

Suburban Life

Lorraine McClish editor/477-5450



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Drug abuse topic for speaker's visit with teens

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

Mike Winchester, author of "Marijuana: The Verdict is Yours," will be here to talk to teens in both public and private schools Monday through Thursday, April 2-5 on drugs and drug abuse.

In classes and assemblies he will be talking to students in all three public high schools; eighth graders in all public middle schools; in Our Lady of Sorrows and Beecham Catholic schools; in St. Paul Lutheran School and Catholic Central High.

Some daytime hours have been allocated for teachers to confer with Winchester about teen-age drug abuse. Parents are invited to hear him talk at 7:30 p.m. Monday in Our Lady of Sorrows School; Tuesday in Harrison High School; Wednesday in North Farmington High School and Thursday in Farmington High School.

Winchester comes to the area through the speaker's bureau formed by Nancy Heagan in her national program for fighting drug abuse among the young.

His visit was initiated by Farmington Families in Action (FFIA) and is funded by that organization and Farmington Public Schools.

WINCHESTER's visit is the most expansive project to date undertaken by the less-than-one-year-old FFIA.

"Our goal is to spread the word on alcohol and marijuana to both parents and the youth, telling the damage it can do," said Betty Nicolay, FFIA's president.

'Our goal is to spread the word on alcohol and marijuana to both parents and youth and the damage it can do. We believe that police are here to protect; the teachers are here to teach; and the parents should be knowing what their kids are doing.'

— Betty Nicolay

"We believe that police are here to protect; the teachers are here to teach and the parents should be knowing what their kids are doing," she said of the organization's philosophy.

"We are not judgmental and we don't give therapy or treatments. Our thrust is in dispensing information and education."

The format comes from one of the first successful anti-drug groups that came to national attention, started in Atlanta, Ga., by parents whose children were hurt physically, mentally or emotionally by drug abuse.

"They were people who were not going to rely on the schools, the church, the police or any other agency to take care of their kids. They realized their hope was in doing it themselves by being as well informed and educated on the problem as possible," Nicolay said.

NICOLAY, who has served as a volunteer for the community in several

areas, notably on task forces for Farmington Public Schools, says taking on the responsibility for being FFIA's first president has taken on the proportions of a full-time, 40-hour-a-week job.

Even so, it has carried its fringe benefits.

She singles out the Round Tables in the three public high schools as giving her one of her biggest bonuses to date.

"It was these students who came to us; asked us for a noted speaker to come into the schools," she said. "They approached us with an offer of a fundraiser to help pay for the cost of the speaker. I think that was the time when we all had first realized that we were indeed spreading the word."

She has also seen the group grow from a membership of five to 162.

"While our parent group was formed of only those who had been touched severely by drugs or alcohol abuse, this is not so with other groups that have been formed since, or with ours."

"Maybe some members have had a

had experience. I'm not sure, but all of them are very dedicated to this, willing to give time and money to work for the good of the entire community," she said.

IN HER TERM as president, in addition to overseeing the general membership and a 10-member board, Nicolay has accomplished the formation of "school teams" to combat drug abuse.

Four parents from each school form the team to get speakers, movies, or programs as they can for their particular school, generally working through a PTO or PTA.

"These people are not necessarily members of FFIA," she said, "so that makes maybe another 100 parents we have involved in spreading the word."

FFIA was brought into being at the initiation of Jane Williams, through her work with teens at Farmington Area Advisory Council, and the Rev. William Ritter, pastor for Nardin Park United Methodist Church, and his concern over the problem.

In conversation, Nicolay rarely uses the words "substance abuse." She is much more likely to say "alcohol abuse" or "marijuana abuse."

She explains, "That's because those are the two that are most prevalent in the area. We don't have any local statistics. We don't know how many parents use public agencies or how many use private doctors or clinics for this problem."

"But we do know national statistics, and we do know we're pretty average here," she said.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Betty Nicolay talks about her job as Farmington Families in Action president, the organization's philosophy and the speaker the group will bring to area schools next month. The Nicolay family's dog is Maggie.

Helping hands

Tribute benefits Arab, Israeli tots

the Allied Jewish Campaign's Project Renewal," Leemon said proudly.

At noon, Thursday (today) a tribute luncheon honoring Leemon will take place at Congregation Beth Achim, 21100 12 Mile, Southfield.

In addition to honoring Leemon, a resident of Farmington Hills, the event will allow members and friends of Pioneer Women Na'amat to meet a pledge

to match the funds contributed by the Leemon Family. A contribution to the building fund is necessary for admission.

"My husband is the principal contributor," Leemon said. "But the Labor Council in Ramle and Pioneer Women Na'amat are part of it."

BEIT FRIEDA started out as a 50-child center, but the need has grown and so has the facility, already accommodating 100 children, 6 months to 5 years of age.

"Centers like this are a must in an economy where it takes a minimum of two breadwinners to support a family," Leemon said. "It's located near the aircraft industry of Israel and makes it possible for parents to drop off their kids and go to work."

Leemon says the purpose of the organization is the advancement of women, so day care is vital.

"The first project of Pioneer Women 60 years ago was four training farms in Israel," she said. "In 1925 we built our first day-care center. It's got some bullet holes in it, but it's still standing and in use for Arab and Jewish children."

Leemon, who has made countless trips to Israel and was national president of her organization from 1977 to 1981, says her happiest times in Israel are visiting the day-care centers.

"I enjoy looking at the faces of the children and seeing them eat a nice, nourishing meal. It makes me feel, in a special way, that I've become an instrument of good for Arab and Jewish children."

BORN in Poland, Leemon was brought to this country at age 1. After a short stay in Hoboken, N.J., her family came to Detroit. She was educated

here, graduating from Northwestern High School.

"In 1932 in high school, they asked if I was college prep," she said. "At the time I was happy to have a whole pair of shoes and I opted to take a clerical course."

Later, she made up the entrance deficiencies in night school and two years after high school graduation, entered Wayne University, eventually earning a degree in sociology.

She met her husband in Hebrew school. Like her husband and his father, long known as Lawyer Leemon in this area, their children are attorneys, and two are married to attorneys.

Leemon runs an Orthodox Jewish home just like the one she grew up in. "My mother had a wall-to-wall collection of charity boxes, mostly Zionistically oriented," she said.

"I have been a Zionist since age 6 when I put my first two cents in the Jewish National Fund box at Hebrew School."

In the early days of her marriage, she was a donor but not a joiner. Eventually, she did join the Aviva Chapter of Pioneer Women. "I became president because I was the only one not pregnant," she said. She continued in the leadership of the organization from that time.

Beit Frieda, already in operation, will be dedicated late in June. Leemon, her husband and a number of family members will attend the opening and also visit the high school in Lod, Israel, that Pioneer Women named for her when she left office.

At the tribute event in Southfield, members will do a "This Is Your Life" program for Leemon, bringing in family, friends and neighbors from long ago.

There may be some surprises, but none to equal the birthday gift of a child-care center that Leemon's husband gave and her Pioneer Women Na'amat colleagues are supporting.

Frieda Leemon



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Holy Cross repeats millionaire's party

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church of Farmington Hills will be hosting its annual Millionaire's and Bingo Party from 6 p.m. to midnight Sunday, April 1, in Vladimir's, 26125 Grand River.

This year will offer an expanded version of "Golden Bingo" where all the prizes will be 14 carat jewelry. A

prominent handwriting analyst will also be back, as well as the gambling games in previous years.

For the gamblers, there will be craps tables and the Las Vegas roulette table. Refreshments will be available.

Tickets at the door are \$2 and include a chance to win a \$1,000 bill as the grand prize of the evening.

Olympics of the Mind winners move to next step in competition

Recently spectators watched Farmington students, elementary through high school age, participate in mental competition called the Olympics of the Mind. The OM program, sponsored by FACET (Farmington Association for Children with Exceptional Talents), is designed to encourage creative problem-solving experience for students of all ages.

This was the third year the OM competition had been held in the Farmington area and it included teams representing Larkshire, Longacre, Flanders, Kenbrook, Beechview, Forest, Eagle, William Grace Elementary Schools; East, Power and Dunkel Middle Schools; and Farmington, North Farmington and Harrison High Schools.

Competition included the presentation of the teams' solutions to long term problems which required many

weeks of diligent work by each team's five members. Another portion of the competition included spontaneous problem-solving in which participants were given a specified period to produce as many solutions to hypothetical problems as possible.

Brainstorming is an important part of the teams' training for both portions of the competition. From these exercises came possible solutions to be designed, tested, refined and re-tested. The long term problems this year included Chariots of Rescue, Camelot, Moby Dick, Strategy Structure and Mouse Mobile Relay.

The winners of the Farmington Competition representing the above schools will now move on to the regional competition, set for Saturday in Oakland Community College, Auburn Heights campus. The event is open to guests without charge.

OCC dinner theater served Roman style

An evening of food and musical comedy will be presented Saturday, April 7, and Friday, April 13, at the Smith Theatre on Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in association with the Culinary Arts Department.

The musical, "A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum," written by Stephen Sondheim begins at 8 p.m. with the dinner, served by OCC's Culinary Arts Department commencing at 6:30 p.m. Wine will be available and paid reservations must be received one week prior to the show.

"Forum" is a bawdy yet sophisticated look at Roman comedy, complete with pranks, disguises, slapstick and witty songs. A live orchestra, under the direction of Paul Ferris, adds to the evening's festivities. The dance sequences have been staged by director, Jamie Mason and choreographed by Joe Neal of the Harbinger Dance Company.

Non-dinner tickets are also available on both evenings, with additional performances scheduled for April 6, 12

and 14 at 8 p.m. and a matinee Sunday, April 8, at 2 p.m.

For reservations and information, phone the box office at 471-7700.

'1984' staged by Drama Club

St. Mary's College drama club, Skaga, is presenting the drama "1984" based on George Orwell's famous novel, Friday through Sunday, March 30, 31 and April 1; Wednesday, April 4, and Friday, April 6.

A dinner-theater setting of the performance is offered March 31 and April 1. Tickets are \$17 for the performance and dinner. Reservations in advance are necessary for the dinner which begins at 6 p.m.

All other performances will begin at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$5. For further information, call 662-4124.