



STAFF PHOTOS BY AON HEALEY

Give a 'C': A police woman by profession and a cheerleader coach during her off hours, Chris Guinan watches over the junior varsity cheerleaders. At left, the Farmington High varsity and junior varsity cheerleaders show Coach Guinan a cheer they plan to use at a pep rally.



The cheerleader coach is a cop

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Somehow, Jack Webb wouldn't sound quite right saying: "My name is Friday. I wear a badge . . . I coach cheerleaders."

TV's cop missed out on a good routine, though.

Farmington police detective and Farmington High cheerleading coach Christine Guinan has found there's something beyond the frills of a shaking pompon and shrills of girls' voices on Friday nights.

Her association with puff and pageantry has helped kids open up to her. That makes her job as school liaison officer all the more rewarding.

"Kids come up and relate to me more," said Guinan, who became a cheerleading coach last year. "They don't see me as the mean police officer, the typical stereotype."

She's there at school football and basketball games. She gets to

meet all the students, not just the ones in trouble.

Some of it's small talk.

Girls will tell her about boyfriends; Boys will tell her about girlfriends. They'll explain how things are going at home.

Sometimes, it's more serious: questions about date rape or thoughts of suicide. When something is going down, or someone is acting up, she hears about that, too.

Farmington High principal James Myers and counselor Robert Crawfords asked Guinan to help coach the cheer teams, suggesting kids would more likely see her more as a person than a police officer.

Guinan was a cheerleader at Chelsea High, where she graduated in 1982. She'd never coached cheerleading before, but decided to give it a try.

During the summer, Guinan had them running, doing sit-ups and other exercises to get in

shape.

"They weren't used to that," Guinan said.

She has been Farmington High's school liaison officer for 2 1/2 years.

The detail involves speaking to classes on traffic, drug use and searches and seizures. The officer is onsite two days of week to meet with students and answer questions.

The mere mention of police around teens evokes fear or wariness, prompting some who would rather approach a grizzly bear carrying a bag of marshmallows than an officer.

Leading cheerleaders has helped changed that. Guinan is not necessarily there to bust them, but to trust them.

"If they have low self-esteem and if they have family problems, they'll act out — fighting, using drugs," Guinan said. "If they have someone there to say, 'You'll be OK. I'm behind you.' They're

more likely to get help."

Counseling comes natural. Guinan majored in psychology and criminal justice at Grand Valley State University.

She worked in a juvenile home before joining the Farmington police. She's been on the force 6 1/2 years.

With her school job, Guinan has to squeeze in her other work. She is one of two detectives in the coasting crime scenes, interviewing witnesses, seeking warrants and testifying.

Guinan is preparing for the Raymond Ponke murder trial, the city's first homicide in 15 years, which starts next week in Oakland County Circuit Court.

The transition from the role of detective to cheerleading coach has been tough at times.

"At first it was really hard. They were calling me by my first name in school," she said. "I had to tell them not to do that."

Death

from page 1A

Sharon Misch had a hard time describing what her son Joe was like as she looked over pictures of him spread out over the dining room table in her Farmington Hills home Tuesday.

Her 14-year-old, who died tragically from an accidental gun shot to the head, had done a lot of living in his short life.

"He did everything," she said. "Joe had a passion for living, loving and having fun."

And the pictures bore her out. There was the picture of the Redford Catholic Central student with the deer he shot with a bow and arrow last year. There were others of him fishing, golfing, water skiing, hot dogging on the ski slopes out west, and playing hockey.

"He really had a great sense of humor," she said. "And he always helped me around the house. He'd play with his 4-year-old sister (Jenna), and carry her on his shoulders."

That picture of life has left the family and police at a loss as to how the teen accidentally killed himself.

"It continues to be an open investigation," said Farmington Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer. "But we have no thoughts that there is anything criminal about this or that it was a suicide. We're treating this as a very tragic, unfortunate accident."

Police said Joseph Paul Misch was staying, along with his sisters Kelly, 15, and his sister Jenna, 4, at their father's house on River Bend over the Labor Day weekend. Their parents are divorced and the children, including another daughter, Lindsey, 13, live with their mother.



Accident victim: Police believe that the death of 14-year-old Joseph Misch was a "tragic accident." They have ruled out suicide and foul play.

Joe Misch and a friend, 13, who was staying overnight, had found three unloaded hand guns, owned by Joe's father, Paul, in a gun case on a high shelf in the basement, the friend told police.

They then looked upstairs and found a single bullet for one of the guns, a 38-caliber revolver, loaded it into the weapon at about 1 a.m. Sunday, left it in a night stand and went to sleep.

Joe Misch woke up his friend at about 7:30 a.m. and was "joking around" with the gun, and held it to his head while the two were seated on a bed. It fired.

After the friend called 911, firefighters, police and an ambulance arrived at the scene.

The teen was taken to Botaford General Hospital and then was

air-lifted to the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor where he died Monday night at 8.

His mother said she could not have asked for a better son, or one with a better sense of humor.

"He had a way of making dreams come true," she said. "One of his hockey buddies at the hospital said, 'Joe must have had to go because I got too boring in heaven.'"

Funeral arrangements are being handled by the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington. The Misch family asks that memorial contributions be made to the Joe Misch Memorial Scholarship Fund and Redford Catholic Central.

Jury selection starts in Ponke case

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Jury selection could begin today for a man accused of the bludgeoning murder of his estranged wife with a hammer.

Raymond Ponke, 40, is charged with first degree murder in the death of Jackie Ponke, who was killed Jan. 8 while she worked in a Farmington dental office. He is being held without bond in Oakland County Jail.

Trial is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 13, before Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Jessica Co-

per.

A motion by the prosecution to strike use of an insanity defense was denied Aug. 31. Judge Cooper, in a separate ruling, granted defense use of expert witnesses, at state expense, up to \$3,000.

Jackie Ponke's family successfully sued to have Raymond Ponke's assets frozen. As a result, his attorneys have not been paid.

"We're giving him the best defense we possibly can," said Timothy Ash.

A doctor was flown in from Bos-

ton to test Raymond Ponke for Huntington's Chorea, which is a mental illness. Ponke underwent three hours of testing Friday.

Ponke has a family history of Huntington's, attorneys said during pre-trial hearings.

Jackie Ponke, 30, a Farmington High graduate, died from massive head injuries after being struck several times with a hammer. Raymond Ponke surrendered to police at the scene without incident.

It was Farmington's first homicide in 15 years.

Jacobson's

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FOR THE 2ND WEEK OF SEPTEMBER '94

Here are events happening in our Livonia store for the second week of September.

September 6	Starting today, enjoy our new expanded hours: 10am - 9pm (Monday through Friday), 10am - 6pm on Saturday. And 12noon - 5pm on Sunday.
September 8	(7:00pm) The J Shop Fashion Show. This will be modeled by the 1994-1995 J Board, who represent 12 local high schools. See what everyone will be wearing for school this year. (10-4pm) Searle Coat Collection Show. Believe it or not, it's coat season again. Get there first and get first pick. (4-8pm) Peter Nygard Pettites Fall Collections Show. With a special wardrobe seminar at 6:30pm.
September 9	Clinique White Lightening Event. Quick color makeovers. Cosmetics Department. (10-4pm) Platinum Collection Show. Signature. (10-5pm) Kasper Dress Collection Show. Get a sneak preview of the latest career styles. Misses Dresses. (12-3pm) Janie Friend from Crane & Company will be here to answer any questions you have regarding personalized stationery, wedding invitations, even etiquette. Stationery Department. (11-3pm) M&M Designs Artist. Demonstrating hand-painted furniture designs. A great way to decorate your kid's room. Children's.
September 10	(10-4pm) It's the Homecoming Fashion Event. Shop for that perfect homecoming dress. And register it so that no one else arrives at the dance with your dress. (10-4pm) Sanyo Coat Collection Show. (10-4pm) KGR Separates Collection Show. (10-4pm) Theo Miles Knits Collection Show. Formal fashion show at 2:00pm. (10-4pm) Valentino and Senca Collection Show. Men's Department. (10-4pm) Sweater Carven. Beautiful hand knit sweaters for fall. Collection Sportswear. (11-3pm) Bordes/Kaiser Cookware and Barware Demonstration. You can never have too many gadgets or entertaining toys. (12-4pm) J Board Mannequin Modeling. (12-4pm) Cole Haan Men's Footwear Collection Show. Good for the feet, great for the soul. (1-3pm) Billy Bones Barbecue Ribs Demonstration. The best part about this is the taste testing afterward.

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