

Fame

Youth fight obstacles in hopes of the big time

By Mary Klemic
Staff writer

Debbie Deter was four years old when she was first fascinated by tap dancing. "I liked the clinkety-clinks," she recalled. "I wanted to take tap right away."

Today, 10 years later, those "clinkety-clinks" still hold a strong attraction for Deter, a student at Warner Middle School in Farmington Hills. She now says she wants to be a dancer "anywhere, specifically Broadway."

"I've never thought of anything else," said Deter, who performs in her school's choir and talent show. "I wouldn't know anything else to go into. I love the audience and doing things in front of people. It's a lot of fun."

Deter is just one of the talented young people in the Farmington-Farmington Hills area who are hoping to make names for themselves.

It's a long way from this area to Broadway or a concert stage at Carnegie Hall, but the would-be entertainers have already taken the first steps in that direction through lessons, drama groups and music auditions.

Local residents have made it in show business. Barbara Early, who landed a spot in the musical "42nd Street" on Broadway, and Pam Farber, who co-starred in "Mork and Mindy" on television, are just two examples. But often it's easier said than done, say area instructors and coaches.

"It's one of the roughest rows to hoe that it's possible to find," said Hope Nabatoff, founder of the Farmington Community Players. "You're just hoping to be in the right place when the lightning strikes."

"So many think, 'I'll just keep trying,'" said Debbie Brown, former drama teacher at Morey High School. "But for auditions, you see lots of people who do the same thing as you, look like you. . . There's one million of you."

Would-be performers are advised to study a lot of subjects, more than basic acting classes, both to be versatile and to have something to fall back on in case their careers head in a different direction.

"You can't rely on entertaining to be the sole means of support," warned Laurie Smalls, director of the Quaker Valley Community Theater. "Business management is a good place to start. If you can't get any jobs acting, if you go



into managing theaters or producing, you still need those organizational skills and knowledge."

Getting involved in community theater or summer stock is also a good idea, they said.

"Theater is such a marvelous hobby, such a creative kind of thing," Nabatoff said. "Maybe that in itself would answer the needs for the person who wants to go into the theater."

Dancing is a good way to acquire versatility, said Smalls and Virginia Dickerman, owner of the Dickerman Dance Studio in Farmington. "I tell young people who want to go into show business, okay, you have to start studying right now. Take as many things as you can — voice, dancing, drama," Dickerson said. "Audition for anything that comes into town."

Several teen-agers with show business careers in mind, including Deter, take dance lessons at the Dickerman studio. One of them, 14-year-old Terri Lynn Forte, takes lessons in tap, ballet, vocal, drama and jazz. The Cook Junior High School student has appeared in shows around the area, including the musical "The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd" by a Plymouth community group.

"Go for it, all the way; try your best," is Forte's advice to anyone who wants to be an entertainer. "I've aud-

itioned for everything that I've been able to," she said.

Forte said her dream to enter show business began when she was six or

seven years old. "I was dancing and just started to really enjoy it," she said. "I like everything (about it) — the people, the audience especially."

Dan Ryan, 16, has been playing the piano for 10 years. He hopes to major in music in college, then perform in concerts.

"It's a challenge," the Farmington resident said. "I got a chance. I think, I'm going to play the way I feel it should be played."

Ryan, who prefers classical music, practices five hours a day. He has accompanied a school production of the musical "The Boy Friend" and entered some 12 competitions in the area.

Coaches and instructors agree that anyone who hopes to make it big in the entertainment field "has to really want to be an entertainer," as Dickerman says. "It takes a lot of energy and enthusiasm," she said. "And don't be discouraged."

It helps to be outgoing and friendly with people, Smalls added. "You have to be very observant, especially in acting. It helps you develop characters by talking with people. If you're shy when you start out, you won't be when you finish."



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

Dan Ryan, who favors classical piano, hopes some day to perform in concert.



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

Debbie Deter, a Warner Middle School student, has set her sights on a dance career.

INSIDE ANGLES

CONGRATULATIONS to Paula Inman on receiving an award for Champion Open Jumper and Reserve Champion Open Jumper at the Michigan Horse Show Association's annual awards dinner. The banquet, held at the Holiday Inn in Livonia, honored many of Michigan's most skilled horsemen.

KUDOS to Lynda Knoll, daughter of Ron and Sue Knoll, and Patricia Bolen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Bolen of Farmington Hills on being inducted into the Beta Pi Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta at Michigan State University. Both are graduates of North Farmington High School.

IT WILL BE an exciting international summer for Steve Markham, a senior at Harrison High School who will travel to Europe with the Southern Michigan Youth Chorale. Besides visiting the Western countries of Belgium, France, Switzerland, Austria, West Germany and the Netherlands, he will go behind the Iron Curtain to Czechoslovakia and East Germany on the three-week concert tour.

FEBRUARY IS CHOSEN as American History Month for no other reason than so many of America's famous had birthdays in that month. School children who are doing research now for the DAA's annual History Month Essay Contest have a lot to choose from for their essay subject. Besides Washington and Lincoln, William Harrison, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Thomas Edison, Susan B. Anthony, Horace Greeley, Aaron Burr and Winslow Homer, to name a few, all were born this month.

ONE OF THE MOST active Camp Fire groups in town is now completing Valentine Day gifts to be delivered to those in Allen Park Veteran's Hospital. The gifts from the youth, who meet in Longacre Elementary School, are part of the Camp Fire's "Salute to Veterans" program, one of many service projects extended under the leadership of Barbara Speranza. Local shoppers will see the youngsters this month after school and on weekends in supermarkets and shopping centers. The sale is their major fund-raiser, running this year from Feb. 16 to March 17. Telephone orders for the candy are taken by Speranza, 478-7088, after 4 p.m.

DINGHY SHARP, learning specialist for Farmington Public Schools, will be holding forth on storytelling, another of her many specialties on Family Forum next Sunday, Feb. 13. Sharp will represent Detroit Story League when she appears as guest on the question-and-answer show, 10-11 p.m. WCZY-FM-95.5 with co-hosts Tom Call and Myrna Henderson.

STRAW HATS off to WCZY-FM station mascot "Cozy Bear," D. Dennison's Seafood Tavern, Eastern Airlines, Bacardi Rum and the Grapevine Beach Hotel in the Virgin Islands. All united to raise approximately \$1,000 for the American Cancer Society during "Escape to the Tropics" week at D. Dennison's through Jan. 31. The cancer society's Susan Lerch, coordinator of the benefit (to be televised on Channel 2's "PM Magazine" at 7:30

p.m. Feb. 9) said the support from WCZY was fantastic. Numerous public service announcements were topped off with the tropical week's finale, a special dinner attended by Cozy Bear and disc jockeys including Tom Dean. Dean selected contest winner Sieglinde Dahm of West Bloomfield, who with a companion will be off soon, compliments of Eastern Airlines and the Grapevine Beach Hotel for a week in St. Croix in the Virgin Islands. All contest proceeds plus a portion of D. Dennison's weekly profits went to the American Cancer Society.

CONGRATULATIONS to Richard Lynch, executive vice president of Freeman-Darling Inc., General Contractors of Livonia, who has been elected president of the Detroit Chapter, Associated General Contractors of America. He is the group's 50th president and has been on the board of directors since 1976.

DID YOU KNOW that Jerry Potter, principal of Farmington High School, is president-elect of the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals and that Millie Bennett, principal of Longacre Elementary School, is the vice president of the Michigan Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals.

THE OUTSTANDING Young Women of America Awards Program announced that Patricia Diane Gardner, Colleen Kay Kopko and Virginia Fonash Samhuri, all of Farmington Hills, have been selected for inclusion in the 1982 edition of Outstanding Young Women of America. The program is designed to honor and encourage exceptional young women between the ages of 21 and 36 who have distinguished themselves in their homes, profession and communities. Congratulations!!

BON VOYAGE TO Jay and Joy Markham, who are forsaking Farmington Hills with their children to relocate in Orem, Utah. Joy, a former Utah resident, for eight years has served as secretary for the city council, planning commission and the zoning board of appeals. Jay, who is being transferred by the Burroughs Corp., recently was awarded for several years of service on the Committee to Increase Voter Participation in Farmington Hills. At a recent study session, Mayor Fred Hughes paid tribute to Jay, telling her, "It's going to be a loss when you're not with us. You have the appreciation of all of the council, board and commission members, and we'd like to express our personal gratitude." Responded Joy, who already has looked into city government in Orem, "I feel like an old-timer after eight years — it's going to be hard to leave. It's been an honor." Council member Jan Dolan noted another of Jay's accomplishments — mastering safely driving home in the snow from city council meetings.

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