

Plymouth resident joins fight for freedom

Gary M. Cates
Staff writer

Sanne Vicini lives in her house on Midland in Plymouth without the fear of being arrested without a warrant, being tortured, or being forced into making false confessions. Yet, each month Vicini's thoughts and efforts turn to people in South and

Central America where such activities allegedly take place. Vicini is a member of Amnesty International's Urgent Action Network. Each month she writes letters to government ministers, embassies, leading newspapers and international organizations, calling for the release of selected persons.

"I felt called to answer Amnesty In-

ternational's challenge because I read in the southeast corner of Ford and Lilley roads. The combination restaurant-arcade opened its doors a little over a year ago, after Akhtar and Baldwin battled with township officials over several issues.

Originally, the partners had planned to open only an arcade. However, they later opted for a larger space and decided on a family restaurant-arcade combination.

Business failed poorly with the full-service restaurant said Jackie Forgie, a Canton Wizzard employee.

The large, former restaurant area now is devoted to arcade machines. A snack bar with two booths is nestled in a corner area. Billiard tables are in another room.

Customers didn't want a full-service restaurant, Forgie said. "People were more interested in grabbing a bag of chips and getting back to the machines," she said.

THE CANTON WIZARD owners also have been embroiled in controversy with township officials on a number of issues.

Apparently, there was some confusion among the partners about whether planning commission approval was needed for both the restaurant and arcade portions.

Members of the township board also expressed concern about proper land use for an arcade, traffic patterns and pedestrian safety at Ford and Lilley, a high-accident intersection.

The township board initially held up licensing approval for the arcade while considering possible changes to the mechanical devices ordinance. Akhtar and Baldwin last December filed a lawsuit in Wayne County Circuit Court to force the township to immediately grant them a license.

Judge James Mies refused the request, saying township ordinances call for approval from both the planning commission and the township trustees. The judge urged the partners and township officials to work out their differences. A license was eventually granted.

streets in the day or at home in the night," she said.

"There was always the terrorizing fear that you might be seized, tortured, or killed."

When she joined Amnesty International in March 1982, Vicini wrote several letters to Uruguayan officials on behalf of Maria Cecilia Duffau Echevarren.

Echevarren, 29, was arrested by Uruguayan security forces on March 18, 1982 in the Uruguayan town of Chuy on the Brazilian border, according to Amnesty International reports.

ECHEVARREN WAS returning from a visit in Brazil with her sister, who was forced to leave Uruguay due to her work with a human rights organization.

Fearing that Echevarren would be subjected to torture while being held without charges, Amnesty International asked its volunteers to write on her behalf.

Almost one year later, Vicini received a reply from the Uruguayan government.

"Imagine my surprise when I opened my mail box last week to find in it a letter from a government official in Montevideo, Uruguay," she said.

"It was an exciting moment, ripping open the envelope, because I had not received a response before from my many messages on behalf of prisoners."

In the past, letters written by Amnesty International volunteers have led to prisoners' releases around the world. A Dominican Republic man was released in 1975 after some 3,000 letters were sent on his behalf.

However, Vicini's letter from Uruguay didn't contain the news of Echevarren's release.

"The letter had both good and bad news. Maria was getting medical care and a proper diet, but she was being held on charges of subversive activities," Vicini said.

Despite the news contained in the letter, Vicini remains optimistic about the

letters she writes each month.

"BY WRITING these letters we're showing them that citizens of the United States have concern for others down there."

Amnesty International was founded by Peter Benenson in 1961. Today there are 2,500 Amnesty groups throughout 140 countries.

The group has three goals, according to Vicini.

"The immediate release of prisoners of conscience, fair and prompt trials for political prisoners, and opposition to the death penalty and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment for all prisoners."

Amnesty International's work is based on the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other international instruments.

The group encourages volunteers to write as concerned private citizens, rather than members of Amnesty International. It also encourages the use of pen names, especially if the volunteer plans to visit a country they write to.

"Social justice is an empty phrase, unless people use their God-given talents to be their brothers' keepers," Vicini said.

Although writing a letter may seem frivolous, Vicini said the Christophers' motto sums up her attitude.

"Better to light one candle than curse the darkness."

Persons interested in writing letters for Amnesty International should contact Barbara Francisco at 688-0249.

"For the price of some postage stamps, you may save a life — dare to care," Vicini said.

Canton Wizzard arcade owners sued

Arlene Funke
Staff writer

The Canton Wizzard owners are being sued for alleged non-payment of \$200 worth of food and supplies.

Miesel-Synco Co. of Canton, an institutional food supplier, recently filed a suit in Wayne County Circuit Court against Jamil Akhtar of Plymouth and Barbara Baldwin of Pontiac, partners in the Canton Wizzard restaurant-arcade.

Both Baldwin and Akhtar work closely with Wayne County Executive William Lucas. Baldwin is Lucas' secretary and Akhtar, a former deputy sheriff, is a top Lucas aide.

The lawsuit contends the business owners failed to pay for food and supplies. Jack Penwarden, attorney for Miesel-Synco, declined to comment.

"We know nothing about it," said Akhtar. "There is a dispute between that company and (ours) for the interest they are charging us. We haven't been served (with documents)."

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Singers to give concert at OU

The Academy Singers from the Academy of Popular Vocal Arts will present their fifth annual Concert and Recital at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday at Varner Hall on the Oakland University Campus near Rochester.

Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for senior citizens, children and students. Tickets are available at the door. Students of the Academy of Popular

Vocal Arts have recorded four show albums and have performed numerous concerts and shows throughout the United States. This year's traveling group features 30 singers and dancers who represent 12 different communities.

Among the group are Laura McCandless of Orchard Lake and Kathy Ganaden, Jonathan Irvine and Chris Morand of Troy.

Computer classes are conducted

Madonna College in Livonia has several computer-related workshops scheduled for May.

• **Computers for Couples** — An evening for couples, complete with wine and cheese, featuring short lectures, computer games and exercises and hands-on experience; 7-11 p.m. Friday, May 6.

• **Computer Applications in Personnel** — Learn computer-assisted company book auditing and conversion of accounting data into computer input; 8-10 p.m. Friday, May 6, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 7.

• **Computer Security and Privacy** — Participants will focus on administrative program structures, fiscal premises, hardware, software. Problem prevention and security emergency time frames also will be discussed 6-10 p.m. Friday, May 20 and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 21.

Participants can receive college credit or continuing education units. For more information or to register, call the Continuing Education Office, 581-5049.

Madonna College is located at I-96 and Levan Road in Livonia.

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