

Goodbye, O&E, it's been a blast

HHEY CHRIS, I hear you're leaving.
"You hear correctly."
"Where you going?"
"Muskegon."
"Excuse me?"
"Muskegon."

In case you are wondering what this is all about, this is something like a farewell column.

"What's Muskegon?"
"Muskegon is a city three hours west of here. That's what they tell me, anyway. Why are you asking me all these questions?"

"Never mind that. What is in Muskegon?"

"The Muskegon Chronicle, for one thing. And the Muskegon Lumberjacks for another."

"I can figure out what the Chronicle is, but what are the Lumberjacks?"

"A professional hockey team, you doll. They play in the International Hockey League."

"I get it. You are leaving because Muskegon has an IHL franchise and all Observerland has is the Hennessey Engineers Junior A team, right?"

"Not hardly. I love the Engineers. Don't ask me why I'm leaving. It's too complicated. Just say it's a good career move."

YOU SEE, writing a farewell-type column isn't as easy as it might appear. Especially for me. I'm not sure what all should go in one. I'm not even sure someone like me should write one in the first place. I mean, it's a little conceited, isn't it? Who really cares if your friendly community sports editor is bolting for another community?

Well, my mom cares. So what the heck, this one's for you mom.

"Chris, what will you miss most about us?"

"Let Who's us?"

"You know, Observerland."

"Oh, I'll miss just about everything in Observerland. I've met some special people — athletes, coaches and parents — and made some very special friends. I wish I had the time to list them all."

"Well, list a couple. Who will you miss the most?"

"Geez. Who are you anyway? All right, I will mostly miss the guys I've worked with in the sports department over the years. Dennis O'Connor, Jim Hughes, Brad Emmons, C.J. Risak, Marty Budner, Jim Toth, Larry O'Connor and Bill Parker. These guys are first-rate, both at and out of work."

"Who else? Come on, bleed a little for us. Don't give us this sissy, la-la stuff about missing your fellow sports writers. Four, your heart out for crissakes."

"You're starting to bug me."

THE JERK is right, though. A farewell column should pay a debt of gratitude to the people who made my four years fun. But there's too many special people. There's Fred Thomann, Tom Negoshian, Ron Holland, Larry Baker, Leo Cagle, Fred Crissey, A.J. Baker, Kathi Kinsella, Mary Gillis, Tom Moshammer, John



Chris McCosky

Herrington, George Pryzgodski, Chuck Olson, Ron Krueger, Horwitz, Denny Mikel, Jim O'Leary, Jerry Young . . . I'm telling you, I could go on and on and on. And that's just coaches.

If we want to talk about the athletes, then we have to mention the likes of John Miller, Craig Morton, Donna Konjarevich, Lis Bonello, Stephanie John, Erich Hartnett, Craig Alexander, Missy Duryewski, Mary Kosowski, Dawn Johnson, Rick Anderson, Ken George, Katie Macintosh, and so on and so on.

See, if I start mentioning names I'm bound to leave someone out. And that would be tragic.

"Chris, what do you think people will remember about you, if they remember you at all?"

"Oh, that's a nice way to phrase the question."

"Sorry."

"I would like to be remembered for some of the extra things I tried to do for the community. Like, I initiated an All-Area gymnastics team. I thought the Athlete of the Year presentation at the close of the school year was a nice touch. I sponsored a softball game between the best men's rec league team from Plymouth and the best team from Canton. I sponsored, with a lot of help from Ron Holland, a city volleyball tournament in Farmington. And basically, I tried to give balanced coverage to all sports, not just the big three (baseball, basketball and football)."

"You think people are going to remember all that?"

"No. I said that's what I'd like them to remember."

"Fat chance."

I DON'T know. This is pretty lousy. Who is asking these questions? And why? I better quit this.

This is all I really wanted to say: I'm leaving. I had a great time. I appreciate all the help and cooperation and I'll miss you all a lot. Come visit me at my lake — you know, Lake Michigan.

"Hey, Chris, Chris, wait. There's a note here for you. Open it. What does it say?"

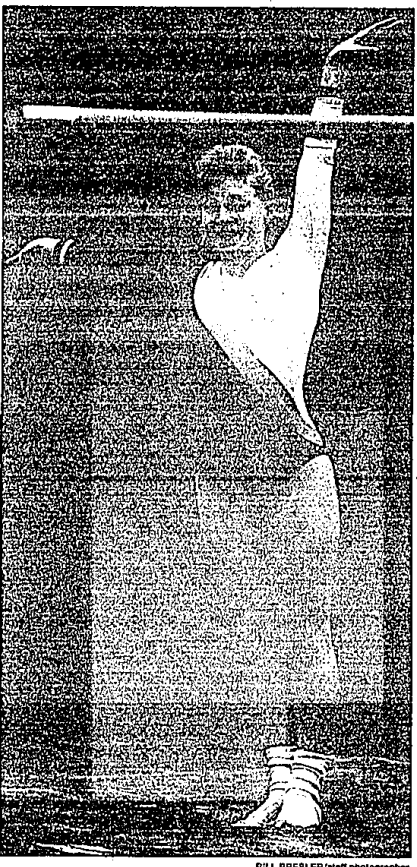
"It says, 'Dear Chris, sorry to hear that you are leaving. Will miss you very much. Love Mom.'"

"That's sweet."

"There's more. P.S. Whatever you do, don't write a farewell column. Nobody cares."

Bye.

North No. 2 at regional



Kim Heller placed fifth all-around for North Saturday during regional competition at Troy. She scored 34.95 in four events, including a 9.2 on floor, 9.2 on vault and an 8.8 on uneven bars.

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Finishing second in all-around was Athens freshman Melissa Miller with a score of 35.55. Miller finished .05 behind Dube in every event.

NORTH FARMINGTON'S Lucine Toroyan posted the third-best all-around score with a 35.50. Toroyan tied Dube for first on floor, finished third on bars with an 8.8, tied for fourth on beam with an 8.4 and came in seventh on vault with a 9.0.

Athens sophomore Natalie Leich won the vault competition with a 9.4, finished fifth on floor with a 9.15, seventh on bars with an 8.5 and 18th on beam with 8.0. She finished fourth in all-around with a 35.05.

Kim Heller of North Farmington finished fifth in all-around with a 34.95. Heller's total included a fourth on vault (9.2), sixth on bars (8.6), sixth on floor (9.10) and

tied for 14th on beam (8.05). Rounding out the top 10 in all-around competition were Kim Trever of Laker, Jill Boardman of North, Sharon Counts of Fraser, Heather McLaughly of Dondoro and Janice Greff of Athens.

"I was really pleased with our effort on beam," Divito said. "That's what hurt us last year. I think Saturday's effort will boost their confidence."

"We're not going to be underdogs going into the state meet because we're No. 1," Divito continued. "But we don't have the experience some of the other teams have. I just told the girls, if they want to win the state meet, not to fall off the beam."

"We were up before the meet," began Dwyer. "We were first on beam and really shaky. We were two points below our average. But we came back strong on vault with our best score ever."

Salem makes grade

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Kathi Kinsella and her Plymouth Salem gymnastics team were drained of all emotion Saturday after qualifying for the state meet for the first time in the team's history.

"The whole day was one big rollercoaster ride," Kinsella said.

The Rocks placed second at the regional tournament at Adrian, scoring 127.25 points. Jackson County Western won the region with 134.70 points. Ann Arbor Pioneer was third with 127.05. Only the top two teams from regional competition advance to the state meet, which will take place Friday and Saturday at Grand Rapids Creston.

Kinsella, moments before the final results were announced, gave the obligatory concession speech to her team.

"The way I had it figured, we were going to get beat out by Pioneer. I was sure of it," she said. "I told the girls that I had never been more proud of anyone in my life. I told them that Pioneer didn't beat them, the judges did. I thought the judging was low. I thought we got ripped. I thought Canton got ripped. I was so mad I had to go out to my car and cry. I didn't want the kids to see me cry, but I really thought we got robbed."

THEN THE results were announced. "In second place, Plymouth Salem."

From sadness to euphoria. "I just couldn't believe it," Kinsella said. "But you know, I want this community to realize something: Five years ago this team couldn't win a meet. Now we're going to the state meet. I'm very proud of that."

It was a team effort that vaulted the Rocks into the state meet. The top guns performed well as always: Jackie Huff placed 10th all-around with a 32.75 score. Becky Talbot placed 13th with a 32.0 all-around score. Amy Pastori was 28th with a 30.45.

But, as Kinsella said, "My backup people are responsible for us getting out of here. They made the difference."

Debbie Popp, Dana Holda, Debbie Drabek, Jennie Syria and Sharon Way all earned crucial points for the Rocks.

Kinsella rewarded their efforts by keeping them in the lineup for the state meet.

PLYMOUTH CANTON, coached by John Cunningham, placed eighth at the regional with 120.25 points. Salem will be the first Centennial Educational Park team to compete in the state meet since 1981 when Canton went. The team competition will begin at 6 p.m. Friday. The individual competition will begin at 1 p.m. Saturday.

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