

CHAT ROOM



KATHIE O'DONOHUE

Troubling times call for prayers

How remarkable to see that God is politically correct once again, and not only are there no arguments about publicly invoking his name, prayer has been showing up in some pretty amazing places.

What a shame it took such a devastatingly tragic event as the terrorist attack on New York's World Trade Center to help us re-align our priorities, and that it required a staggering death toll to awaken in us spiritual life. I cannot help but wonder if this attention to the Almighty is the real thing, though, or simply a knee-jerk reaction. Will it stay with us or slowly recede as our collective consciousness begins to heal and we return to "normal?" I hope not.

I believe when we take the focus off ourselves to recognize the greatness of someone else — specifically, our Creator — miracles happen. While some consider it cliché, for many people there is abiding comfort in knowing no matter what happens, God is in control.

Watching American citizens come together in unity to mourn, donate blood, to give assistance wherever needed, and to pray has been an extraordinary experience. People from all different cultures, races, religions, and philosophies have been woven together during this time of great sadness and loss. Congress has demonstrated a united front, and we have received support from our many friends in the international community.

Youth join in

Even our children have been affected. Bake sales have been held at area schools to raise money, candlelight vigils are everywhere that young people are, flags are displayed and waved proudly, and even "spirit rocks" on high school campuses have been devoted to stars and stripes. Spiritual and patriotic hymns are in the air, and there are some who believe these are signs of a much-needed spiritual revival.

We are one people sharing grief for our American brothers and sisters, fatally stricken while simply going on about their daily lives. Yet, will we ourselves ever again be able to do so without thinking about them, without remembering such a moment of infamy among all moments of infamy?

Are there lessons to be gleaned from this experience?

In times of crisis, we take stock of what's important; family, friends, love. Yet, why wait for the hard times to ask for God's blessing? We need daily to raise up our hands in prayer, not frustration or helplessness, for our world is in His hands.

Surely, many of those aboard the hijacked planes ultimately realized their impending deaths. I wonder how many at that point pondered their accumulated wealth, lavish lifestyles, or next important item in their planners. I'd be willing to bet most thought of their loved ones, and prayers of repentance were undoubtedly offered to a God some may never have spoken to before, a God who welcomed them from the threshold of death into a place of everlasting peace. In those final agonizing moments...did they congratulate themselves on all their worldly accomplishments or utter a prayer to Almighty God for mercy?

Where God is

When tragedy strikes, we often ask, "Where was God?" Times like these reduce us to lost little children seeking their loving, protective, knowing parent, and when we seek him in this simple, humble manner, we not only find God, we also understand that He was there all along.

What must it feel like for God to watch for great lengths of time as his children turn away in futile attempts at self-sufficiency and independence yet lacking any credible capability? Any parent of a rebellious teen knows how it feels to speak to a child who has turned a deaf ear to what his parent knows beyond any doubt to be true or right. For as long now in this country, God has existed in parentheses and footnotes, or has been excluded altogether. We have actively

All she wants to do is dance, dance

■ Longacre House dance instructor Lisa Weaver emphasizes fun in her classes. But the kids learn a thing or two.

Lisa Weaver works full-time night shift as a lab supervisor. In her spare time, she teaches dance five days a week.

For the second year in a row, she's sharing her love of dance with students at the historic Longacre House in Farmington Hills. There she teaches jazz, tap and ballet classes to kids and adults of varying skill levels. She also presides over two courses for pre-schoolers to get them ready for dance classes.

"We do study a little technique, but it's more fun than anything else," she said. "I give every child a chance to express herself."

Many performances

Weaver, of Detroit, is skilled in all aspects of dance. She has performed with the Wayne State University Dance Company, Oakland University and Detroit City Dance Company. She's completed summer workshops with Alvin Ailey and the Harbinger Dance Company.

Weaver attended WSU on a dance scholarship, majoring in biology and minoring in dance.

She enjoys working with children and was a dance teacher for six years with the Rosedale Christian Child Care Center, where she worked with 2 to 6-year-olds on creatively stimulating movement and interpretations to music.

Longacre House program director Jeff Ferreri said what he likes about Weaver is, "She stresses making dance fun and a positive experience over rigorous technique. Students are encouraged to learn, never scolded or ridiculed."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRENKIN

Twist & Shout: Lisa Weaver, above, shows her dancers Lindy Doyle, Meghan Pierce and Melissa Levan how to do the twist. At right, Weaver teaches her dancers new moves. Below, Lindy Doyle and Meghan Pierce concentrate on their teacher's instruction.



For all the dance classes, there is a recital at year's end.

Among courses offered:

Dance Tots: For 2 and 3-year-olds. A fun preparation for either jazz or ballet.

Pre Dance: For ages 3 and 4. A fun 30-minute class with movement and dance.

Jazz: from basic to advanced

Ballet: from kindergarten through adult.

Class sizes are limited but new students are welcome to join. Call the Longacre House at 477-8404 to register or for more information.



Naturalist will answer kids' questions

Hey kids! Have you ever wondered how a caterpillar turns into a moth or a butterfly as if by magic? How a frog or a turtle can sleep away the winter months buried in the mud at the bottom of a creek or a pond? Why some birds fly south for the winter, yet some birds stay with us for the cold months?

New column for kids

If you've thought about these wonders of nature, then we have a new newspaper column just for you. I've enjoyed nature my whole life. I learn something new about the natural world

almost every day.

I still write everything that I do with a pen and paper and that is what I would like you to do. In your own printing or writing, I'd like you to send any question you have on nature and the outdoors to this new column reserved just for kids. You can color or draw on your letter and make it as creative as you like. We will print your name and the city you live in at



the end of your letter so you can save the article and show it to your family, teachers and friends. We will not print your address to protect

everyone's privacy.

Answer every question

I will respond to every letter that gets sent to the Farmington Observer. Your parents or teachers can help but

please use your own words and write it in your own handwriting. I know that there are a lot of creative young minds out there.

Here is your chance to get your name in the paper in a fun column designed just for you. I look forward to your handwritten or printed letters on the wonderful world of nature. Please send your letter to: Naturally Kids, Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335.

Joe Derck is the city naturalist for the city of Farmington Hills.

Business coach responds to calls for help

By SUSAN STEINMUELLER

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Shortly after the terrorist attacks on America Sept. 11, entrepreneur Diana Jacques received a call from her business coach, Catherine Lamar, wondering what she could do to help.

The call came at the right time. Jacques, owner of Jacques Communications, a global company based in Farmington Hills, had been wondering what her response should be to her 20 employees.

The result was that Jacques sent an e-mail to them expressing her feelings and attaching letters of condolence from international clients, as suggested by Lamar.

"Several people called to say thank you for doing that," she said. "Cathy has a good way of helping me crystallize ideas. After talking with her, it really brings them into focus."

In coming weeks Lamar, owner of Lamar & Associates in Birmingham, expects to be helping her clients as America seeks justice for the terrorist attacks.

"People want to do the right things but don't know what it is," she said. She'll help them on a spiritual level too. Her company provides coaching "for the entrepreneurial spirit." That means enhancing and nurturing the client not just from the bottom line perspective, but from their ideals as a business owner and person.

'How can I help you?'

Lamar, 54, of West Bloomfield, said her clients are primarily women with small businesses, although she is also a marketing consultant for the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan (Parks) Authority, her largest client.

She said it's important that female

small business owners have someone else to talk to about their business, especially since "sometimes we don't have partners at home."

While a business consultant provides advice, a business coach can help consider things from a different perspective, she said.

"A coach says, how can I help you? What do you need? How can I help you see this in a different way?"

"I think my biggest concern for small business owners would be their fear of the business not surviving."

Small business owners may need to reassess how they do business as a result of current events, she said.

"Maybe they could put some new ideas into the business, possibly some reorganization," she said. "They need to trust in themselves that they will overcome the obstacles."

"If they don't keep the business going, then their employees don't have work," she noted. "If they don't have work, we will be in a worse situation. That's where the spirit of continuing on with life is necessary, but maybe, we can do it in a kinder, gentler way."

Another issue may be that employees will be coping with the changes too. And, they may do so in different ways.

Diverse background

Lamar was vice president of sales and marketing for a large managed care company for 15 years. Prior to that, she worked in the corporate world for 16 years.

"I have been a student within the last 10 years of all the spiritual work that has been written, spoken or lectured about," she added.

"The message is the same," she said. "If we replaced fear with love we would have a better understanding of who we are as human beings."



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMEYER

Coping: Business coach Cathy Lamar discusses how she's helping her clients after the terrorist attacks.

Lamar has taken leadership training. A member of Church of Today, she is taking a course to become a Unity teacher.

Lamar was married to the late Charles Lamar. The mother of two and grandmother of six was widowed at age 38.

Lamar found out about the terrorist attacks while waiting for a meeting.

"Everything has changed. The ques-

tion is how do we embrace the goodness that comes of this national disaster?" Lamar said she gets support from associates and her own business coach.

"Ask for help," she advised those who are struggling.

"When you have a situation that is making you feel insensitive or frustrated, call a coach or someone who can help."