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# Be alert to options for home security

**CRIME PREVENTION**



**MARY KAY MILES**

If you are considering an alarm system for your home, take some time to research the options available to you. Often homeowners find that there are a number of things they can do to improve the security of their homes without the ongoing expense of an alarm system.

Alarms can offer additional security for your home, but should never be used as a substitute for good locks and lighting. Keep in mind that an alarm can only signal an intrusion, it will not keep an intruder out.

The two basic types of alarms are the local alarm and the monitored alarm. The local alarm sounds a siren or bell, when activated, that will alert the homeowner and/or neighbors to call the police.

A monitored alarm sends a signal through the phone lines to a 24-hour central monitoring station which will verify the alarm and then contact the police.

The best way to find an alarm company is to talk with friends and neighbors who have alarms and ask about their experiences

when dealing with the company, then contact several companies based on these recommendations.

Insist on a written proposal and a copy of any contract you would be required to sign. The contract should list all points of protection and itemize all the equipment to be installed.

Underwriters Laboratories (UL) approval of equipment will assure some degree of reliability. Ask about continuing maintenance of the system, whether you purchase or lease the equipment. Check the company's reputation by contacting the Better Business Bureau.

When you go through the expense of installing an alarm, also plan to incorporate a fire and smoke detection system. An automatic shutoff is required by ordinance, meaning that any bell or siren is required to shut off automatically within ten minutes of activation (except for fire alarm systems).

Farmington Hills ordinance 18.38 requires that any resident who has an alarm installed in his or her home or business, file a registration form with the police department. The registration should include the name and phone number of at least one person, within a thirty minute response time, who can be contacted in case of an emergency to deactivate

the alarm or secure the premises.

A nearby relative or neighbor should be instructed on the operation of your alarm system so that it can be reset if your alarm activates while you are away.

The ordinance also requires that alarm systems equipped with audible signals (bells, horns, sirens) must have an automatic shut off device that automatically silences the audible signal within 10 minutes of signal activation.

If the police department responds to a false alarm at your home more than once during any calendar year, you may be billed up to \$100 for each response.

If that bill is not paid within 30 days, up to \$25 per alarm response will be charged as a late fee. If you're having trouble using your alarm, the fees can add up very quickly. Alarms account for 14.5 percent of all dispatched runs in 1994 with 99 percent of those alarm runs being false alarms. This represents a significant cost to the taxpayers as well as inefficient deployment of police department resources.

User error is one of the main reasons for false alarms, another is inadequate maintenance of the system. The best way to avoid response fees is to have every family member receive training on the proper use of your alarm system.

If you have cleaning or service

people come into your home while you're away, they should also be taught to use the system. Have your alarm company check your system regularly and any time you have an unexplained false alarm.

The police department offers free home security surveys to any resident of Farmington Hills. The surveys are conducted in your home, by appointment.

A crime prevention officer, or technician will walk through your home with you and point out areas of vulnerability while making recommendations for cost effective security improvements. Most are things that you can do yourself for low or no cost.

Whether or not you install an alarm system, have a security survey conducted of your home. You can make an appointment by calling the crime prevention section at 473-9640.

Remain alert to possible criminal activity in your subdivision and call the police immediately to report any suspicious persons, vehicles or circumstances. Join your subdivision's Neighborhood Watch program, or start one up, and get to know your neighbors. They can be your best defense against a criminal attack.

Mary Kay Miles is a crime prevention technician for the Farmington Hills Police Department.

# Hollywood talent comes to town

**BY ETHEL SIMMONS**  
STAFF WRITER

Offering workshops/seminars on writing and acting is former Birmingham-Bloomfield resident Lynn Isenberg's way of bringing Hollywood to Detroit.

By phone from Los Angeles, where she has lived for the last 13 years, Hollywood screenwriter-producer Isenberg said she wants to go back and forth between L.A. and the Detroit area where her family and many friends reside. "The community means a lot to me. It's my roots," she declared.

She said she will bring her Hollywood cohorts to Detroit for a variety of workshops, starting with one on writing for interactive multi-media such as CD-ROM and the Internet and another on acting for movies, television and commercials.

Originally from Detroit, Beth Kennedy is a Hollywood Internet producer/designer/writer for multi-media, who will speak at the writing seminar 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, March 16-17, in Farmington Hills. Kennedy is the first independent service provider and creator of America Online's "Cyberjustice" (which she describes as "a playground for every mood").

Also speaking at the seminar will be UCLA professor/CD-ROM

interactive writer/screenwriter Jim Sauve, who is under contract with Simon & Schuster for a series of multi-media projects, and Jon Samuels, who has written "The Interactive Writer's Handbook," a guide on how to write for the medium.

**In the forefront**

"My guest speakers are at the vanguard of the multi-media revolution," said Isenberg. "The key to people who are going to succeed and profit from this medium are those who understand the technology that drives it."

Isenberg had already started developing her own creative writing skills by the time she was in third grade at the former Booth Elementary School in Bloomfield Township. After students in her class were asked to write stories, hers was chosen as the best and she was selected to attend a writing program at Oakland University.

She recalls how she telephoned The Birmingham Eccentric, asking the newspaper to write about her, and the paper did run an article.

After graduating from Andover High School in Bloomfield Hills, Isenberg attended the University of Michigan, majoring in English language and literature and minoring in film.

In Hollywood, she became vice-president of creative affairs for various production companies. For Tri-Star Pictures, she co-produced a feature film "I Love You to Death" directed by Larry Kasdan and starring Kevin Kline. She also co-produced "Youngblood" for MGM/UA, starring Rob Lowe and Patrick Swayze.

Four of her movies have been produced for cable television. "One just wrapped in Maui for HBO, 'Maui Heat,' a romantic drama that goes behind the scenes of a fashion photo shoot for a sports magazine," Isenberg said.

**Literary Retreat**

For the last five years, she has produced the Hollywood Literary Retreat, a three-day event of studio executive, writers, producers and agents "where we would all have workshops on storytelling. I'd have an oral storyteller come," she said. Isenberg also produced a documentary on the project.

Her company is called Zoom Entertainment, and the Hollywood Literary Retreat is presenting the upcoming writing and acting seminars. Two additional sponsors are the Detroit-based ONLINE Marketing Co., and Storyvision, a computer program for interactive media.

Isenberg plans to offer the seminars in Florida as well as Michigan. "Florida is a good market and my dad's down there. I can visit family in both ports," she said. "My former publicist is in Miami. She wants me to do a screenwriting seminar there."

The seminar on acting will be held 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, March 23-24, at the Clarion Hotel in Farmington Hills. It will be taught by three Hollywood guest instructors, actress/director Valerie Landsburg, actress Cynthia Gibb and casting director Bonnie Yuskel.

Also featured will be Detroit guest speakers W.B. Doner Advertising Agency award-winning producer Sheldon Cohen, award-winning commercial director Leroy August of August Productions, Detroit casting director Mary Locker, Allison Riley of The Talent Shop and Christine Clausen of Affiliated Models Inc.

Fee for "The Tao of Writing for Interactive Multi-Media" ranges from \$195-\$395, based on student rate to corporate rate. "The Tao of Acting for Movies, Television and Commercials" costs \$250 before Feb. 23; \$295 thereafter. Registration for either seminar, or further information, is available by calling 1-810-645-2538.

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