

Clown helps in egg hunt



Gentry as "Wacko, the no-frown clown."

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George and Barbara Bush — along with Dan and Marilyn Quayle — are scheduled to be part of this year's festivities, along with "Wacko" and her colleagues.

"We'll do magic tricks, tell stories and just help the kids have a good time," said Gentry. "I'm really looking forward to it."

Clowning as a profession never seemed like an option when she was earning a bachelor's and master's degrees from Central Michigan University, Gentry said. She was intent on a career in marketing and promotion before taking a class in clowning two years ago.

"Then I got hooked," she said. And the career switch was easy. Gentry said she's learned many of the tools of the trade needed to be a successful clown. She can juggle, sculpture balloons, perform magic and convey messages with mime.

But the most gratifying aspect of clowning, she said, "was making people laugh. Making them feel good."

ASSUMING THE PERSONA of Wacko was easy after she realized the emotion a clown, any clown, can generate.

"People will stand in line to hug a clown," she said.

But clowning around is pretty serious stuff, Gentry said. She regularly attends clown camps — like those at Michigan State University in 1991 — and is a member in organizations like the International Shrine Clown Association.

It also involves traveling. She's been part of the Thanksgiving Parade in Detroit, commented the U.S. Bill of Rights in Richmond, Va., and enjoyed the Sarasota International Circus Festival in Florida.

Last year Gentry participated in the Livonia "Clown Day" (where she won first place for her white face costume) and last weekend she helped induct five new members into the Clown Hall of Fame in Delevan, Wis.

But her most rewarding clown role is likely still ahead, Gentry said.

"In two weeks I'll be visiting my two grandchildren (ages 5 and 3) in South Carolina," she said. "They've never seen me as a clown that should be some challenge."



Mary Lee Gentry as a quiet, efficient secretary.

Helen Cope, 102, was active in church

obituaries

Helen Gibson Cope, a retired social worker and active Farmington church woman, died in her sleep on April 5 in Greenwich, Conn., at the home of her daughter- and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Barber. She was 102.

Mrs. Cope was born in Detroit on Nov. 2, 1889, the second child of Dr. Edward Bradford Gibson and Ann McDonald Gibson. She graduated from the University of Michigan in 1912. She later returned to the University and was awarded a master's degree in social work in 1937.

In 1925, Mrs. Cope joined the Detroit Department of Public Welfare where she served as a case worker and supervisor for 25 years, retiring in 1951.

In 1952, she moved with her husband to Farmington Township, where she was active in the First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, Church Women United (President, 1951-55), the American Association

of University Women (President of the Farmington Chapter), the League of Women Voters, the English speaking Union, the Metropolitan Opera Association, the Art Institute Founders Club, the Women's Republican Club and the Area Council for the Aged.

AT AGE 88, she served as a Senior Intern in the office of Sen. Robert Griffin in Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Cope enjoyed good health and continued her many interests in Connecticut where she moved in 1984, a few years after the death of her husband, Edge Taylor Cope, III.

In November 1989 she celebrated

her 100th birthday with a dinner dance for family and friends. Her old brother flew from Los Angeles to have the first dance.

She celebrated her 102nd birthday with a family party at the Big Apple Circus in New York.

Mrs. Cope took a lifelong pleasure in travel, with a special interest in social and political issues. With her husband, she visited Europe, the Middle East, Alaska and Australia, and New Zealand.

In her later years she traveled to Egypt, Peru Mexico, up the Orinoco River in Venezuela and in her 98th year enjoyed a barge trip in France.

Mrs. Cope is survived by a daughter, Lois Barber of Greenwich; a stepdaughter, Frances Cope Seymour of Upper Montclair, N.J.; a stepson, Robert E. Cope of Phoenix, Ariz., 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

A memorial service for Mrs. Cope will be held at the First Presbyterian Church in Farmington at 2 p.m. Tuesday, April 12.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the First Presbyterian Church, or to the University of Michigan Alumni Fund, Ann Arbor.

JULIA A. ABEL

Mrs. Abel, 89, of Farmington Hills, died April 12.

Mrs. Abel, born in Detroit, was a member of St. Fabian Catholic Church in Farmington Hills. Survivors include daughter, Patricia Giza of Farmington Hills; son, Richard Abel of Salt Lake City; three grandchildren, Leanne Giza, Leslie and Julie Abel, one great-grandchild, T.J.

Services were Tuesday at the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Norbert V. Kendzierski officiating. Burial was at Grand Lawn Cemetery. Memorials may be sent to the American Cancer Society.

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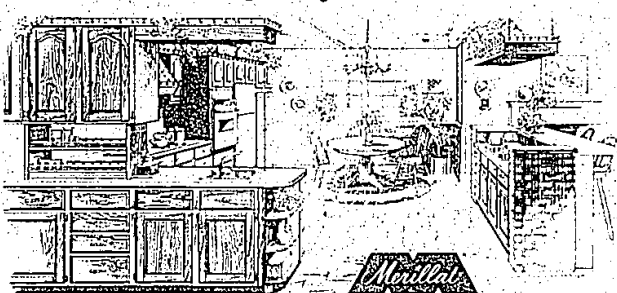
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