

CHAT ROOM



JONI HUBRED

Personals perplex hopeless romantic poster child

"INTELLIGENT GUY"
"HAPPY GO LUCKY"
"BIG TEDDY BEAR"
"SEEKS SOULMATE"

If you are now or have been single and a little desperate, you recognize those brief descriptions as lewd-ins to the largest collection of bovine scatology ever assembled on the face of the earth.

That's right, folks. I'm talking about The Personals.

I don't mean to alight the forum or any of its participants. I happen to be poster child and chairperson for the Farmington chapter of Hopeless Romantics Anonymous.

My parents were married 'til death did them part. My life has been filled with fine examples of men and women who have shown me the strength, grace and beauty in loyalty and commitment.

I always have, and always will, believe in One, True Love. However, as Shakespeare wrote, "The course of true love never did run smooth."

25 words or less

In the interest of full disclosure, I have both placed and responded to personal ads. I know how to use words, but the daunting task of summarizing myself in 25 words or less left me wondering how something so incomplete could communicate something so very important.

Every personals page or Web site prominently posts success stories, glowing testimonials of how couples met, married and lived happily ever after. Oddly enough, my experiences have been a little... different.

Perhaps because I, too, am a little... different.

I was 31 years old and newly divorced when I placed my first ad. Seemed a natural for someone living in The Shit, running a newspaper and intimidating the socks out of every deer-huntin', flannel-shirt-wearin', pick-up-chicks-at-closin'-time single guy in town.

Wasn't long before I realized how very wrong one person could be.

About a dozen responses jammed my P.O. Box in the first few weeks. I wrote back to about half - tossing the two written in crayon, one with more than 15 misspellings, one from a guy who sent Polaroids (don't ask) and the thick, white envelope with the state prison return address.

The resultant dates proved memorable, but not in the ways I'd hoped. A single father of two monopolized our entire dinner conversation with vivid descriptions of his daughter's recent ear infection, from his vice-like grip on her tiny head as he administered ear drops to the color of discharge that drained throughout the night onto her favorite pillow.

I didn't have the heart to stop him. Or the stomach.

Born to be wild

My next date rode up on a Harley, wearing a tie-dyed T-shirt with only one short sleeve still attached and a denim vest adorned with so many patches it was tough to see the original material. Embroidered proudly across the back was the slogan: "Live to ride."

I should have been screaming into the night, but valiantly climbed onto the back of the bike and held on for dear life. We drove to a bar on Main Street, ordered burgers and beer and got to know each other.

He was only in town six months out of the year, during which time he lived with his parents. He'd work, see all his paychecks, then live on the beach in California the other six months, doing nothing.

I wished him a wonderful trip. Meeting these men and the others who have since crossed my path in the few times I've worked the personals has taught me a few things about the short-hand people use in their ads. For instance:

A guy who describes himself as "intelligent" may be a brain surgeon or just a fella who's unduly proud of his library card.

"Start out slow" means, "My girlfriend doesn't know she's history yet."

"Seeking committed, honest, loyal partner" is code for, "I REALLY need to get out of my parents' basement."

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■ This two career couple has managed to keep the romance alive for over three decades.

BY MARY RODRIQUE
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One doesn't think of a gross anatomy class as the setting for a budding romance, but for Farmington Hills couple Dan and Cathy Schneider, it was just the thing.

"We always enjoy telling friends how we met," says Dan with a chuckle.

In 1968, he was a physical therapy student at Wayne State University. Cathy was an occupational therapy major. They had an anatomy class together. Her cadaver, used for lessons on studying muscle groups, weighed about 180 pounds, and she sought out Dan to help her turn it over. Although physical therapy students of that era generally didn't fraternize with occupational therapy majors, Cupid's arrow struck and "we broke down the barrier," Cathy recalls.

Two years later, the couple earned their degrees and then got married on Sept. 25, 1970. More than 30 years later, they are still going strong. Cathy ticks off some of the secrets to a successful marriage: mutual respect, communication, understanding that you will do things differently than your partner.

A rose every week

"Shortly after we married, I asked Cathy if she'd like roses on her birthday and anniversary, or one rose every week," said Dan.

His bride opted for a weekly bloom, and he has kept his word.

"I'm on a first-name basis with Harry Miller Florists," said Dan. "At least once a week, you remember why you



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL SCHULZ

Mutual support: Cathy displays the poster Dan gave her for Christmas the year she began her public speaking career. At left is the bud vase with a rose, a weekly gift Dan gives Cathy.

married this person. It's one way to keep romance alive."

They often give a crystal bud vase for a wedding present with the suggestion to newlyweds to continue to recreate

the romance by keeping it filled all year long.

The Schneiders have two children. David, 24, is a mechanical engineer at Ford Motor Co., and Patti, 23, is finish-

ing her degree in occupational therapy from Western Michigan University.

In the past year, both Dan and Cathy have authored books in their fields of expertise. Dan has self-published *Think Pelvic Tilt: 3 Easy Steps to Managing Low Back Pain*. Cathy's tome, *Sensory Secrets: How To Jump Start Learning For Children*, will be published in late spring by Concerned Communications in Arkansas. The result of decades of research on the importance of touch and sensory stimulation of young children, it urges parents to take their babies out of plastic carriers and hold them.

"Children are not moving, they are not being touched, which their nervous systems need for stimulation. They need movement and touch to learn cognitive skills. Moms used to hold their babies a lot. Now they are transferred from one plastic container to another. Touch is being lost."

Classic pairing

The Schneiders call themselves the classic right brain/left brain pairing. Left brainer Dan is the orderly, logical thinker. Cathy is the creative, free spirit. Over the years, they have learned to adapt to each other's style, and to meet in the middle.

For 25 years, Dan was a staff physical therapist for Farmington Public Schools, working with physically handicapped children ages 5 to 18. He spent summers working in hospitals and rehabilitation centers to keep current with physical therapy trends. He retired from the school district last June. He currently performs in-home physical therapy for Sunrise Medical Co. and produces workshops on low back pain.

Cathy also worked as a school therapist, primarily in Birmingham with autistic children but scaled back her work to part-time when their children were young. She has her own company, The Positive Difference, and presents seminars for educators and par-

Please see VALENTINES, C6

Muslim paper's goal: destroy stereotypes

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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A retired physician is taking on the task of conveying the word about one of the world's largest religions in a place where it is perhaps least understood.

The Muslim Observer's core audience is those who follow Islam and live in the United States. Dr. A. Raheman Nakadar publishes the weekly newspaper out of his Livonia office on Farmington Road.

The paper is in its second year and has 3,500 paid subscribers. U.S. distribution varies between 5,000 and 50,000, depending on the issue.

Readership includes such disparate groups as elected officials to members of the Jewish Defense League, Nakadar said.

Part of the Muslim Observer's mission is to tear down the stereotypes associated with followers of Islam.

"Muslims are generally peace loving people," said Nakadar, who immigrated to the U.S. from India in 1973. "This is what is so distorted about the pictures on TV."

"We help educate the people to what the facts really are."

The Observer hits home with an estimated 300,000 Muslims who live in the Detroit area. There are 50-60 Islamic Centers and four Muslim-based schools in the area, Nakadar said.

Among their ranks are business people, engineers and doctors as well as those who run or work in grocery stores and gas stations. They hail from India, Pakistan, the Middle East, Albania, Southeast Asia and Africa.

Diverse audience

While ethnically diverse, the U.S. Muslim population has one common tie, Nakadar noted.

"The unity is there already,"



STAFF PHOTO BY BRYAN MITCHELL

The staff: From left, Tauqeer Ahmed, Majida Amat-al-Qudus, Dr. A.S. Nakadar (publisher), Imam Abdullah El-Amin, Narmeen Haque and Kashif Saleem.

Nakadar said. "Once you accept Islam, that is the most unifying aspect of all." The Muslim Observer tries to reflect the diversity within the American and Detroit area Islamic community.

An editorial on the U.S. Presidential election focused on the divide in support for George W. Bush and Al Gore in the Islamic community. Many Muslims voted for Bush while African-American Muslims predominantly backed Gore.

The Muslim Observer sponsored a forum to heighten interest in U.S. electoral politics in October. The paper endorsed Bush.

The paper reports and editorializes

on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, taking a pro-Arab stance on its opinion pages. Disputes in Pakistan, Algeria and Kashmir, which are reported by the Reuters news service, are also covered.

Monitored closely

The publication is read in the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit offices, an official said.

"To the extent they do articles that focus on the Middle East, it's biased, subjective and anti-Israel," said David Gad-Harf, executive director of the Jewish Community Council. "We want

to see what the opinion of the Muslim community is in terms of the Middle East and Israel."

"We haven't seen anything anti-Jewish, but we have seen things that are anti-Israel."

In addition to monitoring the paper's Middle East content, the Muslim Observer is also read to keep up on joint efforts by both communities, Gad-Harf said.

The publication has tackled social concerns such as wife abuse in the Muslim community, which appeared as

Please see MUSLIM PAPER, C5

Premiere Swedish sax player to perform here Feb. 16

CONCERTS AT THE COSTICK

Johan Stengard, a popular sought-after saxophonist in Sweden and Scandinavia, will be the second featured artist in the Concerts at the Costick series on Friday, Feb. 16, at 8 p.m.

Born in Stockholm, Stengard plays to sold-out audiences throughout Europe. His latest CD is "Gold" in Europe. He has produced 10 solo albums and performed on more than 400 recordings with other artists, including ABBA, and has appeared with artists as

diverse as Michael Bolton, Sammy Davis Jr. and Lena Horne.

Since 1995, he has done 10 concert tours in the U.S. He is known for his interpretations of sacred music and also performs a wide variety of jazz standards, popular music and Scandinavian folk songs.

"When Johan Stengard plays his sax-

ophone, he reveals a tone where the music and feeling are one... it is a feast for the ears that strikes fire from the heart and brings tears to the eyes," said Ebba Belfrage of Nordic News.

Stengard has been described as having a powerful connection with his audiences, who are charmed by his warmth. Michael Bolton calls him "one

of the best sax players that ever walked the face of earth." Tickets are available at the door or in advance at the Costick Center, Special Services Department and Farmington Hills City Hall Treasury Department.

The Costick Center is at 29600 W. 11 Mile Road, east of Middlebelt. \$15 adults, \$12 senior citizens and \$8 students. The next show in the series will bring the Chenille Sisters to the Costick stage May 5. Call 473-1856 for more.