



Anxiety can cause obsessive behavior

Anxiety can take on different forms. Some of the types of anxiety disorders are generalized anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and panic disorder. Another prevalent type of anxiety disorder is obsessive compulsive disorder.

Obsessive compulsive disorder has received more widespread attention in the media and from the general public during recent years. Previously it was thought to be more of a rare condition than it really is.

In the movie, "As Good As It Gets," starring Jack Nicholson, a classical condition of obsessive compulsive disorder was displayed. The film's main character was full of fears of germs and contamination and had many rituals such as never stepping on a crack and bringing his own plastic silverware in a sanitary plastic bag to restaurants to eat meals with.

The eccentricity displayed by the movie may have seemed, to some, as though fun was being poked at people who have this disorder. Actually, the Anxiety Disorders Association of America recognized Nicholson's portrayal of the obsessive compulsive disorder and awarded him for it at its yearly convention.

OBSESSIONS

Obsessions are ideas, thoughts, or images in one's mind that are senseless, serve no obvious purpose, and continue even though one may try to ignore them. They are unpleasant and may provoke anxiety, guilt, and shame.

The most common obsessions are concerns that objects or other people might be contaminated with germs, dirt, or disease. Other obsessive thoughts focus on fears that doors or windows may have been left unlocked or an appliance has been left on, and so forth.

Obsessions can take many forms. They are an excessive preoccupation which cause a person significant distress and take up excessive amounts of time, which interferes with more efficient, day-to-day functioning. For the obsessive individual the unpleasant emotions associated with their thoughts is way out of proportion with any actual risk of danger or harm.

COMPULSIONS

Compulsions are repetitive behaviors, sometimes called rituals. Common ones are hand washing, ordering objects in a certain way, checking and rechecking things, and repeating words silently. The goal of compulsions like these is to reduce anxiety associated with the obsessional thoughts behind the compulsion.

For example, individuals with obsessions about being contaminated by germs may reduce their mental distress by washing their hands until their skin is raw. They might wash dozens of times per day.

Typically, they know there is something unusual about this but cannot keep their behaviors in check. Similarly, an individual distressed by obsessional wor-

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Positive attitude



Lifelong Farmington resident plans to keep dance students busy

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Lifelong Farmington resident Laurie Smalis plans many surprises for her students at her recently opened Positive Attitude Dance Academy.

"I want to keep the students busy and involved," Smalis said.

The dance studio is located at 23317 Orchard Lake Road, in a shopping center just north of Shawwassee Road in Farmington. It's located in the former Peter Nielsen Total Fitness site.

Classes begin Sept. 9, and there's no upper age limit for those who want to learn. Young students must be at least three years old and potty-trained.

"I love teaching all ages," Smalis said. "I've always wanted my own dance studio," Smalis said.

Smalis began dancing when she was four years old and has more than 20 years of experience as an instructor. She's studied with well-known local instructors like Virginia Dickerman and Evelyn Kreason.

Because dance studios often invite celebrity dancers for workshops, Smalis has taken lessons from nationally-known dance instructors like Savion Glover, Peg Leg Bates, and Fred Kelly, Gene's brother.

"He (Fred) was 83 years old and incredible," she said.

Smalis further expanded her expertise with Cholly Atkins, Motown choreographer for the Supremes and Temptations. She also has experience in theatre and art.

The dance academy will focus on fostering high



PHOTOS BY BILL DRESLER | OBSERVER

Above, Farmington native Laurie Smalis is living her dream with the opening of her new dance studio. Various kinds of dance instruction, as well as fencing, are now being offered at the studio.

self-esteem among its students, which include girls, boys and adults. It will offer beginner to advanced lessons in ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical, hip hop, musical theatre, modern dance and salsa. The instructional year will end in June with a special recital performance at Smith Theater, located on the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

"We will have a circus theme," Smalis said.

OPEN AUDITIONS

Smalis plans open, area-wide auditions for a special holiday performance of "Peter and the Wolf" with excerpts from the Nutcracker Ballet at Smith Theater. Trudy Daniels of WRIF will be the celebrity narrator.

Enrollment as a Positive Attitude Dance Academy student isn't necessary, Smalis said.

"There's some parts in it for people who have had acting experience," she said. "It's a very professional type of production."

The auditions will be held Sept. 15 for an end of December performance. Call Smalis at (248) 476-2099 for more information.

FENCING CLASSES

The studio will also host classes in the sport and

art of fencing, demonstrated recently by Herb Dobbs of Farmington and his daughter, Olivia, 11, who attends Power Middle School in Farmington. Dobbs will teach fencing classes on Saturdays at the studio. He recommends students be between 8-11 years old to begin.

Dobbs previously taught at the Lakeshore YMCA in Grosse Pointe. He's fenced since age 10. "My first lessons were at a Detroit YMCA on the east side," Dobbs said. "It's something which came pretty naturally to me. It was athletic and combative. The idea of fencing is to hit the other person but not get hit."

Three varieties of fencing include foil, epee and saber. "They differ in terms of where your score hits on the body," Dobbs said.

Fencing can take a lifetime of learning to develop sophistication. "Teachers say the first year is for swashbuckling," Dobbs said.

Fencing teaches you to think sharply and to think on your feet, Smalis said.

Outfits are sold either in mail order catalogs or online. "They aren't sold in retail stores," Dobbs said.

A mask, a jacket, a foil and a glove cost about \$160. For competition outfits, the cost can rise to \$500.

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Making happy faces

Celebrity masks raise money for Hospice of Michigan

BY JULIE YOLLES
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The bidding for Hospice of Michigan's Celebrity Mask Silent Auction was anything but silent last week.

In fact, the bidding frenzy over General Motors North America Chairman Robert A. Lutz's hand-painted mask was so intense that the auction went live and personal on Aug. 22. In the end, the good-natured, heated contest between Compuware Executive Vice President Denise Knoblock and Dow Automotive Global Vice President of Communications Tim Nasso resulted in Nasso being the ultimate victor.

But the real victor of the evening was Hospice of Michigan, the second largest non-profit hospice in the county, which serves more than 900 patients a day in lower Michigan. More than 225 Hospice of Michigan donors and supporters attended the Celebrity Mask strolling cocktail reception, held at the Southfield Town Center Garden Atrium. The reception was part of the Mask Project 2 Traveling Exhibit, which

began on Memorial Day in Ludington, and continued to Fremont, Big Rapids, Southfield and, now, on to Grand Rapids where the project will culminate at the Masquerade ball on Oct. 26.

Thursday's event netted \$14,000 for Hospice of Michigan, exceeding Hospice's expectations. Lutz's mask went for Nasso's highest bid of the evening, \$3,000.

Arrived with a paint kit and white clay mask, entertainers such as Janet Jackson, Kid Rock, the Barenaked Ladies and Cher; community and political leaders, such as former president Gerald Ford; sports figures such as Johnny Bench, Mary Lou Retton and the U.S. Women's National Volleyball Team; plus other newsmakers, tackled their creations with zeal. Over the year, the masks have gone on the silent-auction block at the five Hospice of Michigan locations and, beginning on Sept. 10 and running through Oct. 25, you can go online to eBay to bid on many of these masks. For a preview, check out www.hom.org.

Though Lutz said as a kid he used to draw cars all the time, which often dis-



PHOTO BY ROCK SMITH/ECCENTRIC

Dottie Deremo, president and chief executive officer of Hospice of Michigan and a Farmington Hills resident, admires the mask created by General Motors North America Chairman Robert Lutz, of Ann Arbor. Lutz painted his L-39 fighter jet.

tracted him from his schoolwork, he chose to paint a replica of his own L-39 fighter jet that he keeps at Willow Run Airport for his mask subject.

"Airplanes and flying are my passion, so I wanted to paint something I like," said Lutz, who spent about six hours, over two days, meticulously painting his mask while on vacation in Switzerland.

"But there was no red paint included in the kit they sent me, so I had to go to an art store in St. Moritz for the final

touch," added the details man.

While there are a total of 300 masks up for auction during this year's traveling Mask Project 2, 50 were on display at the Southfield Town Center exhibit. Local notables who painted a mask or who had an artist paint one on behalf of them included former U of M Head Football Coach, Bo Schembechler; media personalities Dick Purtan,

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