egacy from page A1

CELEBRATE

een sticking up yourself, and hy in God's name you would do mething like that!

semething like that!"
With a child's understanding,
Alistin said, she thought only of
her father's command that what
happened between them be kept
usecmt. It also never occurred to

JEWTERY

2(18):356-7007.

her that the doctor may have told her mother someone else was responsible for the abuse. When she was around 7, Austin vaguely remembers her mother asking whether Daddy had ever touched her where he shouldn't." But aside from that,

she suffered in silence, leaving home every night from the age of 10 to avoid her father's advances.

"I still wont to the same school, and I sneaked in (to the house) to take a shower," she

She learned recently that when her father couldn't find her, he abused her younger brother.

Surviving

At age 14, Austin moved in with another family, but her father didn't step trying to molest her until she was 16 or 17, she said. Through all those years, though reople may have suspected trouble, no one reported it.

suspected trouble, no one reported it.

From what Austin has seen, not much is different today,

"I find so many things have not changed, she said. "We talk about it, but we don't do anything about it.

It's often difficult for survivors to get connected with help, Austin said. While they may need therapy, some who have spoken with her can't afford it.

HAVEN, an Oakland County agency that provides services for victims of abuse and family vicinece, can provide help for those in need — everything from counseling to crise intervention.

Public relations coordinator Pam Callahan said people often think of HAVEN only in terms of domestic violence. However, the agency can prove a valuable agency can prove a valuable resource for incest survivors and "We talk to the spouses who say 'I do' to somebody and they

letter, Mergener, in California on business, said he did not feel comfortable doing so over the telephone and would rather do

don't know they have these issues," she said. "We can help them understand what this person may be going through."

With satellite offices in Farmington, Rochester Hills. Southfold and three locations in Pontiac, HAVEN serves families throughout the county. Through its crisis and support line, (240) 334-1274, the agency can connect survivors with the kind of help that Austin received.

"You don't even need to be in crisis," Callahan stressed. You can just talk to somebody about your issues."

The results

The results

The results

Married for the second time
just last year, Austin has begun
to speak publicly about her life.
Her husband, a computer technician, is assigned to projects all
across the country, and wherever
they go, abe tries to find a place
to share her experiences.

While others may find her
childhood the stuff of nightmares, to her it was simply her
life. She has learned from it and
grown, as has one of her younger

grown, as has one of her younger brothers, now a homicide detec-

tive.

Her oldest and the youngest brothers have experienced dramatic after-effects. Given pseudonyms in the book, both have suffered psychological damage. The oldest has paranoid

delusions and literally hides from his family. The youngest lived at home even as an adult, losing his long-time love because his mother opposed their mar-

his mother opposed their mar-riage.

Karen's life was no walk in the park, either. Though multiple personality disorder and anorex-ia followed into her adult life, she holds no grudges. Instead, she focuses on sharing her story and working as an advocate for child abuse awareness.

"My focus is not to place blame. My focus is on prevent-ing," she said, "Most people don't want to hurt their kids. They get stressed out and they don't know how to cope.

how to cope."

Instead of judging parents who Instead of judging parents who hurt their children, Austin believes people should put more energy into helping through par-enting classes, relieving stress and providing emotional sup-

port.
"I'm very much into forgiveness and bringing families back together," she said, "because until the day you die, no matter what, you want to reconcile with your family."

For a care of Austin's book.

your family."
For a copy of Austin's book,
Blind Trust: A child's legacy,"
contact her at (248) 427-0675 or
by e-mail at Karenaustin⊕ mindspring.com.

Race from page A1

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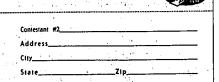
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so in a face-to-face meeting.

He did say, however, that his concerns are "all documented meetings, with action or inaction in black and white."

What began "as an isolated incident here or there, ... became a pattorn, he said, adding that the whole matter turned into a "very frustreiting experience."

Mergener emphasized the recent publicity over whether fifth graders should watch a video about sexual harassment did not play a role in his decidid not play a role in his deci-

sion.

"I viewed it long and hard and gave it very serious consideration," said Mergener, about running in the board race. But my fear was, I didn't want my message to be distorted into a self-

rving political agenda." Brouillette, who is president of

FARMINGTON SCHOOLS

the school board, Friday afternoon said she was ready for "the
scrutiny and added discussion
that a challenger brings to the
election. But I hope Mr. Mergenor's decision to withdraw represents cenfidence in the work
Gary Sharp and I are doing."
The lack of a contested race
apparently won't alter how the
coming campaign.
"We're both very active in the
community and we certainly are
available to answer any concerns
and questions people may have,"
Brouillette said.

Do Social Situations Make You Nervous?

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. (3) T, 6-9 p.m.

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