

CHAT ROOM:



MARCIE ROSEN

Body image and the media: dangerous mix

Body image and the media; it can be deadly. "I'm so fat," says my 16-year-old daughter as she's primping in front of her full-length mirror. Michelle is 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighs 103 pounds. There isn't one speck of fat on her teenage body.

The image of a perfect body, as portrayed by the media, is quite frankly, dangerous. Why should my daughter believe me? She opens the cover of Seventeen magazine to find models who are six feet tall and wear a size four.

There was a time when thin meant frail and skinny. Today thin means sexy and glamorous.

To add to a young woman's insecurity, she also has the issue of cosmetic surgery to deal with. Too fat; liposuction. Too flat; implants. Lips too thin; collagen injections. And the list goes on.

Alarming trend

This trend toward a perfect body is alarming. One percent of female adolescents struggle with anorexia nervosa. This is an eating disorder characterized by severe dieting, often resulting in death. Four percent of college age women suffer from bulimia, a condition in which vomiting is self-induced to prevent weight gain.

There was a very interesting study conducted in May 1999 on the tropical island of Fiji. In 1995, before the introduction of television to this island, the ideal female body image was round, plump and soft. Fast forward to 1999. After just 38 months of Melrose Place, Beverly Hills 90210 and other western television shows, Fijian teenage girls now exhibited signs of serious eating disorders.

What is the responsibility of the media? The images of the ideal female figure are outrageous. One recent study reported that 60 percent of those teenagers who watch television three or more times per week are more likely to feel too fat. Fifteen percent reported vomiting to control their weight.

Consider two recent role models for young women, Pamela Anderson and Britney Spears. Pamela admits to numerous cosmetic surgeries to perfect her sultry look. Many speculate that at the tender age of 17 Britney has had breast implants.

Why won't the media portray intellectual, strong women as ideal role models? What are they afraid of, weaker sales resulting in less advertising dollars? Will there ever be a point when they will stop and ask themselves if they have a moral responsibility to change things? Will the media ever care?

Every day Michelle is bombarded with media images. I can only hope that I've instilled in her values that will help her look beyond the image reflected back in the mirror.

I try to console my daughter and reassure her that in my eyes she's perfect. I know that she'd like to believe me, but I'm only her mother.

Marcie Rosen is the mother of four children and resides in Farmington Hills. A former court reporter, she is currently pursuing a degree in special education at Eastern Michigan University.

Art advocate is lifelong promoter

■ Marlowe Belanger has spent her life promoting the arts. Now retired, she still volunteers for art-related endeavors.

BY DIANE GALE ANDERASSI
SPECIAL WRITER

Marlowe Belanger has carried the gauntlet for artists during a lifetime of work and she has left her fingerprints on art programs throughout Michigan.

"I have been an advocate for the arts and a spokesperson for the individual artists to help the artists become more businesslike in what they do," Belanger explained from her Farmington Hills home.

"I recognize that they can't help themselves oftentimes because they're committed to their art work."

Although her resume is long and impressive, many know her as the manager of the cultural arts division at the Southfield Center for the Arts. In fact, she broke barriers in 1979 when she became the first arts administrator employed by a city in Michigan. She retired last August.

But, her dynamic force continues to go strong, including her work with the Bloomfest at Cobo Hall. She will earn a stipend, but Belanger considers the work as basically volunteer.

Bloomfest April 6-9

Hosted by the Michigan Horticultural Society, the event runs April 6-9, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. today through Saturday; and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. The goal is to promote outdoor gardening and landscape nurseries in and around the Detroit area. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$8 for senior citizens. Children under 12 are free.

Belanger's role is to select sculptures for the various garden areas.

"We have 35 outdoor sculptures that will be placed in and around the gardens and specially produced ponds," Belanger said, explaining that she came to the role with experience from overseeing the Michigan Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition in Southfield.

"Every one of them has a beautiful piece of art in granite, stainless steel, polished steel, stone and glass," Belanger said. "I've done this for so

long and I have a good reputation and when I call them up they say yes," she said.

Legacy continues

Belanger's legacy continues. In fact she worked for two years on a committee to hire a full-time arts coordinator in Farmington Hills. Nancy Comoudouros started that job earlier this year.

An exhausting list of projects she's involved in includes helping to raise money to buy a 9-foot concert grand piano for the Southfield Center for the Arts and working with the Federation of the Arts, a non profit organization she launched in 1989.

Today the organization represents 50-some arts agencies all over southeast Michigan, including the Michigan Opera.

Her activism for the arts began more than 30 years ago when she was a performing singer with the Madrigal Club of Detroit. The group was looking for a place to perform and Belanger landed them a home at Southfield school rooms and auditoriums. More recently they've performed for the president of the United States and in venues around the world.

While she was with the group, Belanger was introduced to Gov. George Romney, who encouraged her to form an arts agency. That was the impetus for her to begin the Farmington Arts Council in 1969. She also went on to help form the Oakland Arts Council.

Since then, she's helped develop and strengthen arts programs in a number of communities throughout Michigan, including the five Grosse Pointes.

"She did a lot to promote all of the arts, sculptures, painters, writers, musicians and theater," explained Jan Dolan, former state legislator and Farmington Hills mayor and city council member.

"She was inclusive in the groups and brought them together to be more effective and better at lobbying," said Dolan, who has known Belanger for 30-some years.

"She asked: 'How can we stop working against each other and work together so we all win?' We were fortunate to have Marlowe here. She really got the Farmington area started."

And along the way, Belanger has become a guardian angel of sorts to

Please See MARLOWE BELANGER, B2



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER

Art Supporter: Marlowe Belanger in her Farmington Hills home with a sculpture, one of the many pieces of art in her personal collection.

Arts commission names student winners

The Farmington Area Arts Commission has announced winners of the 15th Annual Contest for High School Artists of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

There were 160 entries delivered to the Costick Activities Center for judging.

Barb Brownson, a photography and metalworking instructor at Andover High School in Bloomfield Hills, judged the entries. An artist, Brownson works primarily in experimental photography. Her work has been exhibited around the U.S. including Laguna

Beach, Calif., Chicago and Dallas.

Prizes awarded

In the category of two-dimensional art, first prize was awarded to Jon Kambouris of Farmington High School; second place went to Brian Moss of North Farmington High; and third prize to Merrill Stulberg of Harrison High.

In the category of three-dimensional art, first prize went to Keith Fleck of Farmington High School, second prize was awarded to Robyn Williams of Farmington Alternative Academy, and

FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

third place to Aleksandra Palmer of Farmington High.

Honorable mention awards were earned by Andrea Baker of Mercy High School, John Boychuk of Farmington High, Robert Easterday of Farmington High and Erin Maloney of Divine Child for two-dimensional entries.

Three-dimensional honorable mention awards went to Tracy Brown of Farmington High, Robert Easterday, Greg Galperin of Walled Lake Western, Julie Kumeisha of Mercy High, Dana Lyons of Mercy, Krista Peckham

of Farmington High, Chris Stockert of Farmington High and Travis Szudajski of Farmington High.

Awards will be presented on Sunday, April 30, at 2 p.m. at the Costick Activities Center, 28600 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

Winning art will be displayed at the Farmington Community Library, downtown branch, during the month of April, and at the Farmington Festival of the Arts at the Costick Center April 30-May 7.

Tip-toe through the tulips



Bloomfest: The DTE Energy International Bloomfest unveils its second annual flower and garden show today to celebrate nature and the arts. These French tulips illustrate the beauty of spring. It's at Cobo Convention Center, Detroit. Hours are today through Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER

Eclectic mix:

Receiving honorable mention: (clockwise from top left) John Boychuk, FHS; Erin Maloney, Divine Child; Robert Easterday, FHS (chair) and Tracy Brown, FHS. The exhibit is on display at the downtown library. Turn to B-3 for more art.

Nursing home reform is focus of hearing

A public hearing of the House Democratic Nursing Home task force will be held 7-9 p.m. Friday, April 14 at the Farmington Hills City Hall.

State Rep. Andy Neumann, a Democrat from Alpena, will chair the meeting. He asks that all interested persons attend, whether to give perspective about nursing home issues or just to listen.

The hearing will be in the Farmington Hills city council chambers, 31555 W. 11 Mile Road.

For more information, call Neumann's office, toll-free, at 877-ANDY-106.