, Linda, to mark their first wedding anniversary.



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