

## CHAT ROOM



ELLEN HERSCHER

## Convoluting trek to adulthood begins at age 13

**C**rossing over from pre-teen to the wondrous age of 13 was a monumental event in my life — right up there with vowing to be a good wife and giving birth. "Teen" is a magical word that makes kids feel suddenly adult and affirms that the cradle of humanity is finally theirs to rock. Becoming a teenager meant that I was entering the coveted world of mystery, romance and parties of which I had so often fantasized. In contrast, this new path was littered with many obstacles and fear of the dreaded unknown, augmented by my eminent shyness.

I became a teenager in the 1950s. Except for eclectic fads and fashions, teens are basically the same. Throughout the generations, these free thinkers have developed their own styles, language and music. Many parents view their teenage mavericks as slightly insane and cannot understand their craziness. All that fretting is usually for naught, as most of us have turned out to be responsible citizens who have learned to enjoy a variety of music, even classical and opera. We dress in appropriate attire, attend meetings and lectures, and go to church because we want to, not because we are told to do so.

### A balanced scale

Admittedly, teen years brought social problems and frustrations that weighed heavily like a knapsack full of bricks; yet, the scale tipped favorably with added freedom, raging hormones, and incessant energy. We thought of ourselves as adult reformists, although fitting in with our peers was paramount. Essentially, we were conforming to non-conformity. During my school years, teenagers wore sweatshirts wrong side out, bobby socks rolled like doughnuts, black and white saddle shoes, circular felt poodle skirts. Denim jeans from wide rolled cuffs to narrow hems. Boys and girls alike struggled to stuff themselves like sausages into skin tight Levi's. We were announcing to the world our right to individuality and the beginning of our convoluted journey toward adulthood.

Because most parents did not allow makeup, girls applied Mentholatum to their lips so they glowed like dew covered cherries and Vaseline to eyelashes for dazzling allure. Hoping to smooth away conspicuous scarlet zits, we went through tubes of Clearasil, applying it faithfully every night. Boys carried combs in hip pockets to maintain glistening slicked-back ducktails. Being cool, they strolled with an exaggerated gait. Much to their chagrin, the boys' changing voices involuntarily ran the gamut from shrill grating to guttural creaking and anywhere betwixt. We girls found this cute.

### First rebuff hurts

The first time I had to invite a boy to a Eddie Hawkins dance, he said he had another date. It had taken a lot of courage on my part to ask him, so I was quite devastated by his rebuff. It was a lesson in compassion. From that experience, I understood the risk of rejection that boys had to withstand. Years later, when a girl invited my teenage son to a dance, he told her he didn't want to go. Consequently, we had a poignant dialogue about rejection, feelings, and friendships. Deciding that staying home was less important than boosting the girl's self-esteem, he called her back. Together, they went to the dance, had a great time and became good friends. Conversely, when a girl rejected him, he knew that it was not to be taken as a personal affront.

In the beginning, I felt sorry for myself because I had to work after school and evenings. I soon realized that I gained more than I lost. I met the nicest people and learned the value of being a conscientious employee. Working also facilitated my long-time personal endeavor to conquer bashfulness.

"Gang" now has a different connotation than when I was a teen. Today, when we hear about a gang, our ears perk up in expectation of some sort of

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**Bandstand beat:** Leslie Reinbold, Miss Farmington 1999, is flanked by contestants for the 2000 title in the opening number of the Miss Farmington pageant, "American Bandstand."

BY MARY RODRIQUE

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**H**er evening gown shimmered and sparkled but it couldn't outshine the radiant smile on the face of Angela Corsi as she was crowned Miss Farmington/Oakland County last Wednesday evening at the Civic Theatre.

Corsi, 18, of Farmington Hills was selected from a field of 10 contestants in the annual scholarship pageant. The recent Mercy High School graduate will receive a \$2,000 cash scholarship for winning the first pageant she had ever entered. She plans to attend Michigan State University in the fall.

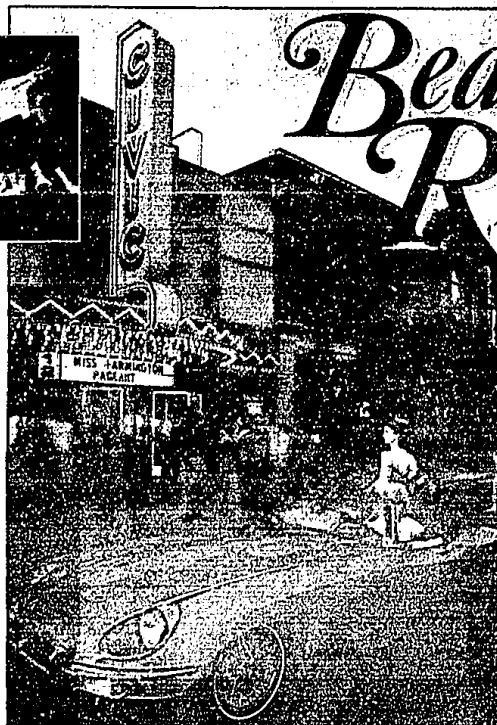
Angela is the daughter of Louis and Penny Corsi, who own Corsi's Banquet Center in Livonia. The restaurant was Angela's parent sponsor.

More than \$6,000 in scholarship money was awarded this year, the first time in the 27-year history of the pageant that the program was staged somewhere other than Vladimir's. The city-owned Civic Theatre, packed to capacity, was the new venue. Hosts for the evening were Mark Shock and his fiancée, Jennifer Hoemke, who was Miss Farmington 1997 and a top 10 finalist in the Miss Michigan pageant.

### New home

"The Civic Theatre is our new home," said Ginny Morris, pageant executive director. "We've had a lot of positive feedback."

First runner-up Madonna Emond, 19, also a Mercy alumna and now a student at Central Michigan University,



**Greeting fans:** The new Miss Farmington/Oakland County, Angela Corsi, is whisked away in a convertible to a 1950s sock hop after the pageant at the Civic Theatre.

ty, won a \$1,000 scholarship.

North Farmington alum Victoria Anderson, currently a sophomore at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was second runner-up. She walked away with \$750 for being a finalist and another \$1,000 for the highest talent score and for community service. Her pageant platform was asthma awareness. Anderson, dressed in a purple gown with dangling purple earrings, played a classical song on harp for the talent portion of the program.

Other scholarship awards went to Erin Troxell and Pam Walk, who shared The Spirit of Miss America

award, which is voted on by the contestants. Troxell, 23, is a graduate of Western Michigan University and a Walled Lake resident.

Walk, 19, of Novi is a student at Oakland University. Francesca Romeo, 22, of Farmington Hills won a \$500 academic scholarship. She is a recent graduate of Detroit College of Business.

The pageant theme, Cruising the Grand 2000, was carried out throughout the two-and-a-half hour program, beginning with the opening number, American Bandstand. All 10 contestants dressed in 1950s attire and

# Beauty Reigns

Cruising The Grand 2000 is pageant theme as show moves to Civic Theatre



**Welcome:** Chelsea Swanderski and Caroline Watts are dressed up for the 1960s as they wait to greet pageant guests.

danced to period music, along with 1999 Miss Farmington Leslie Reinbold in her final public appearance.

Later in the program Reinbold received a bouquet of roses from Joshua Diehr, 24, who wore jeans, a tiny leather jacket and slicked-back hair.

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**It's a kick:** Francesca Romeo kicks high during a dance number in the talent competition. She won a scholarship award.



**Heavenly music:** Victoria Anderson plays the harp during the talent portion of the competition. She won the talent award.

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