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Lorraine McClish editor/477-5450



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'Manners for Moppets'

She writes and teaches to bring back the social courtesies

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

MARY LOU ANDERSON had so much faith that parents were going to buy her book to help them teach their children some old-fashioned manners that she put

\$4,000 on her Masters charge card so she could publish it herself. "I still have faith, but I also have an upset stomach," the Farmington Hills woman joked. "But it will work out well, I know it." Anderson said it doesn't take much more than a casual observance to realize that today's children don't

know many of the social courtesies, particularly at the table, and she cites television shows as the culprit.

"I saw a child pick up a piece of French toast with his hands on 'The Wonder Years' and that's a pretty decent show," she said. "At the other end of the spectrum is 'Roseanne' and a few examples from that show I could cite were abominable.

"Watch children at the table, at a banquet, at a party, in a restaurant. They've just not been taught how to behave themselves.

"Knowing good manners is going to make that child feel comfortable — even if he's eating an artichoke. Good manners says 'I like you' to those around them. Children with good manners are welcome wherever they go."

ANDERSON HAS several good reasons to keep the faith that the last generation which learned good manners has not come and gone, and that her book, "Manners for Moppets," will be bought by the mothers of today's children.

"I tested it out on a group of doctors' wives while we were all at a cardiology conference. We don't have fashion shows or card games. We arrange psychological programs or programs on current events for ourselves and try our ideas out on one another.

"I showed them eight of my pages and gave them the general idea of what I was trying to do. They were all enthusiastic about it. They encouraged me to go on with it," she said.

The next step in going on with her idea stemmed from an advertisement in the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

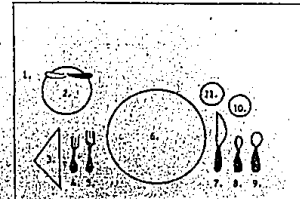
"I answered an ad from the community education department in Livonia," she said. "The ad asked for you to share whatever talents you had by heading up a class.

"I wrote back that I could teach watercolor, or oil painting, or a class for children in manners. They jumped at the idea of a manners class. They had never had anything like it before."

The eight session class has been given several times now and at last report had a waiting list for the next class to start.



SETTING



- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. BREAD KNIFE | 5. DINNER FORK | 9. SOUP SPOON |
| 2. BREAD & BUTTER PLATE | 6. SERVING PLATE | 10. MILK GLASS |
| 3. NAPKIN | 7. KNIFE | 11. WATER GLASS |
| 4. SALAD FORK | 8. TEASPOON | |

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

A page out of "Manners for Moppets" shows youngsters a proper table setting.

Anderson described it as a fun class, where the students learned the gamut from the correct way to set a table to how to use an egg cup.

"Most of them never saw an egg cup before. The next time they visit Canada or Europe they'll be ready," she said.

ANDERSON, who did all of the illustrations as well as the writing for her book, has taught watercolor classes for Farmington Community Education. Early in February she began her first "Manners for Moppets" class here for the 4-10 year old set.

Students in class get much the same instructions as in the book and come away knowing what to do with their hands, elbows, used napkins and silverware; how to make the cook happy; how to correctly eat soups, spaghetti and salads; how to pass dishes and another dozen or so amenities to make them and their fellow diners comfortable.

Anderson said the only trouble she had with the book was getting it published.

"I couldn't get a publisher because I never had anything published before — a Catch 22 I had heard about

before I even started this," she said.

"I could not get a loan because I had no collateral in my own name and no work experience. If I wanted to do this on my own without being under my husband's umbrella, this is what I had to do.

"If I ever get the \$4,000 paid off I think I'll write a sequel Manners in the Business Place."

"MANNERS FOR Moppets" sells for \$8.95 and is available in Lord & Taylor's restaurant, The Cafe, in 12 Oaks Mall; in Little Professors on Union Lake Road in Union Lake; in Border's Books in Novi and in Annie's Book Stop in Simsbury Plaza, Farmington Road and 14 Mile.

Tea parties for youngsters are being planned now to be given in the spring in Annie's.

"These will be exercises in manners at the table beginning with the courtesy of arriving on time, and greeting the guests at the door," she said.

'Most of them never saw an egg cup before. The next time they visit Canada or Europe they'll be ready.'

—Mary Lou Anderson

Events calendar is backbone of singles club

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

FARMINGTON Single Professionals will celebrate their fourth anniversary during their regular last-Friday-of-the-month Single Mingle in Livonia.

"We never dreamed we'd get this big," said Barbara Ott, chairwoman for the group that grew from one idea and a handful of singles to about 300 who are now on the mailing list. "Technically The Community Center is still our sponsor. Our base of operations is still in Farmington. But we've just outgrown the center. Last month we had to go into Novi for our Single Mingle and this month we're going to be in Livonia."

The Anniversary Mingle runs 7-11 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23, in the new Embassy Suites Hotel, east of I-275 on the north side of Seven Mile Road. Admission is \$5 for non-members.

"At the regular Single Mingles we can expect 50-70 to show up," Ott said. "About half of those people will be newcomers and there will be about 10 of us from the steering committee to break the ice and let them know who we are, what we are, what we have to offer, what we are all about, what we do and how we do it."

What Farmington Single Professionals seem to be doing is pleasing most of the people all of the time,

with a format that promotes activities and socialization among people of common interests.

"If there is another group like us in the metro area we sure don't know where they are," Ott said.

FARMINGTON Single Professionals are led by a 10-person steering committee who arrange for about 15-20 different activities every month. The committee sets the agenda, organizes the events, makes the reservations, takes the reservations, lists them all in a newsletter, keeps the mailing list up to date and gets the newsletter out.

"Dinners at different places — from Key Largo to Mexican Village — are popular. We've got a champagne brunch coming up at the Top of the Pond we can expect will bring a lot of people. Cross country and downhill skiing are big right now," Ott said.

"There are always sports listed every month — sports you can participate in like bowling or the Tuesday night Wallyball — or sports events for the spectator. There are always cultural things — movies, concerts. And the committee always tries for something different. Sometime in the spring we're organizing a Night Like in Heritage Park."

The steering committee is not necessarily interested in arranging something that is going to be popular with everybody.

"We've had some events that have brought out 100 people and some that have only attracted 10-15. You are going to get to know other people a lot faster when you are in a group of 10 than if you are in a group of 100," Ott said. "If 10 people sign up, that's OK. Our purpose is to bring together people of common interests."

"I think a lot of our success has to do with no matter what you attend there is going to be new people there for you to meet and there are going to be old familiar faces there to make you feel comfortable."

BETTY PAINE, a former executive director of the center, conceived the idea of a club for singles that would generate friendships through participation in common activities.

The club would serve a purpose for its members not offered elsewhere; it would bring people in the 25-40 age range into the center; and the room rental would be a plus for the center's operating budget.

Paine got the group off the ground as a fund-raiser for the center, but the group works on a break-even basis.

"We ask \$25 a year dues," Ott said. "After refreshments, postage, printing, the phone bills, the rental, we break even and that's that."

Ott was raised in Farmington Township and said she was attracted

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