

Ms. Senior Michigan runner-up stays trim

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

people

Jo Melekian was named first runner-up in the Ms. Senior Michigan Pageant this fall. She credits that win, in large part, to a regimen of dancing, exercising and walking, which keeps her trim and fit.

Melekian puts a class through their exercise paces three times a week at the Farmington Hills Senior Adult Center, takes several dance classes there every week from senior adult specialist Maggie Loradis, gives belly dancing lessons in her Franklin home and walks four to five miles a day.

Belly dancing performances are common. The most recent was a spot in "Footlight Follies," a variety show at Birmingham Seaham High School staged in November as a benefit for St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Pontiac.

But performing in a pageant was a first.

"It was my first time in a pageant and never again," she said. "The preparation took too much time. The competition was tough, but that really speaks very well for the women who are over 60 today."

"These are the women who have a purpose in life. They are not aging, they are just getting better. They are the ones who know that aging is a matter of mind over matter; if you don't mind it doesn't matter."

"They've all found a cause that is greater than themselves, and then they work at it."

THE MOST dominant of several causes Melekian works at these

days involves her mother, an 84-year-old woman who is her best advertisement on the benefits of exercise.

"My mother was living alone in an apartment, not cooking or eating right, getting weaker every day and going downhill fast," she said.

"The whole situation reversed itself when I got her into Marion Oakland-West (in Farmington Hills) and then my exercise classes. At Marion, she's eating right. In my classes, she keeps up with all, and I mean all, the low-impact exercises."

"She has made new friends, is fully functional and dependent on me only for transportation. It is a complete reversal of what the situation was two years ago."

Another cause is her affiliation with Southeastern Michigan Hospice in Southfield. Melekian is a retired registered nurse who gives hospice care to the terminally ill in their home.

"I give hands-on hospice care," she said. "While I'm there, I don't just sit there and talk. I'm giving a bath, doing hair, nails, feet."

"Oh, talking is important. Sometimes, the patient needs to get up the courage to die and you can help with that, or they need permission to die. Sometimes, I just bring out that they want to make amends with someone."

"I've been the intermediary for bringing a whole family together. You can't do it sometimes, but it has happened, and that is truly get-



RANDY BORST/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jo Melekian conducts an exercise class at Mercy Center in Farmington Hills.

ting more back than whatever it is you give.

"In the case of dying patients, the more we talk the more I get and that has never failed," she said.

ONE OF the questions Melekian was asked in the pageant is what she regretted most in her life.

"That was a hard one, but I finally answered that it was never going back to school," she said.

"All of my (five) children are college graduates and I thought

about getting a degree in gerontology, and once in a while, I take a class on care of the aged at Madonna College (in Livonia), but that's where it stops."

"There are always too many other things going on."

The "too many other things" include volunteer work at St. Regis Catholic Church in Birmingham and at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center-Marillac Hall in Farmington Hills. It also includes operating her own small business.

"I do some work at West Bloomfield Nursing Home, I've made lay-

ettes, packed toys and baskets, just do whatever is needed that is on the list that I can do," she said.

Melekian sells Non-Scents, a natural rock deodorant, and home water purifiers.

Just recently, she completed a cable TV show for MetroVision on the quality of America's drinking water.

"I was the producer, wrote the scripts, was the TV hostess to four panelists, and the show turned out very, very well," she said.

Blight-fight funds eyed by Hills

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tions of less than \$10,000 (annually) with another way to get the work done."

He said the city's affluence also plays a part.

AT THE city council meeting Nov. 20, councilwoman JoAnne McShane questioned the extent of the city's advertising and the city's identification of problems.

"We're kind of like a referral agency for a lot of others," said Robert Deadman, city manager. "You could be right, we might need better advertising."

The city's agreement to receive CBDG funds runs through Dec. 31, 1991 or until projects begun are completed.

Under the agreement, the city has adopted a three-year plan for the period ending April 30, 1991. Each year, the city must submit an application to the county describing the specific projects that will be undertaken in carrying out the plan.

The plan, adopted by council on Aug. 17, 1987, was based on a yearly grant of \$34,701. Council planned to allocate \$27,201 to support the downtown development program and \$7,500 to home improvement loans.

THE MOST recent estimate of the grant amount is \$39,146 for 1990-91. Farmington administration plans to continue with the three-year plan and allocate the 1990-91 block grant as \$21,646 to downtown development and \$17,500 to home improvement.

The community block grant program has been in existence in Farmington since 1975.

Farmington residents are eligible for low-interest home improvement loans from CBDG funds administered by Oakland County. Since 1985, county funds went toward a total of eight home improvement projects, Schultz said.

Post office makes plans for holidays

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"Consistent with local customer needs, post office window and collection service will continue during the Christmas period as usual or be increased," Farmington Postmaster Kenneth Harris said.

Harris said the postal service intends to clear from its office by Saturday, Dec. 23, all classes of mail available in time to meet year-round

service standards.

On Christmas day, Monday, Dec. 25, and on New Year's Day, Monday, Jan. 1, all offices will be closed so that as many postal employees as possible may spend the holidays with their families. But Special Delivery service will be provided on these days, along with the deliveries of Express Mail and perishables.

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December

CALENDAR

of
events

This week at Jacobson's in Laurel Park Place in Livonia... a series of events that include something for everyone in a gift or fashion mood. Please join us on Wednesday and Thursday.

DECEMBER 6 Spring 1990 Bis Collection in our Clarewood shop for the fuller figure woman who lives in and loves young fashions.
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

11 a.m.-4 p.m. Designer Andrew Downs with his collection, an informal showing of the latest in holiday and resort loungewear in our Intimate Apparel shop

Noon-8 p.m. Mikimoto cultured pearl show in our Fine Jewelry Salon. An opportunity to select gifts of astounding symmetry and subtle colorings. Loose strands of pearls can be easily made to any length you request. Finished jewelry in combinations of 14K and 18K gold, diamonds and other precious stones

DECEMBER 7 Family Night...you and your family are invited to spend a festive evening with us. We'll have talented magician Mike Thornton in the Children's Shop, and elves with treats for the kids. From 7 to 8 p.m., learn new accessorizing tricks at a scarf-tying demonstration. At 7:30 p.m., you'll be charmed by the Churchill High School Chorations dancing and singing performance, followed by a strolling choir from 8 to 8:30 p.m. It promises to be a memorable evening, with wonderful things going on everywhere. And, a reminder for the children...you have until December 9 to mail your Santa letter in our special North Pole mailbox.

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