

# Farmington Observer Eccentric

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Fifteen Cents

## FAAC coordinator likes helping people

By SUSAN AVERILL

FARMINGTON—Mona Irej is a 28-year-old graduate of Southern Illinois University (SIU) with a master's degree in music education and a second degree in opera. So where is she now? She's a coordinator of Rapline, the Farmington Area Advisory Council's telephone hotline for problems.

Married to Paul Irej, a clinical psychologist, she must have heard enough problems to last a lifetime, one would think. Instead, she's in a rush to be helpful.

"It's encouraging because you see people solving a problem, and occasionally you'll get thank-you calls. What's new is when you've been working with somebody and they've taken a step on their own and been a success."

Problem solving is left to the caller, Mona describes in a calm, "facilitator," a fancy word for listener.

"SOMETIMES PEOPLE call, and all they need is someone to listen—someone to use as a sounding board. She has a calmly efficient manner, a pervasive confidence that isn't overbearing.

Paul and Mona work together professionally because Paul is also Rapline's volunteer coordinator. He takes no referrals from the crisis intervention center, an action he considers unethical. Both are sticklers on ethics.

Her husband has his own private practice. Since his wife of six years works in a similar field, what happens when both are carrying such burdens of responsibility for other people?

"We talk a lot, and sometimes the only time we have to talk is between two and five in the morning." But Mona doesn't mind.

She's a firm believer in taking your work. "It's great if you're doing what you like to do, rather than something you don't like."

A job she didn't like was being secretary for the housing department at SIU.

IT'S NOT ONE of my favorite things," she said wryly. It did, however, serve its purpose.

"I learned how to organize, something I sore need with this job," her gesture included an orderly desk and office.

Not all the work involving the 28-hour job can be done in the office, which is just as well, Mona said. The Irejs expect their first child in November. Mona will spend most of her time in their Farmington Hills home.

They are from Kalamazoo and met on a USO tour. Returning to SIU, she and Paul helped develop a crisis intervention center. They used this experience as a basis for structuring Farmington Area Advisory Council's Rapline.

Mona worked as a volunteer, beginning last October. Her experience with SIU's center stood her in good stead when she was asked in November to become Rapline coordinator.

Until she began, Rapline had no coordinator but was managed by the same person who handled finances and counseling.

The phone counseling service now has 30 volunteers but can use as many as 40.

Volunteers must take 40 hours of training, including reading time, before they are allowed near a telephone. After the basic training, the volunteers are on probation for two months. If successful, they must still attend in-service training sessions once a month.

THEY ARE ALSO responsible for attending other meetings to aid them in their volunteer work.

Rapline is unusual because volunteers meet at least once a month with the center's social worker to discuss positive and negative feelings about their work and the calls they receive.

This way, Mona said, they hope to avoid the massive turnover of volunteers which characterizes most crisis centers.

"We try to protect our volunteers. We don't want any of them getting hurt," she explained.

So far it seems to have worked. There has been only one dropout from the volunteer counseling force, and that because the individual moved.

Volunteers are not necessarily Farmington residents. Some come from Wayne County and others from as far away as Hamtramck. All use only first names, and encourage callers to do likewise.

"We just ask for their first name, because it's easier to talk to someone that way. Often, we'll say, 'Tell me what I can call you—it doesn't have to be your real name.' It helps," she said.

Training schedules and work shifts for the volunteers vary. They are usually molded to the convenience of the volunteer who may donate anywhere from six to 120 hours a month.

"WE'LL WORK around their schedule. Eventually, we'd like to open a 24-hour service, and for that we'll need more volunteers."

The Rapline now operates 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 p.m.-1 a.m. Friday through Sunday.

The counselors will make referrals only by giving the caller the name and phone number of an agency, but will not schedule appointments.

### Moving day

FAAC (Farmington Area Advisory Council) moved into a new administrative and counseling office last week. The Farmington School District donated the use of the old Noble school on Middle Belt north of Nine Mile. Above, volunteer Brenda Crawley vacuums in the counseling part of the building. FAAC director Betty Arnold (right) and volunteer Lou Anne Sunday relax in the midst of the clutter in a general purpose meeting room. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

## Medical group helps firms meet standards

By CORINNE ABATT

The Detroit Health and Safety Associates is a new approach to a growing problem in business and industry—employee well-being.

The Farmington Hills-based company was organized earlier this year

by Dr. Howard J. Sawyer of West Bloomfield Township.

A certified specialist in occupational medicine, Sawyer has more than a decade of plant experience as chief physician, General Parts Division, Ford Motor Co. and medical director of General Electric's Carbonyl Products

One reason for forming the new company, which is designed to serve both large and small businesses, is the standards set by the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the more stringent

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### For Farmington woman

## Community involvement is 'continuing education'

FARMINGTON—Most people probably know Donna Tupper through her extensive work with the PTA. Others know her as the wife of Farmington City Councillman Richard Tupper. Yet knowing Mrs. Tupper doesn't necessarily give you access to the knowledge of what prompts her civic-mindedness.

"It's a lot of fun. I consider it my 'continuing adult education.' You go to different seminars and classes and you learn so much. I've learned about legislation, parliamentary procedure and career education for example," she said.

"I like people. I find them interesting. I have good friends who are interested in what's going on in the community. It's a learning process."

ORIGINALLY FROM a town near Duluth, Minn., Mrs. Tupper moved to Farmington in 1936 after marrying Dick Tupper, who had been stationed near Duluth while serving in the armed forces.

After a two-year period of relative inactivity, she made a preliminary venture in public service and became a charter member of the Farmington Jaycee Auxiliary in 1958.

"It introduced me to Farmington and so many new friends—friends that we've kept throughout the years," she said.

She spent several years with the group and helped establish the "helping hands" program in the Farmington area. The program was done in conjunction with the PTA Council,

and the liaison later served as a natural conduit for her involvement with that group.

Community work is interesting to her. It isn't something she must push herself to do, nor is it an onus put on her because her husband is a councilman.

"It's all part of a growing education of your own," she explained.

Although she emphasized educational growth, her work has also had other benefits for her.

"You learn how to talk to people and how to handle yourself," she said. Granting the advantages, there are still other reasons Mrs. Tupper becomes involved.

"I THINK everyone should donate a little back to the community for the privilege of living here."

She follows on her interests by reading.

"I love to read—there aren't too many subjects I won't pick up."

As a mother of three (Brian, 18; Barbara, 14, and David, 11), Mrs. Tupper said.

"I believe in being rather a strict parent, though sometimes you are so-riely tested."

Partly for this reason she would like to see parent groups formed in the junior high and high schools.

"Parents are not always that cognizant of what's going on in the junior high, and that's precisely the time when you have to be more aware of what's going on."

"That's often when children become confused. It's hard to know what to do, but I think they want your aid and support although they don't want to show it."

SO FAR, there has been no grant demand for PTAs at the junior high or high schools, and Mrs. Tupper isn't really out to crusade for them.

"I don't want to organize something that people don't want. But it could be done if the interest was there," she said.

In the meantime, she will focus her work with the PTA on fostering communication between the area council and its local complements, as well as the school administration and city governments.

"Communication is an overworked word, but people are saying too many times, 'I don't know that,' when it comes to school issues. We have to get the information to the people in the community. After all, the schools are a community thing."

The area council's "voices and comments" program held before millage election earlier this year was a step in this direction.

Area women invited others from their neighborhood to a coffee in the area council's "voices and comments" program held before millage election earlier this year was a step in this direction.

Complaints and other comments were forwarded to the PTA Council, which worked with school administrators to solve or answer problems and questions.



DONNA TUPPER

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#### MUSICAL MINISTRY

A Farmington area minister believes music has charms to soothe the masses. He has written religious music as a way of communicating his feelings. Find out more about this Farmington composer by turning to Farmington Life, Page 1B.

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