

Everything about Hills man's book is left-handed

It's not easy being a lefty, author says

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Jeff Goldsmith is pitching a book about being left-handed in a right-handed world.

Does that make the Farmington Hills resident a crafty southpaw or a flaky fellow nicknamed Lefty? Neither, according to the author. He's not looking for any left-handed compliments, either.

The book focuses on obstacles left-handers face in the kitchen, at work, on the baseball diamond, and other places.

Enough frivolity has surrounded the subject, he said. Goldsmith's 201-page self-published book, "Left-Handed in a Right-Handed World," takes a more serious tone.

Some would say almost too serious. The Southfield High graduate talks of discrimination and past persecution. At the turn of the century, a common practice was tying left-handers' visible arms behind their back while they were made to use their right.

He relates his own experience as a child, trying to use right-handed scissors and becoming frustrated.

"I've had some people say you're trying to create sympathy or a special interest group," said Goldsmith, 40, who lives in

Strawberry Lane Apartments.

"Absolutely not." He's put a moderate spin on the topic. Previous attempts to address left-handedness have either sounded trivial, or

He and other left-handers are in good company.

The previous and current United States presidents, George Bush and Bill Clinton, are both left-handed. Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci were left-handed. So was rock guitarist Jimi Hendrix and former Beatle Paul McCartney.

Estimates vary as to the percentage of people who are left-handed, anywhere from 10 to 15 percent.

"I'd like to see the question asked on the Census," said Goldsmith, who includes a questionnaire in his book. "It might be 20 to 25 percent."

He knows this left-handed business.

His story parallels that of Simpson's TV character Ned Flanders, who opened an outlet selling left-handed wares in the Springfield mall. Goldsmith, who opened a left-handers' store in Scottsdale, Ariz., didn't end up living in an outlet wagon like Flanders and his family did.

He did go out of business after five years. Goldsmith estimates 200 such shops have existed.

"Most have gone out of business because there is not enough of the useful, practical items left-handed people really need," Goldsmith said.

"We sold too many T-shirts and coffee mugs."

After he closed his store in



SHARON LEMUEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Feeling left out: Jeff Goldsmith purports to tell "the truth about left-handed people and their battle for respect, understanding, equal opportunity and equal rights."

1989, Goldsmith returned to the Detroit area. He became a manager at Kinko's Copies in Birmingham where he worked until 1994. That spawned the idea for publishing a book. He saved enough money and left his job to write the practical left-handers' tome.

He found his own editors or proofreaders, self-publishing rather than trying to get someone else to do it.

"I didn't want to be rejected," he said. "I thought I'd side step that bureaucracy."

"A lot of people think I'm crazy for doing this. They say, 'You lost a lot of time and money trying to promote these issues before' . . . but I felt it was very important."

Along with self-publishing, Goldsmith is also marketing and mailing his book. He's appeared on several radio talk shows, though very few locally.

Sales are plodding along. The book focuses on obstacles left-handers face in the kitchen, at work, on the baseball diamond, and other places.

Goldsmith relates how he wasn't allowed to try out for catcher, third base, shortstop or second base in Little League because coaches said no left-handers had distinguished themselves in those positions in the Major

Leagues. He notes that only 12 left-handed quarterbacks have started a game in the National Football League.

Left-handers biggest obstacles have been in education, he said. "The teaching methods are still designed for right handed people," he said. "As a result, their handwriting suffers. It's a lot harder for left-handed kids to learn how to write, and that can affect the child's performance throughout school."

His penmanship suffered. He cites difficulty taking notes as a possible reason why he left Michigan State University.

Symmetrical desks and spiral bound notebooks with ledgers on the right side are only part of the solution, he said.

"I'm not advocating rebuilding everything for left-handed people," he said. "I think it's an educational issue."

"The next step is . . . to help them be left-handed and develop their skills as left-handers."

Left-handers have some advantages, too. Studies indicate they tend to be creative, though somewhat impulsive.

Left-handers also use their right brain. That leaves Goldsmith to sound a familiar southpaw refrain.

"Only left-handed people are in their right minds," he said. "Left-Handed in a Right-Handed World" is \$13.95 a copy, plus \$2 shipping and handling. For information, call 616-3600 or 1-800-LEFT.

Police won't take prostitution lying down; 12 arrested in raid

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police, with the cooperation of a city motel, are trying to nip prostitution in the bud.

Hills police arrested 12 people Dec. 18 on charges related to a prostitution enterprise involving what posed as a legitimate service, said Hills Lt. Marty Bledsoe, investigative section commander.

"What they try to do is legitimize a massage service," Bledsoe said. "But it goes well beyond any massage."

Hills police made the arrests after undercover officers discovered that a man and woman were running a prostitution ring from an apartment at the Spring Valley Apartments on Halsted at 11 Mile in Farmington Hills.

The operation had been advertised in the Detroit Free Press, and other newspapers, as a massage service, but turned out to be something more.

Officers arrested four women and eight men and cited them on various charges relating to the prostitution operation.

Bledsoe said the man and wom-

an running the "service" from the apartment were charged with prostitution/directing persons to a place for the purpose of committing lewd acts. Another man, who was collecting money from two women "operators" at the Red Roof Inn, where customers were directed, was charged with contributing to the ability to direct persons to a place for the purpose of committing lewd acts.

Another woman was charged with taking customers to the motel. The two women police say were engaged in prostitution were charged with maintaining a place for the purpose of lewd conduct. One man was arrested, but has not been charged yet. And three men, who police said were customers, were charged with loitering in a place of illegal occupation.

"The management of the Red Roof Inn was very helpful," Bledsoe said. "They do not want this kind of activity at their establishment. They want to have a clean operation."

Once arrangements were made for men to meet women at the motel, sex was exchanged for money. The man and woman in the

apartment were set up by a criminal organization, police said, with equipment and instructions.

The two would dispatch the women to meet the men. The "pick-up man" arranged to collect the money both at the motel and the apartment.

Armed with a search warrant signed by 47th District Judge Fred Harris, police seized detailed ledgers and employment records from the operation along with thousands of dollars.

The arrests are part of a continuing effort by Hills police to stop prostitution in the city. Hills police have raided health spas in the past, and the city has adopted strict ordinances in the wake of raids on the Korean Health Spa that resulted in arrests beginning in 1985.

"People say this is a victimless crime," Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer said. "That's nonsense. The prostitutes are the victims. You look at the Tina Bigger murder. She became involved in an escort service and became a murder victim."

Those arrested are scheduled to appear for hearings on Jan. 22 in 47th District Court.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

It's in the cards

Again this year, residents can drop off the fronts of holiday and other greeting cards for a special kind of recycling from Dec. 26 through Jan. 19 at five Farmington-area locations: both city halls, both branches of the Community Library and the Halsted Road recycling center.

Volunteers from the Farmington Hills Senior Adult Program will sort and pack the cards to be mailed to the St. Jude Ranch for Children, a facility for abused, abandoned and neglected children in Boulder City, Nev.

The children cut out the decorations and glue them on to a new backing. The "new" cards are then sold and the money received pays for special trips and small holiday gifts.

Applause for her

Sandra Blackmon, a laundry assistant at Botsford Continuing Health Center in Farmington Hills, has been named the organization's "Applause Applause!" winner for December.

Blackmon of Detroit is responsible for the real-life laundry, including personal clothing and linens, at the 179-bed nursing facility. She said her favorite time of day is when she visits real-

dents to pick up and deliver their laundry. "It feels good to know that my work is appreciated," Blackmon said, "and that I can make a difference in their lives."

BCHS recognizes outstanding employees monthly with the "Applause Applause!" award.

Memory Lane

From the Dec. 22, 1995 edition of the Farmington Observer:

James O. Tennant, Farmington city manager, resigned to accept a similar post in Indio, Calif.

Three autos in Farmington's Floral Park subdivision were broken into and looted on Dec. 16, police said.

Robert Hug of Springbrook Drive in Farmington Township was honored at Detroit Catholic Central High School for outstanding scholastic achievement.

Short item: "Was there ever a lawyer, except one highly paid, who used plain words?"

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48338; faxed to 477-9723; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literate, the Internet E-mail address is: packy@ocanline.com.



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