



Farmington Observer

Suburban Life

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Consumer protection is a matter of self-help

By LORALINE McCLEISH

Among the raft of products that will come under the Consumer Product Safety Commission's gun in 1979 are cellulose insulation, power mowers, upholstered furniture, gas space heaters and playground equipment.

One woman who keeps her eyes on these things is Phyllis Gunderson who teaches consumer affairs in the high school completion courses at Ten Mile Community School.

In January, she offers the class for the first time as an enrichment course. In the 10-week Monday afternoon session, students will learn how to spot inflation, investigate various ways to invest money and study the impact of advertising.

"Too many consumers just don't know their rights," says Ms. Gunderson. "I just hope I can squeeze it all in. There is so much I have to say and new things are springing up all the time."

Beyond the topics she considers basic to being a good consumer, Ms. Gunderson will discuss any subject the class chooses as being of special interest.

"Maybe they'll want to talk about clothing, death, health, kids, concerns of the single woman," she says. "I'll be ready."

SHE DESCRIBES her class as "an adventure for doing, not a school for testing."

"Consumerism is a relatively new word," she continues. "We learned it in 1962 from John F. Kennedy when he gave us our first consumer bill of rights. But so many of us know about it only so vaguely."

Enrollment begins at Ten Mile School

Enrollment for all winter term classes at Ten Mile Community School is open Jan. 8-12.

Persons may register by mail or in person in the school, 32789 Ten Mile

"I want to get across consumer education and how it relates to the basic economic concepts of money management, buying and using goods and services, the rights and responsibilities of both buyers and sellers."

Ms. Gunderson is excited about the establishment of a federal consumer protection division as a regulatory agent to act in consumers' interests.

As envisioned by the present special assistant to the president for consumer affairs, the agency would have a staff of 300 and a budget of \$15 million.

The division's responsibilities would be to lobby in Congress for better consumer protection, urging government agencies for better enforcement of those laws, reforming regulatory bureaus, and protecting consumers in electronic advertising.

AS TO CURRENT legislation, Ms. Gunderson says: "So much of that is self help in nature; the consumer has to be responsible for his personal welfare. We are working on a bill to have an improved small claim court system. We have greater ease in getting class action suits into the courts."

"But the consumer must take the initiative and that's why it is so important for him to know what those basic consumer rights are. In my class, my students are tested on writing good, effective letters of complaint."

The Bloomfield Township resident is a teacher of home economics who began teaching community education while her children were growing up.

She teaches in the Madison Heights, Royal Oak and Farmington school systems.

"I love teaching adults," she said.

"They are in class by choice and there to learn. There is a lot of discussion in the class, a lot of motivation and eagerness to get everything they can out of the time they spend in class."

The consumer affairs course will be held 1-3 p.m. Mondays beginning Jan. 15 in the school on Ten Mile, east of Farmington Road. Fee is \$15. Registrations will be taken Jan. 8-12. All classes offered at the school have limited enrollment.



her right. A new class with up-to-date information begins on Monday, Jan. 15 in Ten Mile Community School. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Community Center has a new director

By LORALINE McCLEISH

First official public event on the agenda for Mary Lou Masters in her new position as executive director for Farmington Community Center is opening day of registration for the center's winter term of classes and activities.

She'll be in the center, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 4, to greet registrants, following the traditional format of other registration days. That's the day when arts and crafts teachers set up displays of their work for the visitors, telling and showing what students can expect to learn in any of the arts and crafts classes.

"I will be my first opportunity to meet

some of the instructors, some of our volunteers and the people who take classes here," Ms. Masters said.

She assumed her new position as the winter session of events gets under way, and the spring session is still in the planning stage.

"I'm very impressed with the caliber of the programs offered here

and the many well-known authorities who come to share their expertise," she said.

J. BORSTONE, a lecturer on antiques from Greenfield Village; Ralph Valakota, a Michigan resident for Professional Therapist for Children; and William Bostick, affiliated with Detroit Institute of Arts, were a few people Ms. Masters cited as authorities in their field coming to share their know-how.

"Maybe we could get more of these top-notchers and line them up for a town hall series," she mused. "I want to continue increasing and expanding programs in art, drama, music, even the culinary arts, with those who have a high degree of specialized knowledge."

Because Ms. Masters is now thinking spring, she invites calls from new instructors with ideas for classes, workshops or special events.

"I'm looking for authors, celebrities, specialists in fields to bring us their expertise, and we'll fit them in on our bill," she said.

"I want the entire community to be able to look forward to events at the center that are stimulating with depth and substance."

Her first official meeting with the Farmington Community Center board of directors will be at the end of January, she said. "I'll have a lot of new ideas to share with them."

ONE SHORT-TERM goal is already under

(Continued on page 8A)



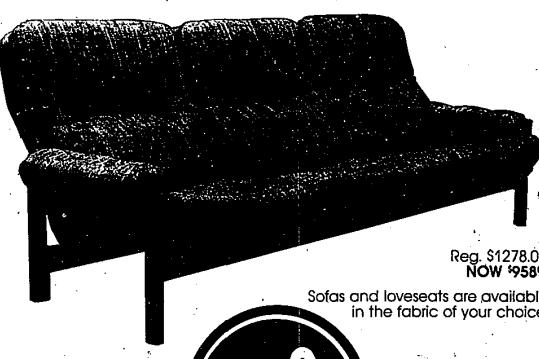
Mary Lou Masters, Farmington Community Center's new executive director, believes all the good things that could happen to the center are still to come.

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