

Time moves quickly during Miss Farmington's reign

As autumn falls upon us, we are drawn closer and closer to the holiday season.

Time seems to move a little faster and there is always one more thing to do on the "to do" list. This holds true for every one of us, including myself during my reign as Miss Farmington/Oakland County.



Kelly's Korner

Kelly Zander

home on weekends to represent our community and occasional weekday trips after class for special events, such as the Farmington City Council meeting, makes life seem like a whirlwind.

But I remain steadfast to the enjoyment of this position. Every event, every new face I meet, and every second is an amazing opportunity and a stepping stone of my life.

Earlier in September I spent the

evening at the Farmington Hills Police Department Benevolent Association's Eighth Annual Golf Classic held at the Links of Novi. The money raised from golfing, the live and silent auctions, and the raffle went to family members of deceased police officers and firefighters. I enjoyed speaking with both the police officers and firefighters who attended and selling tickets for the raffle. The fund-raiser was a success and raised about \$135,000.

The Heritage Festival at the Costick Center was a culturally enriching event that I enjoyed and learned so much from. Many unique cultures were displayed, cuisine from all over the world were available, and a variety of ethnic music resonated throughout the halls of the center. It was wonderful to see the diversity of our town at this great event.

On Oct. 5, Farmington Hills was proud to host the first annual Miss Teen Michigan Pageant. This was a fund-raiser for the Miss America program scholarships. The show was put on impressively at the Costick Center

and all the young ladies involved were very beautiful, smart and talented. I enjoyed sitting in the audience and watching, although during the talent competitions I did have the urge to borrow a pair of tap shoes and jump up onto the stage. The new Miss Teen Michigan title is held by a very enthusiastic young lady named Sarah Ledtke. I would also like to congratulate Chelsea Swanderski for representing Farmington and winning first runner-up.

We had a gorgeous day for the Fire Department Open House. It was wonderful to see so many people from our community and their children coming to learn fire safety from our firefighters. We have a dedicated team of firefighters in our community and it's always great to recognize them for what they do for us.

I'd like to give a pat on the back to the Girl Scouts from East Middle School who worked so hard doing yard work on Make a Difference Day. They worked together to weed the yard of the Masonic Temple, rake leaves, plant tulip bulbs, and plant

new trees and bushes. We all got our hands dirty and filled up on hot chocolate, but in the end it was a job well done.

That same day I also made a visit to the Costick Center to listen to the Community Band. It was delightful to hear familiar songs played by a full band. I also enjoyed seeing all the wonderful and creative Halloween costumes the children attending wore. Near the end of the program I had the chance to lead the children in a parade of costumes around the band.

We all know how important our community is to us, but I have two communities now, one here in Farmington and one in East Lansing at Michigan State. In furthering my platform, I have begun mentoring at school as well. I am participating in a service learning project with a local elementary school. The first-grade class that I work with is so full of life which makes it a pleasure to help out and mentor. I spend about five hours a week with the students at Red Cedar Elementary School.

Along with this project I am an active member of a new mentoring program called A.P.P.L.E. This program allows our small group to go into local high schools and work with and motivate students toward higher education. We have currently been working with students from Eastern High School. I find it very encouraging that they intend to further their education after high school.

Now it is up to us, the mentors of A.P.P.L.E., to help them find resources that will lead them to their destination of choice. Scholarship searches, tutoring help, and college advice are just a few things we do for these students.

In the months ahead I am looking forward to the holiday season. I will be visiting Canterbury Village for the arrival of Santa Claus, working with William Grace Elementary School in Farmington Hills on a mentoring program, and beginning my interview preparation for Miss Michigan. So, until next time, never stop lending a helping hand.

O'DONOHUE

FROM PAGE C5

knows the first one is a guinea pig. As a new mom, you worry about everything. Every rash, hiccup, burp, cold, ear infection, diaper rash.

When they go to school, you worry about the fact your kid can't spell "Constantinople" when everyone else can, or that

they're always on the verge of flunking their timed math tests. You worry that they won't have friends, then that they won't have the right kind of friends, then that they have too many friends and you can't keep track of them all.

You worry with that first pubertal crack of the voice, the overnight growth spurt and that sudden, sudden, if-looks-could-kill glance that you have somehow done everything wrong in the first 13 years. You

wonder where your precious baby went or the carefree toddler that you cherished reading books on Mom's lap before nap time. When your child hits the teen wall, you wonder if things will ever be the same. (They won't.)

When child No. 2 starts eating everything in sight, cites among his hobbies "girls," and begins to sport a mustache, you tentatively realize you've been here before, that it's not entirely unknown territory.

You know that, for now, teen No. 1 is stable, so it's OK for No. 2 to go a little off the deep end.

You can just about smell testosterone in the air on the cusp of your third child's adolescence. By now you understand much more about the distance-making, the looks, the moods. You have learned when to yell, to be quiet, and to retire to the bathroom and cry silently. You know that all you have done in the past has

gone into this obstinate, wonderful creature whom you now scold while looking upward.

CHALLENGES

Somehow, you come to know what it really means to pick your battles. Some days, you can see not only the little child your teen once was, but you may also catch a quick glance of the man he will become. Shivers and goose bumps follow.

You observe biceps where skinny arms once were, thick hair on the legs that used to bear nothing but bruises and skinned, bandaged knees. It doesn't escape your notice that this child is now a head taller than his younger sibling, though three short months ago they were the same size.

You encounter someone you've not quite known before, someone who now has private thoughts he no longer shares, ideas he forms all by himself, dissenting opinions, and lots of "attitude."

This is a time of challenges as well as a time for learning. When you let your child purchase those outrageously priced jeans with the gotta-have label on the butt pocket, he soon learns that patch is nothing more than a label on the butt pocket and that his money is better spent on

other things.

I have also found that while my son wants clothes, he does not want to have to actually go to a store to buy them. Then, the pants he believes fit right are worn around his hips, not his waist. (There is not a single spawned male in my home who can properly identify his waist.)

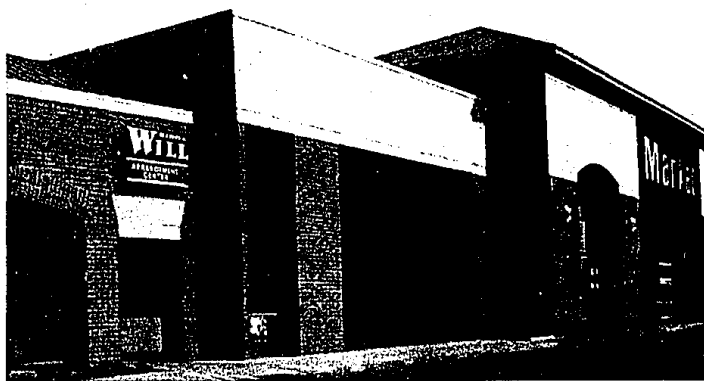
With my first teen, I suspected I would never be the same, and my suspicions were true. Yet, I have changed for the better. I have grown up more myself. I have learned what "teachable moments" are at these ages. I am better equipped to help my child when I reflect on my own insecurities and self-doubt as a teen in a time that seemed so far less complicated. I cherish the discussions we share and try to better understand and articulate my own beliefs and values while listening to theirs.

And just when I think there's an impenetrable wall between my child and me, I hear my very words from his mouth while speaking to a friend.

If it's true that "three is a charm," maybe No. 4 and 5 will be a breeze when their turns come. But I won't hold my breath ...

Kathie O'Donohue is a Farmington Hills resident.

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KATHRYN A. DORNAN
City Clerk

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