

Camp from page 1C

guesses the 11-year-old. "Right! It's called a cocktail fork," she says, before moving on to stemware identification and napkin-folding.

Welcome to Camp Somerset, where skin cleansers and pivot turns replace beadcraft and swimming in six weekly classes for aspiring models and students of good grooming.

Yes, that Somerset, the chi chi Troy shopping mall with upscale tenants and shoppers to match, where charm school classes are re-packaged into a summer camp format and campers lug totes full of grooming products to and from class.

"It was campy and fun," said director Vicki Howard, explaining the day camp concept that includes lessons in etiquette, table settings, skin care, grooming, make-up and modeling through Aug. 15.

The Saturday morning campers, aged 6-12, aren't sold on the gimmicky title, but have bought the charm school idea faster than anyone at the mall can say "cash or charge."

Ten-year-old cousins Tameshia and Lydia McCarty, Detroit, nor-

mally roller skate or swim on pleasant summer days, but learning color-coordination and manicuring have their price.

"I just wanted to take this to learn to model and walk and color coordinate and put together wardrobe and make-up," Lydia said.

"I thought it would be fun. Maybe when we grow up we can have a part-time job as a model," Tameshia added, pointing out "But I already know how to set the table and fold napkins."

Matthew Kruczynski, 6, Westland, spent hours doing "homework" the first day of class.

"I think he'll retain a good portion of what he learned because when he got home, he laid out all of the samples they gave him and showed my husband and son. He played with it and fixed his hair all night," said his mother, Cindy.

"Spending a Saturday morning doesn't take much time to learn a little poise and etiquette," she added.

That's how Katie Cooper, 11, Bloomfield Hills, felt about spending part of her summer weekends indoors. She figured the advice would come in handy if she pursues

modeling. If she doesn't, she'll pass the tips along to her own children some day.

"If it's traditional I want to use it," she said.

Even youngsters who complained about classes ("My mom made me come here") showed grace under parental pressure.

Alex Vajda and his sister, Victoria, took two hours from Hillsdale to attend the 90-minute sessions because their mother, Mistella, believes children who want to "break the rules must know them first."

Both eagerly showed off their knowledge of formal table settings, napkin-folding, food serving, and gender-focused rules of etiquette during classes.

"It's always nice to know the proper way. I like the stability. It's very important. It comes in handy when you have a choice," Mistella Vajda said. "And I believe in keeping kids busy. This is a wonderful thing in the summer to do."

Howard said many of the camp's 77 students, (age 6-18), signed up because of a parent's prompting, but seemed to enjoy the sessions anyway. A handful are serious about modeling and some want in-

struction in grooming and poise.

"When I was young I went to Wendy Ward charm school. I went because I wanted to go," she recalled.

Classes were more rigid in those days, with students learning set routines, specific turns and walking techniques that included balancing a book on the head. White-gloved etiquette spelled out rigid gender roles in rules for everything from buying theater tickets to opening the car door.

Although Howard takes a more informal approach ("I try to teach in a relaxed and giving environment") some of the old guidelines and gender stereotypes have stuck.

When etiquette coach Carlene Jones asked youngsters "Which side of the sidewalk does the gentleman walk on?" Alex was quick to respond with "Closest to the street."

"He should be on the outside so if a car runs off the road and onto the sidewalk, he's there like Superman to protect you," Jones explained.

Howard admits that three decades of the women's rights movement have changed the way people view traditional rules of etiquette.



JIM RIEBER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Polish and Poise: Modeling is more than just walking. Elizabeth Cotsenica, 11, Troy; Melanie Heitmann, 10, Bloomfield Hills; Elena Armenteros, 10, Detroit, and Jessica Bartos, 9, Oak Park, demonstrate the difference at Somerset Collection, Troy.

"If the man opens the car door, is that a feminist thing to argue or not? We had a couple of older guys who said that (opening car doors) might be kind of durkey," Howard said.

But etiquette is just a small part of one session. Howard said the grooming, wardrobe and modeling classes boost self-esteem and give aspiring actors and models a taste of the business.

"They feel good and it's a good way to make friends," she added. "The older kids will retain it all. The younger ones will pick up on what's interesting."

For Hillary Goltson, 7, Detroit, that included unlocking the mysteries of silverware, including table-scrapping crumblers.

"I really didn't know much about that and I always wondered why people carried that thing in their pockets," she mused. "I thought it was an ink pen."



Etiquette expert: Alex Vajda, 11, of Hillsdale impresses Adrian Lark with his knowledge of formal table settings.

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FASHION CALENDAR

FRIDAY, AUG. 7

Saks Fifth Avenue
Anne Klein Autumn '92 Collection in Designer Salon, second floor, Saks Fifth Avenue-Troy. Also, Barakat Fine Jewelry Collection in Fine Jewelry, first floor, through Saturday, Aug. 8.

Neiman Marcus
Frank Olive personal appearance noon to 4 p.m. in Fashion Accessories at Neiman Marcus at Somerset Collection in Troy. Judith Leibler personal appearance noon to 3 p.m. in Leather Accessories. Jhane Barnes personal appearance noon to 4 p.m. in Men's Sportswear. Ike Behar personal appearance noon to 4 p.m. in Men's Furnishings. David and Sybil Yurman personal appearance noon to 3 p.m. at David Yurman Signature Boutique in Designer Collections, Level One. Lee Brevard personal appearance and trunk show 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Fashion Jewelry, through Saturday, Aug. 8. Scarf-tying demonstration noon to 4 p.m. at Boutique de Monde d'Hermes in Designer Collections, Level One. Ellen Tracy Stock Show noon to 4 p.m. in Career Sportswear.

SATURDAY, AUG. 8

Special shows
Giuliana Teso Stock Show noon to 4 p.m. through Sunday, Aug. 9, in Fur Salon at Neiman Marcus at Somerset Collection in Troy. Nautica Trunk Show noon to 4 p.m. in Children's World.

MONDAY, AUG. 10

Headpiece designer
Custom-designed headpieces by Barb's Bridal Designs at Every Bride's Mother, 555 S. Woodward, Birmingham.

Trunk show
Giorgio Armani Bourgonova Trunk Show 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. through Tuesday, Aug. 11, in Couture Salon at Neiman Marcus at Somerset Collection in Troy.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 12

Anniversary tea
25th Anniversary Celebration, with formal reception and tea, 2-5 p.m., second floor, at Saks Fifth Avenue-Troy.

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