

Cultural and classic dance styles taught in city classes

Get in the swing in 2003 by enrolling in one of several dance classes being offered this winter by the city of Farmington Hills.

Dance, exercise and discover the world's most ancient dance with dancer/instructor Trish Pellerito at a new eight-week Middle-Eastern Belly Basics dance class offered by the City of Farmington Hills Cultural Arts Division.

The class will be held on Mondays, Jan. 27-March 17, from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Costick Center.

Pellerito will focus on teaching Middle-Eastern dance techniques while students learn about Middle-Eastern

culture as well.

Also new to the Farmington Hills Cultural Arts Division is a class in African Dance taught by instructor William Wey.

Students will learn this common form of expression of the Nigerian Yoruban culture beginning Jan. 22-March 12, from 8-9 p.m. at the Costick Activities Center.

Wey's instruction will be based on traditional dancing with Yoruba music and dance culture while also integrating other basic concepts of dance and exercise. Wey's dances will also be accompanied with live drums and singing.

Back at the Costick this win-

ter is the popular Motown Ballroom Dancing, taught by dancer/instructor Dr. Karyne Johnson. Glide your way into one or two sessions, Fridays, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. or from 7:30-8:30 p.m. beginning Jan. 17. Johnson and her partner's dance style include the basic ballroom dance with a combination of the Social and the Cha-Cha.

Students may enroll at the Costick Center on 11 Mile, just east of Middlebelt.

For more information, or to receive a calendar of cultural activities in the area, call the Farmington Hills Cultural Arts Division at (248) 473-1857.

Uncle turned in suspect

1 accused man set for trial; exam on 2nd continues Friday

BY CAROL MARSHALL
STAFF WRITER

It was a family member who turned in one of the two murder suspects accused of killing five members of the Pesce family of Livonia, according to testimony Friday.

John Wolfenbarger, 31, of Detroit, and Dennis Lincoln, 27, of Flint, were arrested Christmas Eve and appeared Friday for their preliminary examinations in Livonia's 16th District Court. At the end of the hearing, Judge Robert Brzezinski ruled Wolfenbarger should stand trial in the murders; meanwhile, the hearing for Lincoln will be resumed Friday, Jan. 10.

The day before the arrests, Wolfenbarger's uncle, Billy Smith, 36, of Detroit, called a Dearborn police officer to offer information about the murders of Livonia jeweler Marco Pesce, his mother, Maria Vergati, and his three young children, Carlo, 12, Sabrina, 9, and Melissa, 6.

Smith called "because of the nature of the crimes," he testified. "It was because of the kids. You just don't cross that line."

Wolfenbarger came to Smith's house the night of the murders, Dec. 21, and asked him for some clothing. According to Smith, Wolfenbarger and Lincoln had several large garbage bags.

While at Smith's house, Wolfenbarger alluded to the murders.

"He said, 'Watch the news. Five dead,'" said Smith. Smith watched the news that evening and assumed his nephew was involved in a carjacking, but Wolfenbarger later told him, "No. The s--- I did would make CNN."

Smith's testimony was called into question by the defense, however, because of his own criminal past.

Smith said he is on lifetime, nonreporting probation for a

"He asked me if I had any acid, and I thought he was talking about drugs. He said he wanted the stuff you burn things with. He said he had between five and seven pounds of gold. I knew he got it from that family. I'm not a dumb man."

Billy Smith
John Wolfenbarger's uncle

cocaine charge, and within the last six months his home, his father's home and his wife's business, the Copa Lounge on Schoolcraft, were raided by federal investigators. Further, Smith identified himself as the "west side boss" of the Devil's Disciples motorcycle club.

When Smith saw television reports of the murders, he knew his nephew had something to do with them, he testified.

"He asked me if I had any acid, and I thought he was talking about drugs. He said he wanted the stuff you burn things with. He said he had between five and seven pounds of gold," Smith testified. "I knew he got it from that family. I'm not a dumb man."

Smith also told the court the Wolfenbarger stated the only way he could be caught is by DNA evidence because he was sweating so much during the murders.

One of Smith's neighbors, Terry Letts, also offered testimony at the exam.

During the days before and after the murders, Wolfenbarger and Lincoln were at her home, she said. She had seen the pair carrying trash bags in and out of her home.

She saw Wolfenbarger with necklaces and watches and she testified he had tried to melt the gold down in her bedroom. He used a blow-

torch in a two-hour attempt to melt down the gold jewelry, but was unsuccessful, and had burned her bed spread and sheets in her bedroom.

Letts also testified he was burning papers and a black duffel bag in her back yard, the day after the murders, and when she asked what he was doing she was told to stop asking questions.

Wolfenbarger took Letts to work Sunday, Dec. 22, and along the way, he asked her to dispose of a bag, which she believed contained a gun. She tossed it into a Dumpster at a party store near her home and later directed police to the Dumpster, where they retrieved the weapon, she said. Wolfenbarger also told Letts to watch the news.

"He was tripping a little bit," she testified. "They had to leave a guy and when they came back, he said, 'He botched the job and I had to shoot him.'" She testified Wolfenbarger continued to ask her if she had seen the news.

Letts' 12-year-old son also testified, stating he had seen Wolfenbarger with the gun the day of the murders.

Both suspects are jailed without bond.

Student becomes Eagle Scout

Ryan Killing, 17, recently earned his Eagle Scout badge, the Boy Scouts' highest honor.

The North Farmington High School student decided to build 13 steps on a hill by the high school to make walking to the fields by the marching band and tennis team members safer.

"It seemed like a problem, especially on rainy days," said Ryan. "It makes for a safer climb. I didn't want grandparents to (risk falling) seeing



Killing

their grand kids' games."

Ryan has been in the Scouts for 10 years and participates in band and tennis for the school. He belongs to

Troop 110 that meets out of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish.

The son of Don and Maurine Killing of Farmington Hills,

Ryan said being in the Scouts has taught him "a lot."

Learning how to camp, make healthy decisions and get organized are some of the things he's learned. Ryan said he wanted to thank the people and businesses who made his project a success: Ron Aten, Farmington Public Schools architect, Etikin Skanska construction engineers, Little Caesars, Home Depot, Papa John's, Marsh Tools and Aristo Construction.

Oakland Schools lauded for project

Oakland School's online education program -- Oakland Virtual Connection -- was highlighted in the National School Boards Association's ITTE: Education Technology Programs publication *Virtual Realities: A School Leader's Guide to Online Education*.

Oakland Schools was one of seven programs featured in the report.

Oakland Virtual Connection, or OVC, is an online learning program that began in the 2000-01 school year.

The program is designed to weave together the paths of traditional learning and technology in order to create an online community that recognizes and affirms individuals, their learning styles, and talents.

OVC is available to Oakland County students in grades 9-12 for \$350 per semester.

Students living outside Oakland County and those who are home-schooled are also eligible, but fees may be slightly higher.

Most courses are delivered

entirely online, although some combine distance learning and face-to-face instruction. The three courses chosen most often by students are Science and Ethics, History of the Holocaust and Advanced Placement Computer Science.

For more information regarding OVC, call Mark Hansen, director, New Media at (248) 209-2050 or Mark.Hansen@oakland.k12.mi.us or Lyn Allen, distributed learning consultant, at (248) 209-2210 or Lyn.allen@oakland.k12.mi.us.

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