

When 'It Might Have Been My Child'

By MARGARET MILLER

What do you do when you wonder if a neighborhood child is a threat to the safety of your own little ones?

The question rises, of course, from the tragedy that last week struck a Farmington Hills neighborhood. A lone wolf, a teen and an older boy arrested.

The reaction of mothers who lived on the street was quick and seemed in agreement — "It could have been my child."

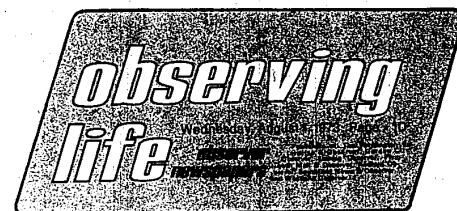
And other mothers reading about the slaying wondered anew if there is any way to keep such a tragedy from

their own subdivision — particularly if there's a child living there who had evidenced abnormal behavior.

No real preventative measures are available, agree three psychologists who work with children and understand better than most those with abnormal problems.

But from the thoughts of Dr. Ralph Rabinovitch and Dr. Edward Katz of the Hawthorn Center staff and Dr. Nathan Claunch, Farmington psychologist, there emerge some guidelines for an awareness that might help both the child behaving abnormally and possible victims.

The first thing to recognize



"is that there is an anxiety state question of the rights of the community versus an individual's rights. I think it's perfectly true that there's like this occurs."

a fair number of individuals in our community who pose dangers, and an understandable reluctance on the part of courts to take pre-

ventative action until evidence of danger is absolutely clear."

Dr. Rabinovitch said that if citizens have reason to be concerned about the behavior of a child or about their children, should first honestly and frankly discuss it with the other child's parents.

"The discussion should be unemotional, factual and as sympathetic as possible," he added. "One should make every effort to encourage the family to seek immediate help."

If the parents refuse to cooperate and there is a reasonable cause to worry regarding danger, then the other family or neighbors should

talk it over with the police — no question about that."

He also pointed out that incidents of abnormal behavior constitute a "frightfully negative experience for the child behaving that way."

"In other words, you aren't doing a kid a favor if you don't act," he said.

Another aspect of the problem, Dr. Rabinovitch said, is the tendency today to avoid hospitalization for disturbed persons or discharge them very early.

"This approach to treatment of mental illness is generally positive," he said, "but greater care is needed in evaluating and accepting a

greater risk to the community."

Dr. Katz said you have to view the problem "like driving in a mass society — it's a matter of statistics."

Unless someone can detect a problem, there's not much to do except keep kids home 24 hours a day, and that I don't recommend or you wind up with a different problem," he said.

He added though, that there's reason to wonder about a teenager who "spends an excessive amount of time with little kids."

"Until you know this for a fact, it's hard to tell children to stay away from him," Dr. Katz said.

Continued on 3D.

Schoolcraft Gardens Thriving



THE IDEA for the garden project originated with Judy Kaltz (center), project coordinator, who gets some help at late planting from her brother, Brian and his friend Karen.



FRANCIS LAMONGIE ties a string between two stakes to support his peas.



TOM BRINGARD of Livonia dazzled his neighbor's eyes by devising a way to water his garden using a 50-gallon tank in his car trunk, a pump attached to a spark plug, and a length of hose.

m. m. memos

"A lot of coupons for a lot of work" read the front page of a birthday present booklet from our youngest daughter.

I've had coupon books as presents before, and really consider them pretty good deals. It's possible to cash in several for cheerful labor — all, make that minimum-complaint labor — before the novelty wears off.

But this book seemed a little different.

On the first illustrated page, it read: "I will make myself a menace, while you are playing tennis."

Succeeding rhymed couplets were equally well-illustrated and equally non-useful. Then we came to "I will cook dinner, and make you dinner."

"That's because I can't cook," she explained.

There was a real find: "I will rake an acre and a half, until I ache and ache and ache."

We have plenty of grass clippings when we mow our front lawn, so I'll cash that one in, along with "I will wash so many a dish, you will think I am a fish" and "I will feed the cat until she gets fat."

My favorites were the last two entries — a picture of a girl pilot and the words "I will fly to the store for you anytime (you furnish plane)" and a blank page that read "I will do absolutely nothing for you — not really."

I'll have to figure out a way to put that double negative to work. After I figure out one to put the writer to work.

—Margaret Miller.

...Despite Pheasants, Rocks And Threats

By KATHY MORAN

Wasn't it yesterday I cringed at the sight of worms and I savored every sunny, day of summer?

Guess it was yesterday, because now I find myself praying for rain and developing a high tolerance for worms, birds and the like.

And it's all because of Judy Kaltz.

Judy's the one who had the brainstorm to use Schoolcraft College's vacant land for gardens. She thought maybe 40 families would be interested in growing their own vegetables rather than letting the land sit unused.

But she was wrong. It's more like 135 individuals, families and, believe it or not, me.

Sis and Sister Margaret Russo IBM, both members of the Newman House staff, arranged to have about four acres plowed for the 25-by-30 foot garden plots and a community corn patch.

That's how the community garden project began.

Now this city girl is getting her initiation to growing.

I've practiced the art of talking to my home plants and then taking credit for their healthy growth. But now, I'm talking to lettuce, radishes, watermelon, carrots, broccoli, onions, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage, green peppers, potatoes and lima beans.

It started out rougher than I anticipated — and every time I pulled a rock out of the soil, I cursed the iceberg that ran over my plot.

And it was disconcerting as my father, brother and I slaved over the soil while listening to pheasants nearby just waiting for our tomatoes.

Already the Thomas Coyne family of Livonia have harvested their tomatoes punctured by fuzzy pheasants, who just peck one hole and move on to the next tomato.

But I'm not worried. By

the time my tomatoes grow, the glutinous pheasants will

have died from overeating.

And I'm not threatened by the raccoon or rabbit or whatever that ate Mark McQueeney's peas. I've calculated plenty of pea plants and (more important) a fence between that beast and my peas.

My real threat is my brother.

Paul (who yelled at me for planting "his" watermelon seeds upside down) isn't impressed with the aesthetic value of working the land and getting it together with Mother Nature.

So when I noticed him slouching off, I didn't pay much attention — until I heard his mutterings and saw him raise his foot over the broccoli.

"What are you doing?" I cried.

"I'm threatening the broccoli — that way it won't grow and I won't have to eat it," he said.

While some of my neighbors and I were bent over our plants and sweating from the hot sun, Tom showed up with a garden hose and started watering his garden.

Seems his vicious eighth grade class nearly murdered a plant by yelling at it, and

he thinks he can do the same to my broccolini.

He'd rather grow potato chips, rootbeer, ice cream and chocolate covered peanuts.

Paul's not at all like Peter.

Peter's not at all like Judy Kaltz.

Paul is about the same age but is a farmer at heart. He was growing tomato plants indoors during the late winter, all the while knowing that his backyard was too small to transplant them.

"It was just what we needed," his mother, Marje, told me after reading about the garden project. Now Peter's growing much more than tomatoes, and his garden looks better than mine.

The prize for ingenuity goes to Tom Bringard, a Livonia who made my garden look better by planting his next to mine.

My neighbors aren't bad despite the fact that they all have tall green plants, straight rows and a tenth the number of weeds I have.

Everyone shares the beer,

orange juice or whatever

they bring for refreshment

(although I sense a note of hesitation when I'm offered a beer and the giver sees my crooked rows and figures I had too much when I planted them).

More important, they share

their knowledge of growing

— and as a result, I can boast

of a terrific green cucumber

and lots of lettuce so far.

And Judy was right about

the project. It has promoted

a sense of "community."

It's been a great project for families to get on together.

And it's a thrill to see the

seeds we planted so carefully

start popping through the ground.

I'm not sure I want to be

around when people start

comparing their large juicy

tomatoes or long cucumbers.

But I'll still have a sense of

accomplishment.

And despite the blisters

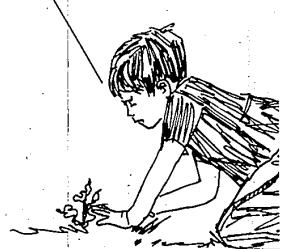
and sweltering heat, there's

a certain peace to working in

the garden at sunset that I

think we're all lucky to be in

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