

# Undaunted by handicap, blind woman plays bingo

BY MARGARET MILLER

It quiets down in St. Francis' Knights of Columbus hall in Farmington and the regular Tuesday night bingo game begins.

All eyes are on the cards spread out on the full tables.

But over in the corner, next to the refreshment stand of the hall located at 21900 Middle Belt, sits a player with cards that look different.

They are all pale green, and you can't see any numbers at all.

"B-75," comes the voice of the caller.

The short woman playing the pale green cards moves her hands rapidly across them.

Then she tears a square of Scotch tape from a roll she holds under her chin so that she can keep both hands free.

She sticks the tape over a set of raised dots on one of the green cards. For Mrs. Pat Ash, another evening of Bingo in Braille is off and running.

"O-52."

"Get on with you, that one's no good," says Mrs. Ash as her hands flick across the cards.

Mrs. Ash, a recent Livonia resident now making her home on St. Francis in Farmington, has been blind since birth, but that doesn't keep her from enjoying her favorite recreation.

"I make my cards up ahead," she explains. "Leona here," she motions to Mrs. Leona LaGrant, playing alongside her. "she reads off the numbers and I put them on the cards with my Braille-writer."

"G-16."

"Hooray!" Another little square of tape goes down and the left fingers are ready for the next number.

How often does she play bingo? "Oh, two, three times a week. Whenever I baby-sit, then I play that night."

"She baby-sits a lot," puts in Mrs. LaGrant. How does she manage when she can't see?

"The same way you do," she comes back. "I feed 'em and play with 'em and paddle their behinds when they don't behave."

"B-4," INTONES the caller.

"What did he say," asks Mrs. LaGrant. "B-4," repeats her companion, muttering a bit under her breath. Her fingers don't locate that number.

Her hearing's plenty sharp, points out Mrs. LaGrant. "And she does all her own housework and makes her own clothes."

"O-93."

Again the tape and an expression of satisfaction. Pat Ash relates how she learned Braille at the Michigan School for the Blind in Lansing but she doesn't use it much for reading—that's for blind people.

She does like to play other games, cribbage and rummy, for instance, with her son, C.B. (short for Charles B.) She's fixed up decks of Braille cards.

She and C.B. also get around a lot to places like grocery stores, and she doesn't use a cane because "that's for

people who can't find their way around."

Getting to the bingo games presents no great problem. If she can't find someone to drive her, she takes a cab.

She's likely to show up in a number of Farmington and Livonia halls.

"N-11," comes the call. "Bingo!" someone shouts from across the room.

Pat Ash pushes aside the laboriously-punched set of pale green cards. She lays out another set. There's always another game. And then another night for bingo.



PAT ASH

## Community Calendar

### SECOND SATURDAY PROGRAM

Registrations are being taken now for the Farmington Public Library's Second Saturday programs for school aged children which will begin Sept. 14. Children aged 5-8 may register for the 1:30-2:15 p.m. sessions; children from 9-12 may register for the 2:30-3:15 p.m. sessions. Registrations may be made in person or by calling the library, 477-1313.

### INVISIBLE GHOST

Thursday, Aug. 22: "Invisible Ghost" starring Bela Lugosi, concludes the Farmington Public Library's summer film series for teens and adults, beginning at 7 p.m. in the library, 32737 W. Twelve Mile Road. No charge.

### ANTIQUE SHOW

Sunday and Monday, Sept. 1-2: Boisford Inn Antique Show in the inn, Grand River and Eight Mile Road, from noon to 10 p.m. each day. Show is made up of collection from dealers in Detroit and suburbs; some art nouveau, some art deco. Demonstrations will be given on rug hooking, wool dyeing, making hand-crafted guns. Admission and parking are free of charge.

### SMOKERS CLINIC

Sunday, Sept. 8: Smokers' clinic, designed to help participants kick the habit, starts this date and runs through Sept. 12 in Orchard United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road. No charge. Contributions accepted. Advance registrations will be taken by calling the church office, MA 6-6820.

## m.m.memos

"What time do you work tomorrow?" is an important question around our house this summer. It goes with the still more important query, "Who's driving?"

When the college student needs to drive to work to help pay school expenses, it's no time to be hard-nosed about the use of the family car.

But we've found that juggling two cars over three jobs requires planning, flexibility, luck and a lot of help from our friends.

WE KNOW OF COURSE that we're not alone. One family in the car pool with the man of our house has somehow been managing to get four gainfully-employed members to assorted jobs on two cars.

And recently, when I asked a fellow worker if I could hitch a ride, she said she was pretty sure she'd be driving that day unless it turned out that her son needed the car.

SO FAR WE'VE managed to get one waitress and two editors to their respective places of business every day for two summers.

But not without a few disquieting incidents. Like the evening this summer when I had invited friends to dinner at the restaurant where our waitress works. One car had gone downtown to the newspaper there, and she had driven the other, and it wasn't until I arrived home (courtesy of a co-worker) that I realized I had no wheels for getting myself and another daughter-to that restaurant a couple of miles away.

The solution that time was to telephone a startled waitress and explain that no, I didn't want her to come and get us but would she please make the guests feel at home until I could get there by cab.

THEN THERE WAS a memorable evening last summer (when our car-owner daughter was home) and we had three sets of wheels in the family and still had problems.

On that occasion all three cars were off somewhere when suddenly I remembered one of the younger girls had a piano lesson.

I called a friend who, it turned out, didn't have a car either.

"How," she asked quite reasonably, "can you run out of cars when you have three?"

Really, it's easier than you'd think. Now, let's see. Who's driving where tomorrow and how do I get to work?

—Margaret Miller



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