

## Suburban Life

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(F10)

## 10 steps lead to recovery

AIM meetings consist of planned lessons, relaxation and discussions. The group uses "10 tools of recovery" which are:

- Belief. Believing in recovery is the first step.
- Relaxation and meditation. These techniques are important in relieving tension, literature said.
- Self-talk. Listening to your negative messages must be eliminated, the literature said.
- Affirmations. The use of positive thinking is taught to relieve anxiety.
- Image books. Using an image book is a powerful tool to help visualize a "new you."
- Goal setting. One small goal is encouraged each week.
- Exposure. Regularly facing the frightening object or situation rather than avoiding it is the main step in overcoming it.
- Telephone. Telephone support is provided.
- Support. Group meetings offer support in a relaxed atmosphere, the literature said. Group field trips also may take place.
- Spiritual step program. AIM considers itself a spiritual program. The steps are adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous.

AIM is open to all suffering with agoraphobia and other anxiety disorders. They meet weekly and members are free to bring a support person.

The Birmingham-Bloomfield and West Bloomfield area support group meets at 10:30 a.m. every Saturday at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, 6255 Telegraph Rd., Bloomfield Township.

More information on other groups is available by calling AIM headquarters at 547-0400.

DAILY STRESS may result in anxiety. Designed to help is an ongoing four-week stress management class offered through Community Health Education at Crittenton Hospital in Rochester. For information, call 532-5269.

Also helpful may be Women Today, a free support group offered by Crittenton Hospital for women aiming to work through conflicts and talk about concerns. The class, led by a certified social worker, is at 9 a.m. the third Saturday of the month.



## Support group helps panic-attack victims

By Susan Steinhilber  
staff writer

"Julie" has had anxiety disorder for more than 10 years. Today, through therapy with a psychologist and with the help of AIM — an organization for individuals who suffer from agoraphobia — she is well along the way to getting better.

In fact, Julie (who prefers only her first name be used) is co-facilitator of the greater Bloomfield area group of AIM, which meets weekly at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Bloomfield Township.

"I started having panic attacks in my early 20s," said Julie, who lives in Farmington Hills. "No one knew what it was. About 10 years ago it came back. I went to two psychiatrists and one psychologist. I'm finishing my therapy with the psychologist next week."

Julie said the psychiatrists gave her medication, along with therapy, but their treatments were not very effective. "They're not nearly as informed as the psychologists," she said.

"I GOT INVOLVED with AIM two years ago, and became co-facilitator in January," Julie said. Being a part of AIM was important, she explained, because it made her realize there were a lot of people with her condition. Also, the group has a 10-step method that has brought relief.

"We work sort of like the AA clubs, except we've turned them to anxiety. One step is exposure — your fear of places. To fight the condition, you go back to the place where the fear lies. Another step is writing affirmations. 'I have a fear of being alone, so I wrote, 'I will be just fine myself,' she said.

"If you follow the 12 steps, you will start to get better."

AIM, an acronym for Agoraphobics in Motion, was founded by Mary Ann Gogoleski of Royal Oak. The non-profit self-help organization now has 31 groups throughout the United States.

Locally, in addition to Bloomfield Township, there are support groups in Troy, Auburn Hills, Waterford, Livonia and Warren.

Gogoleski suffered her first panic attack at age 12.

It was during daily Mass in a church, anxiously important to the young girl who was planning on entering the convent.

**'I started having panic attacks in my early 20s. No one knew what it was.'**

— 'Julie'  
Farmington Hills resident

"IT WAS SUCH an intense feeling that what I decided to do was not go to church again," she said. Faintness, a speeding heartbeat, nausea, dizziness and hyperventilation are just some of the symptoms that can occur when panic, such as Gogoleski felt, hits. Some victims believe they are dying or having a heart attack.

Medical examinations found she was healthy. But later, the panic attacks occurred in other places. By the time Gogoleski was married with three young daughters, she was housebound.

Finally a magazine article led her to recognize her condition as agoraphobia, a disorder characterized by acute panic attacks.

Gogoleski received help from an anxiety center but, ironically, it was a minister who helped her overcome the condition for good. Today Gogoleski has been free of panic attacks for eight years.

SHE STARTED AIM "to let people know it is possible to be free of excessive anxiety. The problem is, recovery is slow, and we live in a world where there are microwave ovens."

Agoraphobia is commonly defined as an abnormal fear of open spaces. But Gogoleski said, "It's such a controversial topic. Most people who suffer from this kind of anxiety are quite functional, but they have limitations in some form or another. Some can't go out the door, although that is rare. Others can travel all around the country, but don't ask them to go into a mall. I guess the main core is the panic has limited them in some way."

"Agoraphobia is a fear of fear. Agoraphobics feel that if they avoid the places where panic occurs that then their fear reaction will be alleviated."

Gogoleski recalls that doctors told her she would outgrow it. She went to college for awhile, then worked at a hospital, then married. It was then

that anxiety, which had become worse over the years, spread to all areas of her life.

"I ended up going to analysis," she said, not knowing that it was not the type of therapy for phobias.

WHEN A FRIEND finally showed her the article describing agoraphobia, she had a treatable diagnosis. She signed up at a center called TERRAP, a contraction of the words "terrific relief."

The 18-month program was costly, but helpful for her severe condition.

She learned behavior and cognitive techniques including gradual exposure and desensitization to feared places. But depression settled in when the group ended.

The turning point, Gogoleski said, was seeing the Rev. Jack Boland of the Church of Today in Warren speak on a television talk show about how a positive attitude had helped him conquer cancer and addiction.

She went to the church and he told her even if she did not believe she could recover, he would believe it for her.

"THAT WAS MY first taste of what support is all about," she said. She decided to believe she would recover. She developed a more positive attitude. "I began to start a journal and look at my self talk."

The change was so dramatic, she decided to start a support group.

"My goal is that I would like to try and tap the people who are suffering from the problem everywhere."

The groups take the form of planned lessons, relaxation and discussion. They are not a replacement for other treatments of the anxiety disorder, still being studied by researchers. At AIM, a therapist or counselor schooled in behavior modification techniques, coupled with a support group, is considered the best treatment.

Staff writer Ethel Simmons contributed to this story.

## Around here, dollmaking is a 'Gala event'

By Janice Tigar-Kramer  
special writer

WHEN DOROTHY Gala sells one of her hand-crafted porcelain dolls, it's almost like parting with family. After the sale, she usually replaces the doll by making a similar one, though, like people, handmade dolls are never exactly alike.

The Farmington Hills resident started making porcelain dolls in 1984 after a friend asked her to make clothes for a porcelain boy doll. Being an expert seamstress, whose patient hands are adept at styling and sewing doll clothes, Gala knew she'd have the outfit made in an evening.

"But I just couldn't do it," Gala said. "I didn't like the doll. It had too much hair and I don't like boy dolls. I thought if I could make the doll the way I wanted, I could dress it."

So Gala, who has been fascinated with dolls and doll clothes since childhood, enrolled in a porcelain dollmaking class in Walled Lake. Two years later, she entered an antique reproduction doll in a competition sponsored by the Michigan Dollmakers Association.

Though her early dolls drew praise from friends and even judges for their detailed clothing and remarkably life-like faces, Gala hadn't yet mastered the art of making authentic antique reproductions, whose features (length of eyelashes and eyebrows), coloring and clothing (style and type of fabric) must be made according to specifications from the manufacturer of the original head mold.

GALA ENROLLED in an advanced dollmaking class, began researching the dolls and fashions from the period the doll originally was made and returned to competition.

**'There aren't enough hours in the day or days in the week to make all the dolls or doll clothes I want to make. It's an addictive hobby.'**

— Dorothy Gala

Today, Dolly G's Dolls — antique reproductions, modern dolls, toddler and baby dolls and fashion dolls — earn first- and second-place awards in every dollmaking competition she enters. Her modern baby doll won Best of Show three years ago at the Michigan State Fair.

"There aren't enough hours in the day or days in the week to make all of the dolls and doll clothes I want to make. It's an addictive hobby," said Gala, who works full-time in the records department of the Farmington Hills Police Department. "If I stare at the face of a doll I'm making, I'm in love with it by the time I've finished."

Like other dedicated dollmakers, Gala likes nothing more than sharing her exquisitely dressed dolls with friends and show-goers who are amazed — sometimes even stunned by their life-like detail.

Few people can resist gathering the porcelain and cloth newborn called Sugar Britches in their arms. And not surprisingly, most utter an adoring remark before holding the five-pound babe to their shoulder. The surprise is no burp, no drool, no cry.

Sugar Britches, with full, rosy lips and cheeks and pale blue eyes applied with china paint, has a porcelain head, hands and feet, and cloth arms filled with plastic pellets to duplicate the weight of a newborn.

GALA'S DOLLS, which range in size from eight to 23 inches, sell for \$75-\$300 and take 12 hours to several weeks to finish. The hobby not only is tedious and time consuming, but also expensive to begin.

Gala has several hundred molds ranging from \$89-\$120 each, which she can use up to 50 times if she's careful. Arm and leg mold sets and shoulder-plates for some dolls can cost another \$90. Eyes are about \$23 a pair and wigs are \$3-\$25 for acrylic and \$25-\$60 for mohair.

Porcelain dollmaking includes a nine- to 10-step process, from pouring the liquid porcelain in the mold to applying synthetic eyelashes to the finished head. After the head mold is dry, Gala cleans the mold (now called greenware) with fine sandpaper.

Then she opens the eyes on some molds with a scalpel and fires the head in a kiln for seven to eight hours. The head is cooled and fired again after eyelashes and brows are painted. Color is applied to cheeks and lips and fired again. Gala even can dip a head in wax and insert human hair with a tool similar to a darning needle.

Gala's reproduction dolls, mostly from the Victorian era (1837-1901) have composition (liquidified wood) or leather bodies and porcelain head, hands and feet, like the original dolls. The body parts, some with jointed knees and elbows, are strung together with elastic or fastened to a cloth torso. A dollmaker is less limited to the material and clothing she can use when making modern baby dolls or fashion dolls.

THE MOTHER of four grown children, Gala often browses through the infant's department searching for doll clothes. She'll visit every fabric and doll supply store before

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Dorothy Gala of Farmington Hills began making modern and antique reproduction porcelain dolls as a hobby in 1984. Gala, who also teaches dollmaking through the Farmington

Public School Adult and Community Education program, designs and sews the dolls' detailed clothing. She researches the costumes she makes for antique reproductions.