

Suburban Life

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Protecting rights by getting involved

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

IN TWO WORDS, the message Mark Pearl brings is "Get involved."

As the Washington, D.C., representative for American Jewish Congress part of the job is giving speeches that bring his audiences, from coast to coast, up to date on legislation and issues concerning the Jewish community. But the underlying message is always the same.

"I can elaborate on the nuances and political ramifications you get from Dan Rafter or Ted Koppel, but in order to make a difference you have to get involved," Pearl said. "I'm talking about more than vot-

ing one day a year. I'm talking about being involved in the political process 365 days of the year. If you are sitting back and complaining without doing and without making your voice known, then you are part of the problem."

Pearl is adamant that one person can make a difference. He badgered him into defining what he meant by "involved." Do you know what a "flood of letters" is to a congressman? It's 15.

PEARL HAD mixed emotions to that answer. "It was very gratifying to me to learn that those 15 letters were read; that they really did count. It was disheartening to learn that only 15 of that congressman's constituents had bothered to write to him on one par-

ticular issue," he said.

"Some get involved by writing a check and maybe that's all they can do. But the whole process is a two-way street. If I'm going to be your spokesman you have to tell that spokesman, that delegate — your spokesman, any delegate — what you want, how you feel, if you want to be, except to be, part of the process."

"How hard is it to write a letter saying you are concerned about taxes or the IRA or prayer in the schools? If nothing else you are going to get your representative to focus on that issue for a while. You are going to let him know something is going on in his district that he better know about."

Pearl called Pat Robertson "in-

credibly intelligent" in the way he chose to decide whether or not to declare himself a candidate for the presidency of the United States.

"As much as I disagree with him, the fact is that Pat Robertson did it right. He asked three million people to send him \$1 and sign a petition for him. By that request he motivated people to do, to act. And the way they respond will tell him exactly where he stands," he said.

Talking from his parents' Farmington Hills home where he was staying for a few days while he was here to address the Detroit Jewish community, he told of an incident to bring home that point.

"I once pushed a congressman into telling me just what he meant by receiving 'a flood of letters.' I

PEARL CALLS much of his job a juggling act. He has been at the job for six years and is "changing gears continually," he said.

He must have his ear to the ground for what's coming up either in the legislature or behind the scenes, and have a pretty good idea of where it's going.

While heavy interest is in issues concerning Israel, anti-Semitism, Russian Jewry, or whatever front page news concerns the Jewish community, the overall thrust is the protection of human rights for all people.

"I align myself up with the hispanics, blacks, Methodists, feminists, the Gray Panthers, or whoever, for whatever the issue if rights are being violated. And in turn they

align themselves with me when I'm calling for a protest against a Russian Jew who can't travel out of his country," he said.

Pearl works with a small staff, of researchers mostly, that sometimes within hours must educate themselves on a new issue in order to take a stand. Pearl said that he and his staff are "forever learning how to do it more effectively."

He gives credit for his own effectiveness in large part to the Jewish people who have a long history of political activism.

To illustrate that point he says, "The Jews make up three percent of the population and the blacks make up 10 percent of the population. But because of the high percentage of Jews who vote and the low percentage of blacks who vote, their voting impact is exactly equal."

PEARL SAYS he gets "incredible personal satisfaction" from his job and gets a feeling of "high invigoration from knowing I can — one man can — make a difference."

His hope is to spread that invigoration throughout what he calls "the universal agenda of social justice."

"We can only feel that when we're part of the process," he says. "When you bend my ear and let me know what you want it is only then that I can channel that concern into effectiveness by making your voices known."

Pearl has been directly involved in many legislative and political battles that have confronted the Jewish community, including arms sales to Arab countries, women's rights, civil rights, nuclear disarmament, aid to Israel, the Arab boycott, and attempts to fuse religion and government.

He has led national coalition efforts to maintain the wall of separation between church and state, particularly opposing constitutional amendments for public school prayer, the removal of federal court jurisdiction and the Equal Access Act.

The American Jewish Congress was founded in 1918 as a democratic and representative instrument of the American Jewish community to help build a Jewish homeland in Palestine, fight anti-Semitism along with any form of racism, foster a positive sense of Jewish identity and work toward full equality in a free society for all Americans.



Marc Pearl mixes the pleasure of visiting his parents in their Farmington Hills home with the business of giving talks while he's in Detroit to address the Jewish community.

HANDY BORGST/staff photographer

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— Marc Pearl
American Jewish Congress
Washington, D.C., representative

Managing helps make the best of all times

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Patricia Materka has learned to put her time to good use. She wasn't always so adept at time management, however.

"I wanted to be mother of the year, wife of the year, the whole bit," Materka said of her younger days. "I now accept the fact that my kids really like Kraft macaroni and cheese. Why fight it?"

Materka is with the University of Michigan's Fitness Research Center. She's also the author of "Time In, Time Out, Time Enough, A Time Management Guide for Women" (Prentice-Hall Inc., 1982).

Time management was Materka's topic to an audience of the American Association of University Women. The approximately 50 women at the program learned about time management — and also shared a few laughs.

Materka decided to write the book to help her get organized. Her house wasn't at all ready for the photographer from "House Beautiful," nor were her children always well-scrubbed and well-behaved, she told those at the AAUW meeting.

Her mother was well-organized, but Materka didn't follow in her footsteps.

"I think these things skip generations."

IN LEARNING to manage time, it's important to consider what you want more time for, Materka said. It's also important to pinpoint what exactly wastes your time.

Some time wasters — phone calls, meetings or paperwork — come from outside sources. Others, however, are brought on by such internal sources as procrastination, personal disorganization or perfectionism.

"Do people here ever procrastinate?" Materka's question drew a

quick "yes" response from her audience.

Values, such as personal growth, close relationships, health and fitness, or financial security, need to be examined periodically, she said.

"It's really useful to review these things now and then." Doing so will help people avoid the "gerbil in the wheel" syndrome of going and going but getting nowhere.

Setting goals — such as finishing a degree, seeing the pyramids, finishing a marathon or adopting triplets — is essential in learning to manage time wisely, Materka said.

"Put them in writing, give them deadlines, use verbs."

It's also useful to assign a priority value to different items, Materka said.

DIVIDING THE day's or week's activities into five categories of A (must be done today), B (nice to do), or C (can be put off) will help.

"A's usually sort themselves out pretty well," Materka said. It's also important to do some work on the B items and not to put off the C items forever.

"Good time management is realizing you can't do it all, at least not simultaneously."

An additional category of "can be delegated" can also help busy people, she said. Delegation is helpful both on the job and at home, even young children can learn to help out around the house.

"I think children are our most wasted resource. This is my new idea about having children — little servants," she said with a laugh.

Interruptions can turn the well-planned day into a time management disaster. There are, however, ways to cope.

In dealing with telephone callers, it's important to be businesslike and action-oriented, Materka said. Such an approach will tend to bring a

caller to the point more quickly.

Returning telephone calls at one time, rather than scattering them throughout the day, is another good idea, she said. At home, a longer telephone cord can give people the opportunity to do dishes or other work around the house during phone calls.

THOSE WHO receive telephone calls at a bad time shouldn't hesitate to say so, Materka told those at the AAUW meeting.

Drop-in visitors can also be a source of aggravation. Body language, such as standing up when the drop-in visitor appears, can help make such interruptions short ones.

Once again, people shouldn't hesitate to tell a drop-in visitor if the visit is an inconvenient one, Materka said.

"What I really should be telling you is don't be a wimp. Be assertive."

Time management also depends on making the best possible use of individual energy levels throughout the day. Some hours are better and more productive ones than others.

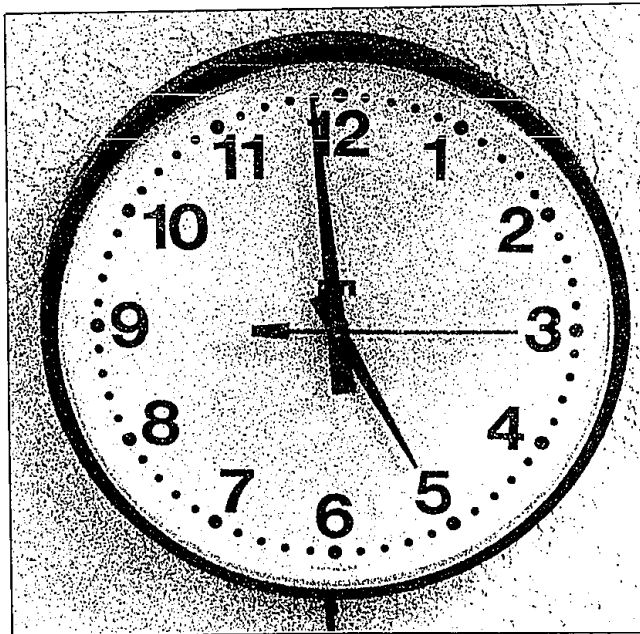
"Those are your golden hours," Materka said. Those hours should be used for the most challenging tasks; telephone callers and drop-in visitors should be discouraged as much as possible.

Less demanding tasks can be done during low-energy time periods.

"You do not have to be in peak form to guide the vacuum cleaner across the rug," Materka said.

The speaker described the five great time management hang-ups: worry, guilt, indecision, perfectionism and procrastination.

BEING DECISIVE involves setting time limits, seeking advice for major decisions and also taking risks. Decisions should be viewed as experiments; mistakes can be learn-



ing experiences, Materka said.

In examining worry and guilt, it's helpful to look at what is causing the guilt.

"Having been brought up both a female and a Catholic, I really know about guilt," Materka said.

Creating action plans and considering what would be the worst that could possibly happen will help in

dealing with guilt and worry.

Perfectionism is another time management bugaboo. It's not necessary to clean behind the refrigerator when having dinner guests — unless you plan on seating the guests there, Materka said.

The "salami technique" of dividing tasks into their smaller parts is a

good one for procrastinators, she said.

"It's hard by the yard, but it's a cinch by the inch," Materka said of getting tasks done.

It's also important to give yourself rewards for jobs well done.

"Give yourself some credit at the end of the day. I believe in chocolate chip cookies, anything like that."