

CHAT ROOM



Theresa George

Technical help aids cyber cops

With the Internet growing so rapidly, the opportunity for Internet criminal exploitation is growing, too. The Internet gives pedophiles an excellent vehicle to get in touch with unsuspecting children.

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 30 percent of children use the Internet unsupervised. This isn't happening only at home. According to a study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and National Public Radio, 63 percent of children ages 10-17 have access to the Internet through schools, and more than 80 percent of these youths say they surf the Internet while at school.

While some surf for entertainment, an increasing number are going on line to communicate with others, thus opening the door for sexual predators. Since 1998, Wayne County's Internet Crime Task Force, led by Sheriff Robert Ficano, has been active in the policing and prosecution of cyber crimes such as criminal sexual conduct against children, child pornography, credit card fraud, illicit drug sales and security breaches.

Internet stings

The sheriff's department has arrested more Internet criminals than any other agency in Michigan. To date, 41 Internet-related arrests have been made. During these stings, undercover officers pose on line as children to catch potential predators. After numerous chat sessions, the undercover officer arranges a meeting place with the criminal where he is then arrested.

Key members of Ficano's Internet Crime Task Force include Deputy Chief of Staff Ralph Kinney and Executive Director Henry Buffa, who also served in the Oakland County Sheriff's Department for 10 years. From 1988-98, Buffa served as a traffic department deputy and was elevated to undersheriff under John Nichols from 1993-98.

To strengthen the cyber policing team, Ficano has enlisted the technical expertise of companies such as Farmington Hills-based Michigan Heritage Bank, Big Net, EDS and Comerica. These companies will provide \$500,000 in manpower, high-speed equipment and technical assistance as members of the Internet Crime Task Force. On Feb. 27, 14 business executives were sworn in as task force commissioners.

Educating everyone about the danger of Internet predators is crucial, said Michigan Heritage Bank President Tony Albanese, who has been appointed task force chairman. The familiarity of computers in the home and schools can create a false sense of security. It is the task force's goal to teach parents the importance of monitoring children's Internet time and to have them alert their kids that people they chat with in cyberspace could be adults pretending to be kids.

In addition to the task force's efforts to make everyone aware of Internet crime, these cyber officers plan to take their efforts national. In conjunction with other law enforcement groups, the Internet Crime Task Force has conducted investigations in Florida, South Carolina, California and parts of Canada. The task force plans to establish a national Internet crime research and investigation center in Detroit.

So cyber creeps, be warned! Internet cops, corporate commissioners and parents are on patrol. If you intend to prey on children, you will be caught and held accountable!

Theresa George is public relations director of The Marketing Source in Livonia.

JET presents new Anne Frank play

In celebration of Detroit's 300th birthday, Jewish Ensemble Theatre (JET) presents *The Diary of Anne Frank*, newly adapted by Wendy Kesselman, at the Masonic Temple.

School performances are 10 a.m. Monday to Friday, March 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23; and beginning at 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays March 13 and 20. These are for groups; but individual tickets can be purchased. Cost is \$5. Call Mary Davis at 248-788-2900.

Hot, spicy chili cook-off a winner

The annual Chili Cook-off co-sponsored by the Miss Farmington pageant and Youth & Family Services named a winner Sunday at Pages.

By MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER

The chili was hot and the reception warm Sunday afternoon, as the 6th annual Chili Cook-off at Pages Food & Spirits drew a full house to the downtown Farmington eatery.

"This is the official kickoff event for the year," said Jera Haglund, Miss Farmington pageant financial chair.

The cook-off is co-sponsored by the Miss Farmington pageant and Farmington Hills Youth and Family Services. Proceeds were earmarked for the city owned Civic Theatre.

First time entrant Tom Smith won the competition, judged by a panel that included U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, who jotted down his favorites on a paper napkin. A host of local officials and citizens also helped narrow down the field.

"The winner's secret was in the onions and garlic," said Ginny Morris, pageant executive director and cook-off organizer.

For \$5 apiece, patrons could taste each variety (17 paid entry fees for the competition although there were just 11 chilis to sample), vote on a favorite, and get entered in a raffle which featured several prizes, from dinners in local restaurants to gift baskets from Farmington Bakery and DeB's Crafts.

"It's just great how this event brings officials from both cities, schools and the public together in a friendly, informal afternoon," said Morris, who also praised host Dennis Page for making

his restaurant available each year to host the event. The first Sunday in March 2002 has already been reserved for the 7th annual Chili Cook-off.

The People's Choice award was a tie between an entry from Farmington Hills Children Youth and Family Services department and Maureen McRae, wife of Farmington Hills councilman Chris McRae. Like Smith, she was a first time entrant.

Farmington businesswoman Deb Watson, also a first-time entrant, donated a dozen gift packages for raffle prizes.

Cultural Arts Coordinator Nancy Counandour, as a first time judge, gallantly made her way through the almost dozen entries.

"It's nice to see the variety," she said. "There are some great cooks in Farmington."

Green and spicy

There were two green chilis deemed "very spicy" by judges, as well as a white chili, and a sausage based entry.

Patrick Watts, a general contractor and Farmington Hills resident, said the broad range of entries made it difficult to choose a clear favorite.

"The broad range of distinct chilis are all a little different, and all very good. It's hard to narrow it down," said Watts, who judged last year, too.

Another second-time judge, Bob Reboty, assistant to the Farmington Hills fire chief, brought his wife, Leslie, along to help narrow down the choices.

"It's a lot of fun and a good fund-raiser," said Reboty.

Farmington Hills Councilwoman Vicky Barnett, another first time entrant, said "love" was her secret ingredient. She shared a table with Hills Mayor Nancy Bates, who won the competition three years ago for a chili that combined Polish sausage and chicken.

"I decided to retire from the contest with grace," she added.

Reigning Miss Farmington Angela



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLEY

Corsi was a hostess along with 2001 pageant contestants Francesca Romeo and Brooke Brennan.

Pages and neighboring restaurant, The Pasta Shop, also had entries again this year.

Farmington Councilwoman Mary Bush, Councilman Arnie Campbell and his wife, Betsy, Mayor Bill Hartsock and School Superintendent Bob Maxfield were among the tasters.

Top Chill: Tom Smith of Farmington Hills took first place in the 6th annual Chili Cookoff Sunday afternoon at Pages Food & Spirits. Proceeds from the event, co-sponsored by the Miss Farmington pageant and Youth & Family Services, will go to the city owned Civic Theatre. The People's Choice was a tie.

Judges included John Davis, Michigan Architect of the Year, Chris Gaidica (brother of weather forecaster Chuck), and William Grace Elementary Principal Mark Marowski.

Besides DeB's Crafts and Farmington Bakery, raffle prizes were donated by Papa John's Pizza of Farmington and Corsi's restaurant in Livonia.

Syrian Catholics build new church

By MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER

Before year's end, parishioners of St. Toma Syrian Catholic Church will worship in a new building under construction on the southeast corner of 11 Mile and Drake roads in Farmington Hills.

The \$2.5 million project designed by the Bingham Farms architectural firm of GAV Associates Inc. will feature a church and social hall as well as two adjoining meeting rooms.

Ghassan Abdelnour, principal architect, described the project as "a small church set on a 12 1/2 acre site. It will be nice and simple, not overwhelming."

Ground was broken on the project five months ago and the expected completion date is November 2001, he said. This church replaces the original building at 13 Mile and Farmington roads, which has since been sold by its owner.

According to a spokesman for the Archdiocese of Detroit, St. Toma is part of the Eastern Church Syrian Diocese of Our Lady of Deliverance in Union City, N.J.

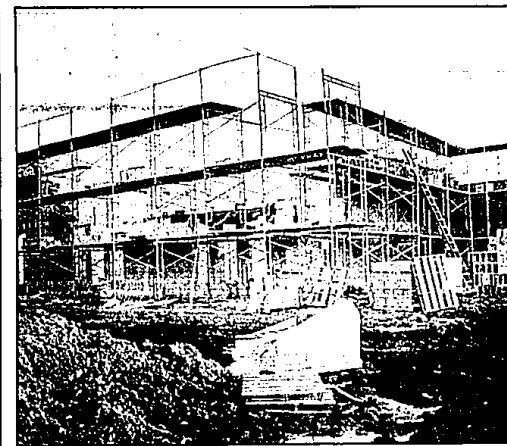
"They are in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church but under the jurisdiction of their individual bishop for the Syrian Diocese," said Richard Laskos, a spokesman for the Detroit Archdiocese.

"The congregation was getting bigger," explained the architect, Abdelnour. "They needed more room."

The new church will be able to accommodate 430 worshippers and the adjoining social hall will have a capacity of 470 visitors.

It will be a modern building constructed of off-white brick with a more flat brown roof and a large Rosary window in the front. General contractor for the 23,000-square-foot facility is Kalabat Construction of West Bloomfield.

"It will be open more to the landscaping," Abdelnour said. "A retention pond in the rear will be kept as well most of the trees on the site. We're adding more trees to the lot. We have worked well with the city and with the congregation and hopefully everyone will be happy with the results."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLEY

Under construction: St. Toma is rising from a muddy construction site at 11 Mile and Drake roads in Farmington Hills.

Authors tackle common parenting pitfalls

This is Part Two of an interview Marilyn Suttle conducted recently with Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, authors of a popular series of books on parenting.

What do you do when you're out in public and a younger child misbehaves and won't listen to you?

Faber: I hear how unhappy you are. Pick them up and get them out of there. Afterwards you can deal with it. End the shopping trip, and take them home.

Mazlish: Children cry and have tantrums. It's because children are childish, that's why adults have to be adultish. When I took my 7-year-old son, John, for sneakers, he ran around the store. The shoe man was busy helping other people. I gave John a choice. I said, "You can sit down and wait for the man and read your book or we can leave. You decide." He ran around and ran around and I took him by the hand. I said, "You decided to leave." He cried, "But I want my sneakers!" I said, "There will be another time, but not today."

Do you find choice is an effective parenting tool?

Faber: It is. In Poland, a mother said they stood in the line for food and her kid was crying and screaming and

pulling on her skirt. Normally she would have said, "Marsha, if you do that any more, you are going to get a beating when you get home," but she had just taken the course and she said "Marsha, you can hold my hand and talk to me or you can sing me a song. Choose." Marsha chose!

Why do children respond so well to choice?

Faber: That's because it's so profoundly respectful. It says, you can't do everything you want, but here are some options and it's up to you to pick them. It's a very basic skill, and it's not a manipulative thing. It's, I'm on your side.

Mazlish: I think it really comes from the knowledge that we can empower children. Children who feel empowered are much less likely to act out. One of the reasons kids have temper tantrums is, little kids have very little power. And by the way, when people get very old and their power is taken away, there is a reason why they say return to second childhood. Again, it's the loss of power. Whatever we can do as a choice, giving the child the choice is a lovely way of empowering them.

When is writing a note a helpful parenting tool?

Faber: I think it's important to have

stacks of paper and pencils all over the house. Kids really respond to the written word. Anything you want to say, know that if you put it in writing it has a thousand times more power and kids appreciate it so much.

What are the pitfalls that parents should avoid when writing notes?

Mazlish: Never say anything negative in a note. "You are stupid. That was a dumb thing you did and I am furious."

Faber: If the language in the note is offensive, then the note will be something like, ugh, who wants to go near that and have to be poisoned again. But if a note is done with a little sense of style, it's really helpful.

Can parents really change their relationship with their children by using the skills in your book?

Faber: You don't do it in one fell swoop. If you write the note, you describe the problem, you listen, you don't put them in a role, you help them get out of a role, you praise descriptive, the whole thing begins to add up to a really caring, loving, wonderful relationship. When you're thrown off course, which we are because families are like that, and temporarily there is always a catastrophe, it's as Dr. Haim Ginnett used to say, "Our humanity

begins when we deal well after the catastrophe and we know how to get back on track. There is a way a time to say, 'Hey, I didn't like what happened yesterday. You were upset. I was upset. We've got to make sure this doesn't happen again. I need your help.' We know how to recover and we know how to be upset with each other and we know how to work productively with each other. Can you even begin to imagine what would happen to the divorce rate in this country if people started relating to each other this way?



Marilyn Suttle

Marilyn Suttle brings skill building workshops like the How to Talk class to corporate and educational settings. Reach her at MsSuttle@aol.com or visit her web site: <http://member.aol.com/MsSuttle>.