

Lib (Men)/Lib (Women) comes to Farmington

By LORAIN McCLISH

Lib Men/Lib Women is a new concept of singles meeting singles that eliminates the games people play. It was brought to Detroit from the east last fall and is now moving into the suburbs.

Vincent Beneteau describes it as a method of "meeting people in a new, free and open way without the stereotyping hassle so often found in the singles scene of bars, dances and afterglows."

"They can play a lot of nasty games there and some of these rejection games are very cruel," he said.

BENETEAU is a former president of the Unitarian Singles (US) Club which underwrote the first effort at Lib/Lib, as it is commonly called now, for a Unitarianist-Unitarian Church in Detroit. He'll be bringing it to the Farmington U-U Church "to see how it goes" for five sessions beginning July 11.

He stressed that the "liberation" portion of the name had nothing to do with an activist group. "We are liberating people from role playing and we are probably liberal in the broad sense because many of us are Unitarians. But our point is to

make people feel more free, more relaxed in a group situation and that is liberation," he said.

Sessions get under way with facilitators (rather than group leaders) who begin group discussions of a common topic. The subject could be any contemporary issue; open marriage, abortion or a pending legislative bill.

"THERE ARE no right or wrong answers, of course. The idea is just to talk. Get to know the people in your group. Find out how they feel and go away feeling that you know them," Beneteau said.

This is followed by a break for refreshments he described as a "sort of stand-up cocktail party and I wish we could measure the noise levels before and after. This is always amazing to me. People are freer now. We have something in common. It is easier for everybody to move from clusters to clusters. We've all revealed a part of ourselves. We are not men or women. We are people."

Lib/Lib, he said, "eliminates that whole scene of the man walking into a singles bar acting like he's cool and super confident, which he is not, and the women's



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subtleties that are sometimes as ridiculous as dropping a handkerchief.

IF FOUR women come together as a group to Lib/Lib, Beneteau said, the odds are that they will find each of them in four different groups because the whole idea is to meet as many people as possible in any given session.

And if you come late the odds are that you might be turned away

because the rap sessions are what makes the whole thing work.

The doors open at 7:30 p.m. and the rap sessions get under way at 8:30 p.m. There is a donation asked at the door and this goes up as the time becomes later.

Lib/Lib is self-supporting. The church underwrites the first session and the church receives all money that remains after the last session.

The "see how it goes" sessions in Farmington will run the second and fourth Fridays of the month through the summer, July 11 and 25; Aug. 8 and 22; Sept. 12. The church is located at 25301 Halstead Road, north of old Grand River.

BENETEAU WILL be chairman of the group who "furnishes the food for conversation," and has patterned the local Lib/Lib from two ongoing groups, one in New

York and the other in Philadelphia.

The Detroit church attracted "about 100 people a night without much publicity and no advertising getting single people together in the most pleasant way possible."

Age range from "20 on up," he said, with a nucleus of the middle-aged divorced person, and a broad range of backgrounds.

"It is for people who like to talk," he said, "at least as much as they like to dance."

Farmington Hills expert tells how

Rug braiding can add a new twist to your life

By CORINNE ABATT

There are two questions always asked Marie Rankin of Farmington Hills when she demonstrates rug braiding. One is how she keeps those colorful, hand-made rugs from humping up in the middle and the other is how much they cost to make.

Mrs. Rankin frequently demonstrates the old art of rug braiding at the Fort Wayne Military Museum and the Detroit Historical Museum. She anticipates teaching a course in rug braiding at the historical museum, probably starting next September. Her affiliation with the Fort Wayne Museum came because she is a member of the Detroit Historical Society's volunteer guild.

Her answer to the first question is simple. "Back off around the curves." Although it sounds like driver's education, it's another way of saying don't pull the braids too tight as they are sewed one to another at the curves.

As the braids are sewn together on the straight, the sections are matched

one to one, but on the curves, Mrs. Rankin allows more room on the outside so the rug lays flat.

She sews with a double strand of pure linen thread intertwined between the braids. Commercial rugs are often top sewn. After a while the threads wear and break.

"Mine don't split," she says.

COST DEPENDS on the amount spent for the wool. Mrs. Rankin uses new wool exclusively and gets it, whenever possible, directly from woolen mills which sell it by the pound. It should be lightly woven coat weight—not dress weight.

Those who buy wool in summer make a first rug next fall should take care in choosing colors.

The color choice in braided rugs may look random, but it isn't.

Mrs. Rankin quotes the woman from New England, Ann Diamond, who taught her rug braiding: "You'll need one color and two blues."

Various shades of the one color will be needed plus various shades of the blues. She describes the blue colors as gray, beige, the muted tones which

form a background for the dominant ones.

"Only change one color at a time, go around with the combination one time, pass it and then change. Try for a light center, shade to darker and then go back to light again."

IN THE OVAL rugs the size of the center determines the size of the rug. A rule of thumb—the center is the difference between the planned length and width. The center of a three by five foot oval is two feet in length. Same for a four by six or a seven by nine.

No calculations are necessary for a round rug. It starts with a circle of braid and goes to any size desired.

Aside from being a very practical form of art, the craft is appealing because the initial outlay in equipment is minimal—the wool, a curved needle, a small table vise to hold the braids being worked on, and braiders. Braiders are clamps on the individual strips of wool. They fold the raw edges under and are moved along the raw strips just ahead of the braid.

Mrs. Rankin has three, made from coffee can lids by the husband of a former teacher.

"You pull them down as you go," she says. "It's just like milking a cow."

Explaining why she prefers to use only new wool, she adds, "If I'm going to put this much time and work into it, I would rather use new materials. Otherwise one color might wear before the others and look tacky."

SHE SEWS the strips of wool together with a fine diagonal seam and says she particularly likes wool "because the colors stay so clear and bright."

She cleans her rugs with a foam spray and a sponge.

"In the olden days they would throw their braided wool rugs out on the fresh, clean snow and sweep them."

Mrs. Rankin's interest in textiles goes beyond rug braiding. She now spins her own yarn from wool and knits it into scarves.

"I've got to learn to weave pretty soon," she says almost to herself as a reminder.

She took classes in spinning from Gladys Teeter of Northville and plans to take a class in natural dying this fall.

Beside her spinning wheel is a pile of white fluff. It is the hair from a Shetland dog and it makes beautiful soft, white yarn.

She traces her husband, Dr. Stuart Rankin, an assistant superintendent with the Detroit Public Schools, about getting her some sheep. He questions who will do the shearing.

She puts a hand on the spinning wheel and remarks, "Spinning is a nice hobby, very quiet, soothing, but not as easy as it looks. At first, I felt as though I had two left feet although I always considered myself fairly well-coordinated."



Marie Rankin of Farmington Hills adds some new twists to the old art of rug braiding.

(Photo by Craig Newman)



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