

'Success in excess' stifles senior ed program

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

An area program to stimulate senior citizens through education is suffering from "a success in excess," according to its publicity chairwoman.

West Bloomfield resident Grace Janisz (pronounced Yahn-ish) is a charter member and devotee of the Adult Learning Institute, but laments the necessity to limit membership to 100 as the elbow room to expand remains elusive.

College, which provides space for the institute, has moved the studios seniors from the lobby in the Smith Theatre to the less commodious confines of a room in the building called J on the Farmington Hills campus.

Campus President George Keith said the move was necessary because the theater lobby is an awkward place to conduct classes with other people walking about and furniture to be moved to and fro.

Janisz doesn't blame OCC, but said the institute board of directors will nevertheless be forced to limit membership because fewer folks will fit into the smaller room. "We have more people than we can handle," Janisz said. "And we'll have to cut (membership) off at 100."

In the most recent session of the institute last September and October, 125 area seniors were enrolled, although no more than half ever showed up for any one class, Janisz said. That same number of individuals would cramp sessions in the smaller room.

The institute, Janisz said, provides an important service to sen-

iors (65 and up in this case) who find themselves asea in the wake of retirement.

"We have thrown a lifeline to people who are climbing the walls," she said. "After the first three weeks of fishing, what does a man do? Not everyone goes to Florida." Don Speyer was one of those. The Bloomfield Hills resident was accustomed to hard work and long hours in a corporate climate as a vice president of Bendix Corp. Consequently, retirement was a vast change.

Speyer recalls the classes he attended last fall where the history

of Mexico and Yugoslavia were taught by volunteer instructors, which is the only sort of instructor the institute employs.

It's important to him, Speyer said, to sustain the "mental challenge, to continue learning and continue to grow. If I sat at home I probably wouldn't explore."

The institute, in existence since 1991, is quite loosely structured. For example, there were 20 classes, study circles and discussion groups last fall, each centered

around a topic of interest. Members, who paid \$50 each to join, were welcome to attend any or all of the classes and events. No grades or course credits are given. People learn as much or as little as they like.

Topics included an insider's guide to Washington D.C., taught by an aide to U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, children's rights, taught by a Wayne State University pro-

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If you have someone at home suffering from Alzheimer's, what happens to her if you become so worn out that you can't function effectively? What happens to her if you become so exhausted, you get sick? After all, your own health and welfare are critically important and must be protected. This message is for you.

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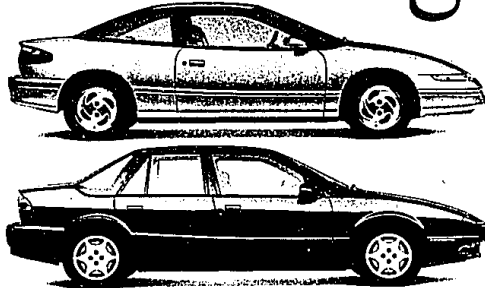
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