

Roeper fencers prove point about sport



Showing her sharp stuff during fencing practice at Roeper City and Country School in Birmingham is Aliya Pasik of West Bloom-

field, who says the sport is both physically and mentally challenging.

By Greg Kowalski
staff writer

What do Neil Diamond, Loni Anderson, Robert Redford and Gene Wilder have to do with Roeper City and Country School?

Nothing really, except they are former fencers. Fencers as in sword wielders. And Roeper has one of the finest — and last — school fencing programs around.

Its fencers are so good, in fact, that several qualified to compete last month in the Junior Olympics in Kansas City, Mo.

Roeper's Junior Olympians were Michael McCune of Birmingham, Under-20 Men's Saber Division; Aliya Pasik of West Bloomfield, Under-20 Women's Foil and Under-17 Women's Foil; Jeffrey Cousins of Southfield, Under-20 Men's Foil and Under-17 Men's Foil; and Ellice Osborn of Oxford, Under-17 Women's Foil, Under 15 Women's Foil and Under 13 Women's Foil.

Braden Ruddy of Royal Oak qualified for the Junior Olympics but was unable to attend.

ROEPEK'S TRADITION of fencing goes back to the 1930s and has produced a number of champion fencers including Ann Marsh who won a gold medal in the Pan American games in 1991 and is ranked a No. 1 junior fencer. She is now competing in the World Cup games in Italy.

Another Roeper graduate, Rob Conway from Flint, is the topped ranked junior fencer in the United States. He won a silver medal at the Junior Olympics and is now a member of the Columbia University fencing squad. Frank Osborn, another Roeper graduate, is ranked No. 8 in Men's Foil and is also now participating in the World Cup games in Italy.

Over the years, some of the finest fencing coaches in the world have taught at Roeper, including Istvan Pannos, a Hungarian who escaped from that country during the 1956 revolution against the communists.

"I think it (Roeper) has an excellent program," said Bonnie Topper, who is with the Michigan Division of the United States Fencing Association.

"IT IS ONE OF the few sports that goes beyond offering the basics," she said.

Fencing, she explained, is a classic form of athletics with a tradition that dates back centuries. It combines mental alertness with top physical coordination and strength.

Unlike other sports, fencers often start studying fencing while very young, even at age 3 and many continue into their 70s.

Cousens has been fencing for nearly three years. "It's different, unique," he said. Unlike a team sport, fencers have only themselves to rely on.

"You have to make your hands move and make everything move together," he said.

A sophomore, Cousins said he plans to continue fencing when he goes to college.

McCune also will continue fencing at Columbia University next school year.

"IT'S MORE OF an individual sport," said McCune. He likened fencing to a physical chess game. Style and movement are critical but so is planning strategy to face an opponent.

"It's not only a physical sport. It's a mental challenge," said Pasik, a junior who also plans to continue fencing in college.

Many of the Roeper fencers begin studying in the fourth grade, and the youngsters demonstrate admirable agility.

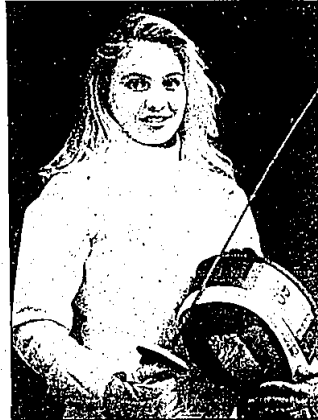
And they're serious about their sport. Athletic director Ernie Righetti said the fencers usually practice three times a week for an hour to 90 minutes. Many then go to other fencing clubs to practice.

But one problem they're facing is finding competition. Several schools that once had fencing programs have dropped them, making coming up with opponents a new challenge to the sport.

That's one reason the Junior Olympics are special. They officially are not rated the international Olympics that were televised in recent weeks.

Junior Olympics are divided into categories of age 11 and under, 13 and under, 15 and under, 17 and under, and 20 and under.

They are the highest level of competition for fencers in the USA, and the top three finishers in each category are eligible to represent the United States in World Cup meets. Those are a step away from the international Olympics.



STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

West Bloomfield's Aliya Pasik, a junior at Roeper City and Country School in Birmingham, now has plenty of fencing experience to go with her sword and shield. She recently competed in the Junior Olympics held in Kansas City, Mo.

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Feds file added charge against Hills gun buff

By Joanna Moliszewski
staff writer

A 21-year-old Farmington Hills gun buff faces additional felony firearms charges as the result of a second federal grand jury indictment handed down Wednesday.

The indictment against Brian Oscar Lang charges him with unlawfully possessing and manufacturing unregistered firearms and destructive devices.

The indictment, which supersedes the first indictment, includes eight counts that were in the Feb. 11 indictment as well as five additional counts charging Lang manufactured several of the firearms and destructive devices noted in the first indictment, said assistant U.S. Attorney G. Gregory Schuetz.

"THIS IS manufactured. That's a little frosting on the cake," said Lang's attorney, Seymour Posner.

The firearms and destructive devices the indictment alleges Lang made include two silencers, 29 pipe bombs, 11 explosive devices made from carbon dioxide compressed gas cylinders, three pipe bombs attached to wooden dowels, and an explosive device made from a .22-caliber cartridge casing.

If Lang is convicted on all 13 counts, he faces a maximum sentence of up to 130 years in prison and a fine of \$3.2 million.

THE ORIGINAL indictment against Lang states that he "knowingly possessed several firearms and destructive devices that were not registered to him. . . in violation of federal law."

The indictment stems from the Feb. 11, 1991, raid on a house on Briarcrest Street in Franklin Knolls, south of 14 Mile, east of Northwestern Highway, where Lang reportedly lives with his family.

Though the Lang's trial is scheduled for April 6, Posner says he plans to have it adjourned. He also plans to file a motion to have a search warrant quashed. That warrant was used to get into Lang's house based on

information that Lang planned to sell a semiautomatic weapon. That weapon, according to police and federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, was supposed to be registered with the federal government.

POSNER CLAIMS all of Lang's seized weapons were semiautomatics, not automatics. Semiautomatic rifles need only be registered with the state, Posner said.

Items seized in the raid and noted in the indictment include: one Uzi semiautomatic assault rifle with a shortened barrel; one nine-millimeter semiautomatic pistol modified with a vertical forward pistol grip; two silencers; 29 pipe bombs constructed from polyvinyl chloride pipes and Pyrodex explosive; three PVC pipe bombs attached to wooden dowels; one explosive device constructed from a .22-caliber cartridge casing and gunpowder; and components used in constructing an operational hand grenade.

THE 1991 raid came during last year's Persian Gulf War.

Immediately after the raid, Lang was charged with possessing an unregistered short-barrel Uzi rifle.

Posner says he plans to defend Lang by saying Lang used the weapons confiscated for paint war games, also known as splatterball.

"According to my client, the guns were registered, the silencers were made of plastic and the explosives were things he made to use in paint war games," Posner said.

Unrelated to the weapons seizure, Lang also was charged with receiving and concealing stolen property of more than \$100, a felony, in connection with two scanner radios police say were stolen from the Detroit Board of Education offices.

Lang posted 10 percent of a \$100,000 bond in March, 1991, after Posner got the bond reduced from \$1 million. The receiving and concealing charge has not yet been scheduled for trial.

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C'ville restricts felon program

By Marie Chestney
staff writer

Those convicted of petty larcenies will no longer be allowed to work weekends in the Clarenceville School District.

Problems encountered with the 16th District Court's volunteer work program had forced district officials to question whether they should continue their three-year involvement.

Convicted felons opt to work weekends in the program in Livonia rather than going to jail.

The 16th District Court serves Livonia, Clarenceville includes northeast Livonia, southeast Farmington Hills and northwest Redford.

THE CLARENCEVILLE Board of

Education Thursday approved a list of restrictions to tighten the way in which the program is run.

The restrictions come in lieu of ending the program, which district officials had considered doing after news of several incidents surfaced.

In the past, workers included shoplifters and other minor felons. Now, the district only will allow people convicted of driving offenses to work in Clarenceville schools.

"It did not please me to find it necessary to terminate the volunteer work program in the Clarenceville School District," Superintendent David Kamish wrote 16th District Court probation director James Burke in a Feb. 25 letter.

"As we have indicated in the past, this program has been very benefi-

cial for both parties. However, I did feel that it was necessary that we address concerns presented prior to continuing with business as usual."

Incidents that have occurred range from the pointing of a jacket to a missing checkbook.

BESIDES LIMITING the program to driving convictions, the trustees also set the following rules the court must adhere to in order for Clarenceville to continue to participate:

• There must be one supervisor assigned to every eight workers inside a building. For outside workers, the ratio is 1-to-12;

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