

Suburban Life

Lorraine McClish editor/477-5450



Thursday, September 11, 1986 O&O

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Home team

Love, marriage and sports

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

ONE HAS made a hit at marriage with a professional athlete. The other is in the on-deck circle.

At any rate, DiAnna Stefan, wife of Detroit Red Wing goaltender Greg Stefan, and Melanie Kozorsky, fiancée of Detroit Tiger outfielder Pat Sheridan, would have every right to take a few swipes at life with a professional athlete.

After all, their mates are often on the road. They have to sit through countless games.

And they have to deal with someone afterwards who might've let in the winning goal or struck three times in a game.

YET BOTH wouldn't trade their lives with their athletic partners for all the Don Juans of the world and an accountant to be named later.

Stefan, who grew up in Livonia and whose maiden name is Taran, has been married to Greg Stefan for more than a year. They live in Farmington Hills.

Kozorsky, from Westland, will marry her high school sweetheart, Sheridan, in November.

"It's exciting," Stefan said. "Of course I sit on the edge of my seat with him being a goaltender. . . I worry about him getting hurt. I'd feel more comfortable if he was a forward."

She met Stefan three years ago while celebrating her birthday. A mutual friend introduced them to each other.

It was a mutual liking at the fac-

ceit. "I didn't know anything about hockey," she said. "I was raised on baseball. I just thought he was so sweet and cute. I didn't care if he was a hockey player or not."

Courtship initially included going to a lot of hockey games.

BEING A SPECTATOR is something Kozorsky can understand, having gone out with a baseball player since high school. She and Sheridan were an item when they went to Wayne Memorial High School.

And since the 11th grade and through college at Eastern Michigan University, she has sat through more games than she cares to remember.

"We didn't go out to the movies all the time like other couples," Kozorsky said. "A lot of Saturdays were spent watching Pat play baseball."

"There were times I'd say to myself, 'Not another baseball game.'"

Those times, though, were few and far between. From the time she was 8, Kozorsky has been a baseball zealot.

She boasts of having the biggest baseball card collection in her Westland neighborhood when she was younger.

HER LOVE of the Tigers even caused torn loyalties during the 1984 American League playoffs. Detroit knocked off the Kansas City Royals, the team Sheridan was on.

Last year Sheridan was part of the World Championship Royals team,

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— DiAnna Stefan
wife of Red Wing goalie Greg Stefan

only to be cut at the beginning of this season.

"It was the most difficult day of my life when he called me and told me he was released," she said. "It came as such a surprise. The best day of my life, though, came when he signed with the Tigers."

Both Stefan and Kozorsky have to deal with the high and lows of professional sports their mates bring home.

For Stefan it's especially difficult. A National Hockey League goaltender makes an air traffic controller's job look sedate in comparison.

"He takes (a loss) in stride," Stefan said. "He'll be real down after a game if he loses. But he bounces back and starts thinking about the next game."

FANS SOMETIMES won't let the Red Wing goalie forget about a bad game, or his wife for that matter. Stefan, when not on the road with her modeling career, makes it to about half of the Wings home games at Joe Louis Arena.

She also hears her fair share of abuse directed toward her husband.

"There are some fans who yell at him just because they know who I

am," she said. "But there are some nice people also. . . You just have to put up with it."

Another thing both women have to put up with is being separated from their mates when they travel. For Stefan and Kozorsky, it's not so much of a problem.

Both are busy with their own careers. Stefan travels the auto show circuit as a model. Kozorsky is a probation officer at the 18th District Court in Westland.

Stefan, when in New York City or Chicago, has been able to catch her husband's games on the road.

For Kozorsky, it's not so bad with Sheridan on the road since she lives in her hometown. She isn't stuck in some remote city waiting for Sheridan to return.

The only thing Kozorsky is anxiously waiting for perhaps is her wedding in November. She said plans are for a small, private wedding.

Even the veteran, Stefan, can offer some advice after a year of marriage to a professional athlete.

"Just get used to the traveling," Stefan said. "That's about it basically."



Detroit Red Wing goalie Greg Stefan and his wife, DiAnna, (above) get to spend more time together now that it's the hockey off-season. Melanie Kozorsky of Westland (left) has to make do with a photograph of fiancé Pat Sheridan while he's on the road with the Detroit Tigers.



Staff photos by Rick Smith and Steve Fecht

St. Alexander Parish hosts a Country Fest

Now celebrating its 25th anniversary year, the St. Alexander parish will host a Country Fest from Friday through Sunday, Sept. 19-21. From Pugh show carnival rides on the midway to hand-crafted items and the country store, the festival offers a harvest of family games and activities.

Many activities are scheduled each day of the fest. Those who attend can swing a partner on the dance floor to the best of live square dance music or enjoy a spaghetti dinner Friday evening. In the beer

tent, the folk-song players will start a sing-along on Saturday evening. Sunday events include a chicken dinner and a corn roast, and entertainment by a five-piece polka band.

For kids, the fest will include special rides, events and prizes.

Continuous bingo, casino and games of chance also are returning to the lineup.

Raffle prizes this year include \$3,000, \$1,500 and \$1,000 in cash, a Commodore computer, a color TV and VCR auctions. Wheelbarrow of-

fers are also planned.

THE FESTIVAL, raising money to pare away a debt on construction of the original church buildings. In addition, the many Christian service activities of the small parish keep it in need of funds.

"The parish supports more charities in proportion to its size and resources than other comparable parish," festival publicity chairman Larry Rosperski said.

Since 1983, the church has been a food distribution center for the

needy. In 1984, the Christian Service Commission became involved with the Emergency Task Force to establish a permanent shelter in south Oakland County.

In addition, for 11 years church volunteers have made weekly visits to meet the needs of the residents at Williamsburg Convalescent center. Since 1962, the church has sponsored the St. Vincent de Paul conference, which discreetly aids the needy, visits homes, hospitals, institutions and the bereaved in funeral homes.

The annual fall festival has be-

come a way for parishoners to rally to support the out-reach of their church.

"In some parishes, a festival is a way of bringing people together," said the Rev. James Wright, pastor of St. Alexander. "But it's not needed to bring people together here. It's a by-product of their on-going togetherness."

THIS IS THE 12th edition of the fall festival. Since the festival was first staged in 1974, the church has gone two-thirds of the way toward

reducing the building debt. According to past financial chairman Ed Olaszewski, the festival took in \$40,000 last year.

In a relaxed and country atmosphere festival-goers can enjoy home cooking at old fashioned prices or stroll under the trees beside a meandering stream and enjoy the Living Memorial Garden.

The fest opens at 5 p.m. Sept. 19 and at noon Sept. 20-21. St. Alexander Church is on Shlawassee between Inkster and Middlebelt.