

COMMUNITY LIFE

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Page B1



RABBI MARLA FELDMAN

New state board policy adds little to secure quality of public education

The new policy approved on Oct. 24 by the state board of education that "empowers and encourages public schools to provide character education" adds little of substance to its mandate to secure quality public education in our state.

State Board of Education president Clark Durant has been touting his desire to include Bible stories in the public school curriculum, as if these could solve the problems of juvenile crime and drugs and increase test scores for Michigan students.

Teaching character and values in school is nothing new. In fact, values always have been, and continue to be, taught by capable, caring educators throughout our public school system. What public school student has not been taught the value of sharing, respect, truth or helpfulness? One might argue that it is unnecessary for the state board of education to spend its valuable time and energy, and our tax dollars, passing resolutions to tell educators to do what they are already doing.

Nonetheless, the new "character education" policy challenges each district to identify values which are appropriate for secular, public education. Proposals have been offered by the West Bloomfield school district, Arthur Ellis and Dorothy Beardmore which recommend a list of

See VALUES, B3



Karen Dalessandro, W4 country disc jockey

Deejay likes being a country girl



BY MARY RODRIGUE
STAFF WRITER

When she was a high school underclassman in Trost, Karen Dalessandro looked wistfully at the seniors in the broadcasting class which operated out of the school lunchroom. It looked like they were having so much fun.

"I thought it was so cool, I couldn't wait to be a senior so I could take this elective class," she said.

As fate would have it, budget cuts put an end to the "seniors only" class the year she was eligible.

"I was so bummed," she said. "But at the same time, I started paying attention to deejays on the radio. There was only one woman in the Detroit market then, Karen Savelly. She is still my idol today."

Despite that missed opportunity in high school, Dalessandro, of Farmington Hills, has carved a successful career in radio over the past 15 years.

After high school, she was an early enrollee of the then fledgling Specs Howard School of Broadcasting. There, over six months, she

'Country has the most loyal fans to its music artists.'

Karen Dalessandro
—disc jockey

perfected her speech, breathing techniques, and the finer points of being an on air personality, as well as completing an unpaid internship at WNIC-FM in Dearborn.

To cover tuition, she worked as a bank teller, practicing her radio voice with customers at the drive through window.

"It taught me what I needed to know to go out and do it," said Dalessandro, whose upbeat personality is the same on and off the air.

After 15 years on the radio in formats ranging from alternative rock to top 40 tunes, in time slots varying from morning sidekick to afternoon drive time host, Dalessandro has found a home for the past year at WYVV Country (106.7 FM) in Detroit, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays.

This isn't her first job at a country station. Her first paid job in radio

was on WSDS, a country station in Ypsilanti. When a Lansing rock station offered her a 7 p.m. to midnight shift, she jumped. At 20, country music wasn't her thing.

"I grew up on rock and roll, I loved it. And Lansing was not a bad place to be. It was a college town. I was the same age as the students from Michigan State. It hit me, I was having fun."

In retrospect, she's glad she made the move north to a smaller market where "I could make mistakes that could've been detrimental in a larger market."

Another plus associated with that move, she met the man who would become her husband. He was morning music director at the Lansing station. When the station was sold two years later, she decided to move on.

WHYT in Detroit offered her a

chance to spin top 40 tunes. Then it was on to WDTX for 6 years giving listeners alternative music, and various other formats as the station was sold again and again.

"I managed to survive," said Dalessandro. "I went to different time slots, different formats. Most of the changes I got moved into I was thrilled with."

There was a two year period in the early '90s in Chicago, a move prompted by her husband's music promotions career. There she found a job with WICQ, an morning man Mark Good's sidekick.

"The difficulty with a new market is that they don't know you. You have to pay your dues again."

Soon the couple was back in Detroit, where Dalessandro did some evening shifts at WKQI.

"I thought I was auditioning for a job for them, but WYCD heard me. I got a call from them and a job offer."

Initially she was leery. She wasn't familiar with country music. "My husband told me to go in and listen. The new country music is pretty hip. The first artist I heard was Garth Brooks live. He was

See DEEJAY, B3

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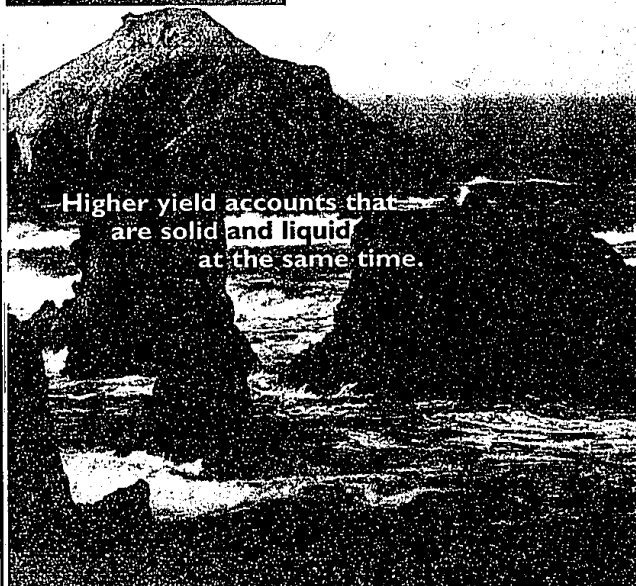


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