

Spotlight on Women

'YOU Influence Films'-- Fontaine

By BETTY MASSON

When it comes to improving the quality of movies, "you are the influential people," actress Joan Fontaine told her Farmington Town Hall audience Wednesday.

Introduced as being from the era when movies were rated with stars instead of Xs, Miss Fontaine commented, "They (the influential people in Hollywood) will make X-rated films until people stop going to see them."

She said she is more concerned with "sadism, masochism and violence shown on the screen" than with nudity and sex. "I'm not sure it's very healthy for people to see this violence. As long as we see this, our children are in trouble. It's a violent age and I think our civilization is retrogressing. We have become animalistic almost in our attitudes towards other people."

SHE EXPRESSED the opinion that many older people go to "blue" movies to get educated. "We were a very prudish generation," she said.

"Censorship is not the answer," she said. "It's dangerous and sometimes it's absurd." She mentioned one scene with an old couple in bed together. Under the movie code then in force, they had to be in twin beds and the door had to be shown open.

She urged her audience as "influential people" to teach and expound good taste and to put leisure time to good use, rather than spending it at bad movies.

Of the movies showing in the Detroit area last week, she said, "Other than 'The French Connection,' there isn't a movie I'd care to go to."

SHE DEPLORED the passing of the star system as another weakness of today's movies.

About the movies of the '30s and '40s, she commented, "You and I have had mutual experiences together than our children have imagined. Stella Dallas, like me, may have saved you from a life of sin. The movies used to laugh and pray."

Miss Fontaine reminisced at length about her experiences as a movie star.

Her much-publicized "feud" with her sister, Olivia de Havilland, she discounted as a publicity stunt dreamed up by the studios. "Like all



JOAN FONTAINE

siblings, we've had some problems and as we were often up for the same roles, we were rivals in a sense, but there was no feud," she said.

Miss Fontaine was leaving over the weekend to tour South Africa in a stage presentation of "Dial M for Murder" and planned to visit her sister in Paris en route.

Of her marital status, she said, "I've been married 33 years...to four men. I am not married at the moment. I may shock you, but I think marriage is for children to have children in or for companionship later in life, and I'm between the two stages."

Her first husband was Brian Aherne. "He will be 70 in May. Our problem was we were obviously of different generations," she said.

She has one daughter, 23, who is in New York City studying to be an actress. She also has an adopted Peruvian daughter.

AT THE TOWN HALL LUNCHEON, the question most frequently asked was how she kept her marvelous complexion and figure. She advised using creams and lotions which have a low melting point. They do not have to be expensive. "I'm told if you use a little butter, it's just as good," she said.

She compared the millions spent each year for cosmetics with the amounts that might be spent to help the people of Bangladesh.

Creams and lotions are not absorbed into the skin, she said. "They do lock your own moisture in, keep air from absorbing it, and keep out dirt and grime."

She favors a high protein diet, with lots of fresh vegetables, fruit and cheese and "milk or cream every day." Some butter fat is essential for a good complexion.

For exercise she plays golf. Another favorite exercise is to lift her legs slowly while lying in bed in the morning. This is good for stomach muscles, and "it will exhaust you, and you'll go right back to sleep," she quipped.

IN HER REMINISCENCES, she revealed that her two favorite leading men were Ray Milland and Charles Boyer, both of whom were kind and concerned for others.

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m. m. memos

"Isn't it exciting to work on a newspaper," I'm asked often.

Not particularly, usually. But there are moments...

It's intermission at the Fisher Theater, and the man of our house and I are discussing the delightful comedy we're viewing. A doctor is being paged. Suddenly, undeniably, the loudspeaker is saying our name.

I'm past the elderly ladies in our row as if they weren't there. Down the stairs like a shot, imagining the worst about what may be happening at home. To the lobby desk, where I'm told there's a call waiting in the office.

I grab the telephone. Daughter No. 1 is reassuring. "Don't get excited," she says. "No one broke an arm. But the office called and something's lost so they're holding up a page."

Back to the balcony to assure my husband everything's all right -- and to get some change for the pay telephone.

Down again to the office and the joyful news that the lost has been found, the small but absolutely necessary headline is safely on the page and I'm to enjoy the rest of the show.

Back once more to the balcony, to compose myself for the second act and explain the whole thing to my husband, who spends his working hours in the office of another newspaper.

"That's very surprising," he says. "I thought we were the only ones who lost things."

And that's how exciting it is to work on a newspaper.

—Margaret Miller

SMILING Debbie Diegel of Livonia is just one of the handicapped children who will benefit from the Rotary Ann Lily Sale coming Friday and Saturday, March 24 and 25.

Livonia Rotary Anns, represented here by Mrs. Robert Stewart (left), and Mrs. Donald Friedrichs, will be at all the major shopping centers in their city with the small lilies, made by handicapped people, and the canisters for contributions to the Wayne County Easter Seal Society. More canisters have been placed in local business places.

Funds collected help the organization, formerly known as the Western Wayne County Easter Seal Society, to maintain a center for handicapped children and adults. Located in Inkster, it provides a variety of services not available elsewhere.

Five-year-old Debbie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Diegel, attends the Florence Roberts school in Inkster. She gets around well with a walker, and one of her favorite possessions is "my own typewriter."

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Nila Returns To Town Hall

By MARGARET MILLER
Women's Editor

Nila Magidoff, the Russian-born speaker who is the first ever to return to the Livonia Town Hall spotlight, came back last week as super-American as ever.

A recent trip by rented car through her native land brought plenty of anecdotes for a new talk, the lady told her Livonia friends, but in no way diminished her fierce loyalty to the country she has adopted.

Many incidents made her realize this, she said, but none more than a visit with a group of young Armenians who sang "We Shall Overcome" in English for Nila and her traveling companion, writer Irene Kampen.

"IT WAS ABOUT THEMSELVES they were singing," the speaker said, "and with all of my heart I wish them success."

"It made me realize more and more what a wonderful gift I am given in this country -- the gift of freedom and democracy. I shall never take it for granted."

Nila Magidoff came to the United States just before Pearl Harbor, and she related in her talk to the Livonia Town Hall five years ago her experiences as a frequent

speaker at World War II bond rallies.

After the war she went back to Russia "on a sentimental journey because I dreamed that a new and happy life would come to Russia, but it never did." She said she learned then that most of her family had perished, and believes she would not have been able to leave except for her marriage to American correspondent Robert Magidoff.

SO THE TRIP this time, Nila said, was specifically to get material for a new talk, and she agreed readily with the suggestion that she travel with Mrs. Kampen, a writer who was in the area several months ago to talk for the Northville Town Hall.

"She was sure there must be a funny book in Russia," Nila said, "and I was afraid to travel there alone."

The trip in a Volga 21 abounded in hilarious incidents, as Nila described it. Planning it in New York, the women were advised to map a hunting and fishing trip to Armenia in negotiating with Russian authorities. "We agreed that Irene would hunt and I would fish," she said, "but we couldn't imagine who would cook." As it worked out, they needn't have worried, because when they reached

their destination they found hunting and fishing forbidden.

BUT PLENTY of other problems developed. "We negotiate by mail," Nila said, "and the people in Moscow

think we are men, and when they see us the office goes to pieces."

Finally approved for travel, they agreed that Mrs. Kampen would drive "because I never drive a car with shifts" and Nila would

ask directions and read the Soviet signs.

"One sign that we saw often made us very nervous," she said. "It said 'other dangers.' The most frequent comment from fellow travelers was a 'because I never drive a car with shifts' and Nila would

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RETURN VISITOR Nila Magidoff (center) looks over clippings of her first lecture for Livonia Town Hall with new president DeDe Dittmar and outgoing president Barbara Laymen (Observer photo by Harry Mauthe)