

rites of Passage

ANNIVERSARIES

Jonas 50th

Bernard and Pauline (Kraus) Jonas of West Bloomfield, who met in 1944 at a synagogue dance, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Nov. 25. The couple recently marked the golden anniversary with a two-week Mediterranean cruise. The couple has three children, Marc Jonas of Farmington Hills, Rabbi Stuart (Tovah) Jonas of Brooklyn, N.Y., and Suzanne (Marc) Winkelman of Buda, Texas, and 16 grandchildren.



Beddow 50th

Bill and Peggy Beddow of West Bloomfield celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Nov. 17. The couple enjoyed a dinner party with family and friends Nov. 18 at the Botsford Inn in Farmington Hills. The party was hosted by the couple's children and their spouses, Laura and Bob Brooks of Dallas, Texas; Katy and Steve Brower of Matawan, N.J.; and Doug and Kathleen Beddow of West Bloomfield.



Mom wonders about posters

ALL ABOUT FAMILIES Alice McCarthy, who prepares this column, has asked Richard Lerner, Ph.D., and Cheryl K. Olson, Sc.D., to answer the week's question. Lerner is director of the Institute for Children, Youth and Families at Michigan State University, Olson is a specialist in youth and health communications.

Q. Do I need to worry about all the posters of young, male TV stars my 12-year-old daughter collects? R. T. Rochester

A. When 11-year-old Janet broke her arm, her parents' biggest worry was getting her to the hospital. Janet's greatest concern, however, was not the broken arm. "Promise me you won't forget!" she pleaded in the emergency room. "You have to tape 'Beverly Hills 90210!'"

How much does the show mean to Janet? Only everything. Its characters are central to the lives of her group of friends. Posters of the cast members cover their bedroom walls. They debate which of the guys is the cutest and fantasize about meeting them.

Kids develop devotion for pop-culture figures as early as 8 or 9. Girls tend to have crushes earlier than boys. However, it's generally not until the preteen years, when an interest in romantic relationships collides with a developing skill in abstract thought, that the swooning really begins.

All this can be tough for a parent to endure. However, your preteen's fixation on a teen idol is more than just a drain on the allowance. It provides a safe stepping-stone on the path to adult feelings and roles.

Being infatuated with an idol offers a number of advantages over actual dating. A real-life failure would be devastating at this age, but by imagining how attractive and witty she would be with her heart-throb, she boosts her fragile self-esteem.

Preoccupation with pop-culture personalities can also offer social benefits. If all your kid's friends like the same rock group or TV-show cast, it naturally becomes a source of shared interest and conversation.

Talking about the doings of the cute and famous also allows kids to share and test their values and to assert their individuality. When the Beatles were popular in the 1960s, Paul McCartney was almost universally regarded as "the cute one." An evening Ringo as her favorite was one way for a girl to show her independence.

Finally, a crush on an idol helps prepare a preteen for age-appropriate dating. She can rehearse how she might feel, act and talk, as well as the responses she might get from her idealized date. All these are perfectly good reasons not to belittle your child's love-truck extremes, no matter how trying they become.

Instead, acknowledge her feelings. Tell her about your own preteen crushes, and show her how you felt. Granted, it's harder to have a sense of shared experience when your child's teen idol's hairstyle, behavior or song lyrics are abhorrent to you. Saying, "How can you

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like someone like that?" won't get you anywhere, though. Instead, ask your child what she likes about her idol. If possible, mention something you like about him ("He does have a cute smile, and he's a good dancer.") before mentioning specifics that concern you. Again, sharing your own memories may help.

When you ask your son how he would feel if a girl he dated did some of the things his idol does on her show — a question that could lead to discussing the qualities he finds attractive in girls. Although change his mind about her, you'll give him food for thought. And you will have shown respect for his feelings and views.

Infatuations with teen heart-throbs usually subside as a child gets a social foothold in high school, although it's normal to maintain some fantasies about famous people into adulthood. An occasional teenage crush is both common and healthy, but you should be concerned if the infatuation is interfering with friendships or is leading to problems with schoolwork. If that's the case, your child may need professional help in developing his or her social skills or addressing other underlying problems.

Alice McCarthy has adapted the above response with permission from Parents magazine (September 1995) where a longer article "Teen Idols" by Lerner and Olson appeared.

Richard Lerner's current efforts involve working with communities to build programs effective in promoting positive youth development. Cheryl Olson's doctorate is in health and social behavior from the Harvard School of Public Health. She is a communications specialist for the International Youth Foundation.

For an annotated bibliography on teen development including sexual development, discipline and self-esteem send \$2 (cash, check or money order) to: All About Families, c/o Sue Wills, The Maple, Birmingham 48009. Order by giving the date the column appeared. Leave a daytime telephone number and indicate if you want delivery by fax or mail. The resource list is only available for up to 90 days after each column's publication.

All About Families runs every other week in The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Birmingham resident Alice R. McCarthy, Ph.D., is a nationally known writer and editor. She is the mother of six children and grandmother to five young children. To leave a message for McCarthy, from a touch-tone phone, call (313) 953-2047, mail-box 1894, or write her at The Eccentric.

Here's how to submit your special announcements

Local engagement, wedding, anniversary and birth announcements run in the Thursday and Monday editions of The Observer & Eccentric. Residents of the Birmingham-Bloomfield, West Bloomfield and Southfield areas should send their engagement, wedding, anniversary or birth information, with

or without photograph, to The Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, Attention — Brides. Residents of the Troy and Rochester areas should send information to The Rochester Eccentric, 1814 S. Rochester Road, Rochester Hills 48307. Residents of the Farmington area should send information to

the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335. Preprinted forms that outline the information needed for your engagement or wedding announcement are available at Observer & Eccentric offices. If you have questions regarding your announcement, call Sue

Wills in Birmingham at (810) 901-2560; Debbie Douglas in Rochester at (810) 651-7575, or Rose Butler in Farmington at (810) 477-6450. For a recorded message, with complete information on submitting announcements, call (810) 901-4700 for The Eccentric and (810) 953-2055 for The Observer.



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