

## CHAT ROOM



ELLEN HERSCHER

## Computer adds new dimensions to busy lifestyles

I walked into my study, glanced toward the computer desk and shook my head.

The top of the desk was completely hidden by crudely organized stacks of paper with colorful little sticky notes poking out from all sides. Someone else might view it as a wasteful pile of rubble, rather than the treasure of useful, invaluable information that I have accumulated through use of the Internet.

It has reached the point where I must categorize and file the vast library of data or I will no longer be able to operate my computer.

Pushing the chair away from my desk, I began moving great mounds of paper from the desktop to the floor, placing neat groups of material all across the room. Mind you, I have not even begun to read subject or title; it is most important that I can first see the desk and have a sense of tidiness.

Some of the sticky notes fell to the floor, which makes my project a bit more difficult. Any of you with computers know exactly what is going on here and those of you who don't have computers can be happy that you aren't faced with such chaos.

### Simplifying tasks

In one way, computers make tasks simpler, such as keeping track of finances, creating a database of addresses (very helpful when sending out Christmas cards), compiling endless "to-do" lists, and researching infinite volumes of knowledge and trivia on anything in which you have an interest.

Because it would be impossible to retain all facts and data that I find, I often print out the results of my searches, which has generated literally thousands of pages, over a period of time. I won't tell you that a computer is always a time-saver, for I spend many hours inputting things that will make life "easier." Also, I devote entire days to reading, sorting, and alphabetizing articles that then have to be 3-hole-punched and stored in binders.

If you want to know where the fish are biting in Minnesota and at what depth, I can tell you. In less than five minutes, I can even supply you with a detailed map from your door to the lakeshore. Do you want to know what bait shops and restaurants are near that lake? No problem! One can access anything, anytime, anywhere - virtually 24 hours a day, with a few clicks on the keyboard and the touch of a button. The accelerated research and instant results compel me to spend far more time at the computer than I would looking up facts in an encyclopedia, and there is undeniably more detail.

### Less calling

My telephone bill has dropped dramatically, since I can e-mail messages to relatives and friends, in several states and countries, including Hawaii and Germany. Every day, I can be assured of a good laugh from a joke someone has forwarded to me; however, it is not uncommon to receive as many as 20 a day and it does take time to read and respond to all. Still, it's nice to know that I am remembered.

Do computers make life easier? Maybe it would be more accurate to say computers engender the probability for life to be more interesting, exciting, enlightening and sociable. It is still ambiguous as to whether life is "easier." When my computer crashes, which isn't often, I think the world has come to an end. It's right up there with having a car that won't start when you have an important engagement. If choosing between my television and my computer, the computer would unequivocally prevail.

Ellen Herscher is a Farmington Hills resident.

## Come chat with us

The Chat Room column is open to all residents of Farmington and Farmington Hills. Got a story to share? We'd like to hear it. For more information, call Mary Rodrique at (248) 477-5450.

■ The Sisterhood of Adat Shalom sponsored Hiddur Mitzvah - Celebrating the Holidays in Style in preparation for Rosh Hoshanah and Yom Kippur.

By MARY RODRIQUE  
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With Rosh Hashanah, or Jewish New Year Sept. 18, about 100 members of the Sisterhood of Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills got into the holiday spirit at the 2nd annual Hiddur Mitzvah last Tuesday.

The day-long event included viewing a stunning roomful of elegant holiday table settings decorated by synagogue members on 20 themes ranging from Hanukkah to Passover and Purim.

Canadian Jewish cookbook author Norene Gilletz demonstrated her recipes for pesto with whitefish, minilattes with zucchini and a spinach-orange salad with honey mustard dressing.

Workshops on setting pretty table linens by Nancy Zide, leaf paint decorating with Sharon Bass, and how to serve a proper tea presented by Fiona Palmer of Fiona's Tea House in Detroit rounded out the offerings. Between sessions, patrons could shop at a boutique with vendors offering everything from jewelry to books to pot supplies.

### Introspection

Setting the tone for the day was Lynn Scheele Nevins, wife of Rabbi Daniel Nevins, with an explanation of the 10-day period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, or Day of Atonement.

"We're called upon for extra introspection," she said about the traditional period of repentance. "To turn away from sin and toward righteousness."

She had the crowd perform a religious exercise. Each person wrote down a way to improve their relationship with God on one sheet of paper, a way to improve a relationship with another person on a second sheet. Then she read them aloud: listening to others, not spreading gossip, reconnecting with friends, more patience with children.

"Create your own family rituals including a religious exercise," she urged.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL DADLER



Display: At left, Sisterhood co-presidents Janis Holzman and Linda Warner stand near Susie Barr's Hanukkah Celebration table. Above, one of 20 elegantly set tables at Adat Shalom. Below, a docent gives a guided tour of the holiday tables.

Norene Gilletz, author of kosher cookbooks *Second Helpings Please* and *Melkon/Yummy* admitted "Jewish cooking can be a challenge: to cook healthy plus the restrictions on ingredients. You learn to be more creative."

Her posts for example used less oil, substituting tomato juice for some of the liquid. A tip for roasted chicken: season underneath the skin. After roasting time, remove the skin before eating. Another tip: use Idaho potatoes for latkes "because they have the perfect starch content. New potatoes are great for potato salad."

This fall, she'll publish a new cookbook *The Food Processor Bible*.

"Use my recipes as a springboard and experiment a little bit," she suggested.

Rochelle Perlman and Hannah Monique Ulysch were event chairwomen.



## Bye Bye Birdie on North stage tonight

A lot of song, a lot of dance - the 7th annual Farmington Schools Community musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*, will be staged at 7:30 p.m. tonight through Saturday, Sept. 6-8 in the North Farmington High School auditorium, 32900 W. 13 Mile.

"We get whole families involved - mom, dad and kids together," said Sue Cobb, who with husband Dean Cobb organized the joint school-community production. Students from North, Harrison and Farmington high schools have lead roles. Kids from the International School and International Academy also have roles this year.

"At first, I did this because Harrison (High) didn't do a musical," said Sue Cobb, who is production assistant for TV10 at North Farmington High. "This would give their kids a chance to get involved. Of course, now they do musicals."

But the concept grew in popularity. The first year, Cobb reports, 32 hopefuls auditioned for the production and "everyone got a part." Now, the annual play draws 100 would-be actors to auditions.

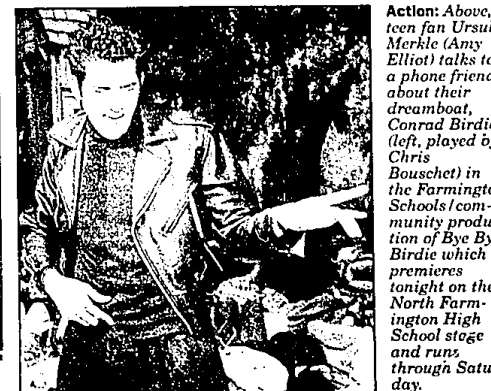
Dean Cobb is telecommunications coordinator for the Farmington school district and teaches TV intern courses at North. Both Dean and Sue Cobb also oversee the theatrical productions at North.

"One lady who has been instrumental is our choreographer, Lucy Kovach," said Sue Cobb. "She puts time, energy and sweat into it."

By involving members of the community, Cobb says it's possible to get "age correct" actors for roles.

*Bye Bye Birdie* is loosely based on the story of teen idol Elvis Presley being drafted into the Army. A few of the more notable tunes include "Put On A Happy Face," "Kids, What's The Matter With Kids," and "Rosie."

Cobb said tickets remain for tonight's program, but are almost sold out for Friday and Saturday evenings. Ticket prices are \$8 for students and seniors (age 60 and over) and \$10 for adults. All seats are reserved and will be on sale through the box office, which opens at 6:30 p.m. Call (248) 426-4740.



Action: Above, teen fan Ursula Merkle (Amy Elliot) talks to a phone friend about their dreamboat, Conrad Birdie (left, played by Chris Bouschet) in the Farmington Schools community production of *Bye Bye Birdie* which premieres tonight on the North Farmington High School stage and runs through Saturday.



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Wow: "Conrad Birdie is coming to kiss me" Kim Macafee (Lisa Levick) tells her mom Doris (played by Janet Vogel).