

Scarf brings back memories, inspires acts of kindness

I brushed a thin veil of dust from the top of the box as I retrieved it from the back of my closet. More long-forgotten items for the garage sale, I thought. But, I was wrong. While rummaging through the box, I felt some oddly familiar soft material and drew it toward me. As the long, faded green scarf came into view, a flood of fond memories followed.

I was given this scarf 23 years ago by a woman in France who had not only opened her home, but her heart, to me

PAY IT FORWARD

This woman, known to me simply as "Madame," had a grown son, who was away at college. Perhaps, this was one of the reasons why she and her husband decided to share their living quarters and their lives with two university students each summer. I was lucky enough to be one of them.

Madame was extremely kind and patient. In addition to caring for "les étrangers," she also baby-sat two precocious 5-year-

olds during the day. At times, I know she had trouble differentiating between the two groups. But, she spoiled us anyway. Each evening she prepared cuisine with wonderfully exotic-sounding names like "brioche" and "pin." Then she would sit back and delight in our reactions, knowing she had done all she could to educate two very unsophisticated American palates. I can still picture her giggling at my failed attempts to properly dissect and eat an "arichaut" (artichoke).

One chilly day, as I was head-

ing toward the front door, unable to suppress a coughing fit, she stopped me.

"Pour le rhume," she said, handing me the green scarf. I nodded in comprehension and gratefully wrapped the warm length of cotton around my neck.

Since that time, I have experienced many acts of kindness. But, I'll always be thankful for Madame's generous spirit and her many little gestures of goodwill. She never treated me like an innocent abroad.

As a student, my mission was

to learn something about the language and culture. Unfortunately, I am still not fluent in French. However, I did learn one very valuable lesson: an act of kindness needs no translation.

Because of Madame, I will never again feel like a stranger in France - or anywhere else my travels take me. People all over the world respond to kindness.

That is why the scarf now hangs on a peg in my hallway. It is good to remember past acts of kindness - mostly as a

reminder to do a good deed for someone today.

-Karen C., Farmington Hills

Has someone said a kind word or done a good deed that touched your heart and made your day brighter? Please take a few minutes to share your story with others.

Stories may be submitted by mail to 3341 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335; by FAX to (248) 477-9722; or via e-mail to hubred@oe.homecomm.net or to the Commission on Children, Youth and Families at cyl@farmib.org

District names new special education director

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STATE WRITER

A veteran Clarkston Community Schools administrator has been named the new special education director for Farmington Public Schools.

Patricia Brumback, assistant superintendent in Clarkston and also a Clarkston resident, was appointed by the board at its regular meeting Tuesday, July 16. She replaces Interim director Lynn Noelke, who handled special education since Jan Richards retired in June, 2001.

"I'm very grateful to have this appointment and look forward to getting to know the community," Brumback said after she was appointed.

While with Clarkston, Brumback supervised administrative staff and the operations of the 2,300-student high school. With Farmington, she will oversee a special education program that services 1,495 students.

Brumback is working toward a doctorate in educational administration from Wayne State University. She earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Michigan State University, and completed other degree work at Oakland University.

Superintendent Bob Maxfield said that he was impressed with Brumback's work with SCAMP, which provides a summer camp experience for students with disabilities.

"Pat has enjoyed a long and distinguished career with the Clarkston schools," Maxfield said.

Some highlights of Brumback's career with Clarkston:

- 1998 to present, assistant superintendent
- 1996-1998 director of student support services
- 1994-1996 director of special education
- 1993-1994, administrative supervisor/autism
- 1992-1994, teacher consultant
- 1979-1992, teacher, general and special education

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(248) 477-5450

City seeks nature donations

Are you sick and tired of dusting that old mounted lugernouth bass, caught by Uncle Harry in 1950? The City of Farmington Hills is presently constructing a nature center at Heritage Park and is asking for donations of Michigan related items.

Mounted animals and fish, rock collections, nature books, or any other nature items in good condition will be accepted for display.

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