

Farmington LIFE

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(F11)

Seniors rights champion puts in 7-day work week

By LOUISE ORLITSKY

Alice Sonnenberg of Farmington describes her age as "70 and holding," but she still has a full-time job of a seven-day work week.

"I kind of jumped away with the idea she has joined in the last 10 years. After her husband's death, she was asked to act as a liaison between the Presbytery of Detroit and its home for seniors Presbyterian Village, Livonia.

"It's led to so many things that I never dreamed of," she says. Mrs. Sonnenberg is a consultant coordinator for the Presbytery of Detroit's Commission on Aging, chairman of Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), a member of the New Detroit Help Committee and a charter member of Citizens for Better Care, an advocacy group concerned about conditions in nursing homes.

She also visits the sick as a member of the Sixth Ministry of Westminster Church, Detroit.

She has been active in getting the recent general medicine bill passed and in submitting a list of recommendations for alternatives to nursing home care for the aged to Gov. William Milliken.

"I REALLY work six days a week," she says. "Senior power is something to be reckoned with," she added. "We represent 12 per cent of the population. We have a better voting record than any other segment of the population."

She is a small woman dressed in a blue parka which matches the deep blue color of her eyes. Her white hair is pulled up on top of her head.

Leaning back in her chair at her office in Presbyterian Village, she turns to look out of the window behind her desk at the quiet residential street behind the complex.

"In order to exist, the majority of older people have to have medicines," she explains. "The rising costs of food and medicine force some elderly people who live at home to choose between the two. Because medicine is often such a necessity, some elderly people cut back on food."

They feel they can live on a less, toast and cereal diet," Mrs. Sonnenberg says. "There are over 200 bills in the legislative hopper that affect seniors," she says. "She was a member of the legislative task force which submitted a report to the governor, advocating the beginning of a homemaker service for the elderly."

THE SERVICE would provide at-home help for seniors who don't want to live in a home for the aged. Many homes are geared beyond what most of the elderly or their families can afford, she says. The service would provide older persons with help in doing heavy chores and in shopping.

The Medicaid task force report was submitted over a year ago, she explains. While the report has been accepted, the plan hasn't been financed.

The identities of nursing home believers should be made public, she believes. It would do a great deal towards correcting the conditions in some of the homes and it would prevent the appointment of owners to agencies designed to oversee the homes. It would do a great deal toward correcting the situation," she says.

Some of the cutbacks in the state budget hurt the financial position of the elderly, she says.

The cuts that were made are the ones that shouldn't have been made," she says. The cuts affect the handicapped by eliminating dentures, hearing aids, glasses and physical therapy from Medicare coverage.

UNDER THE cutbacks, the state will pay for 14 days of psychological treatment. Fourteen days do about as much good as nothing," she says. She is active in a coalition formed to persuade the governor to change the cutbacks.

We can't change the 1976 budget. We hope to affect change in the 1977 budget," she says. We're hoping to arouse enough people so we will be able to take a group to the Legislature," she adds.

She doesn't agree with the practice of retiring completely at 65. That's simply because I have such admiration for the talents of older people. We lose so much. It takes a long time to gain experience," she says.

The attitude of the young toward the older generation is slowly changing for the better. The young are much more tolerant.

A great deal has yet to be done," she cautions. You have to educate every element of society. You see now with the advances in medical science, people are living so much longer.

I think people are becoming increasingly aware and appreciative of the wisdom and experience of older people," she says.

THERE ARE some advantages to being old, she says. The most satisfying thing is knowing so much of what happened

in chapters both at Western Michigan and Wayne State universities.

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ALICE SONNENBERG

You relate to almost anything that you see," she says. Farmington is marvelous in its opportunities for senior citizens," she says. The community center is a beautiful building and so far as I know, no other place in the area has such a diverse range of services for seniors. The classes are the experience. We must not lose sight of the fact that seniors are not just a statistic, they are people.

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DECA adviser Joan Marzetti, center left, is flanked by club members Jeff Spilman and Lee Howell, at her left, and to her right, Kathy Kerman, Skip Sullivan and Mike Kennedy (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Retailing comes alive for DECA at Harrison

Six Harrison High School students go into state competition this week, backed up by the balance of their classmates who make up DECA, the first chapter of Distributive Education Clubs of America to come to Farmington.

Joan Marzetti, who brought DECA into the school system, described it as "making retailing come alive." It's the closest you can bring the students into a real situation.

And in speaking about the club members who were working to back up the competitors, she said: "It brings cohesion and a solidarity."

DECA is co-curricular, run in conjunction with the school's marketing class which got under way last September, and already has produced two winners in a regional contest.

Skip Sullivan, who is president of the club, took home a trophy in the "human relations" category. Mike Kennedy took a trophy in the "sales demonstration" category.

The students know what category they will compete in, but don't know what hypothetical, role-playing problem they will be asked to cope with on the spot.

"ABOUT THE PROBLEM we can do to prepare to read a book and sometimes that doesn't help," is the way Kennedy put it. The contest, in Grand Rapids, is spread over a two-day period. Competitors travel less one hour with the proceeds of a jewelry sale. DECA has been running for a couple of months. The contest is supported in part with vocational education funding by the state, and receives support from area businesses.

Sullivan will try again, on the state level, in the category of human relations. Lee Howell expects to get a customer relations problem in the category of food service.

Liz Bonner will compete in the job interview category. Gordon Harrapaves will tackle the merchandising and cashing category. Jeff Spilman will enter the radio spot category. Kathy Kerman will enter "letter of application."

Noting that retailing and competitiveness were almost synonymous, Mrs. Marzetti said she thought it fitting that students interested in marketing for a career be put into competitions.

Whether the contest is an advertising or display or human relations, all the categories are directly related to real life marketing situations and judged by people from the business community," she said.

MS. MARZETTI is no stranger to DECA. In her second days, she was an officer in chapters both at Western Michigan and Wayne State universities.

I believe in the concept of DECA," she says. I've seen how it develops students from just June to September. I've seen how it pulls them out of the classroom and sets them thinking on a realistic basis. A lot of them don't realize what competition is until they've gone through one of these contests.

DECA's purpose is to develop leadership, gain scholastically through competition in sales, advertising and communication, promote civic consciousness and gain social intelligence through competition.

Sullivan's officers in the chapter are Liz Bonner, Rick Horst, Kathy Shaper and Diane Peterson.

Nursery observes Young Child Week

The "Week of the Young Child" will be the theme of open house at Harlan Park Community Nursery School Sunday, April 4, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at United Methodist Church, 2867 W. Eleven Mile, Farmington Hills.

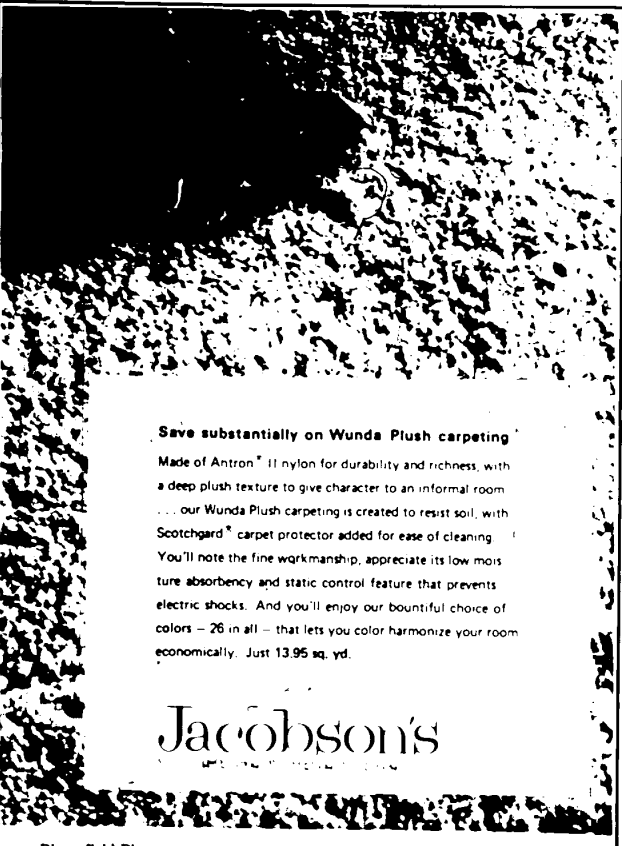
Actually every week is young child's week here," comments Mada Briggs, director of the nursery school, a non-profit community service organization. The school's governing board consists of parents whose children are, have been or will be enrolled.

Consequently, the school gets feedback from parents who have had experience with pre-schoolers as well as from new parents with expectations of their children.

The school's objective, according to Ms. Briggs, is to prepare the young child to enter kindergarten as a happy, well-adjusted person able to interact well with his peers.

The educational facility is under the supervision of trained teachers with separate classes for three- and four-year-olds. Teachers strive to provide each child growth and have a happy experience.

Through the use of many media, the school promotes language skills, mathematics and science. Children are encouraged to express themselves in art, music and dance.



Advertisement for Wunda Plush carpeting. Text includes: 'Saves substantially on Wunda Plush carpeting', 'Made of Antron® II nylon for durability and richness, with a deep plush texture to give character to an informal room...', 'our Wunda Plush carpeting is created to resist soil, with Scotchgard® carpet protector added for ease of cleaning.', 'You'll note the fine workmanship, appreciate its low moisture absorbency and static control feature that prevents electric shocks. And you'll enjoy our bountiful choice of colors - 26 in all - that lets you color harmonize your room economically. Just 13.95 sq. yd.', 'Jacobson's', 'Bloomfield Plaza, Telegraph at Maple', 'Birmingham, Woodward at Willits', 'SHOP JACOBSON'S THURSDAY AND FRIDAY EVENINGS 'TIL NINE 2 HOURS FREE PARKING WHEN YOU MAKE A PURCHASE'