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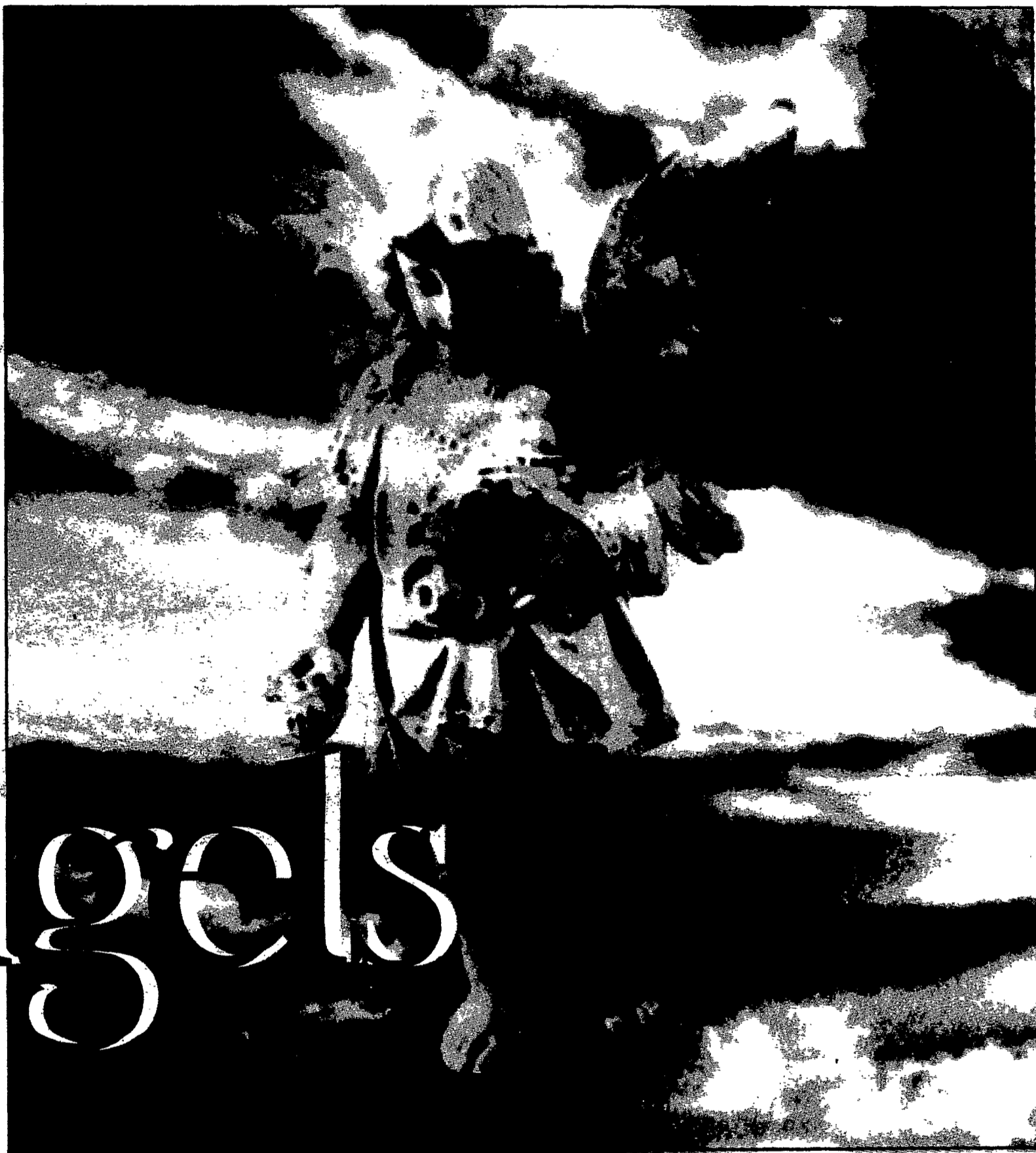
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S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer/Lorraine Hennessey/Graphics manager

angels

Interest in the heavenly host takes flight

Despite believing that she was apparently in good health, Frances Vito felt compelled to make a doctor's appointment three years ago.

Through the visit, Vito learned that she had cancer. Fortunately, the malignancy was caught early enough for it to be successfully treated.

Had she not made that visit, the Chili woman might not be around today. After the disease's discovery and subsequent cure, Vito began wondering if what she had experienced was more than just a "coincidence."

"I thought maybe it was a guardian angel," Vito said. "Something made me go to the doctor, which I don't normally do. And there was no reason to go."

She then looked at her own beliefs and started to see the growing number of books about angels hitting the bookstores. And she began to collect angels through pictures, statues and carvings.

Vito now has a room in her house dedicated to angels. "It's just a reminder that there is a parallel universe, perhaps, and there is another realm that seems to be working in our lives," Vito said.

Meanwhile, in the Rochester suburb of Gates, another woman is exploring the realm of angels.

Audrey Yantz this summer began publishing "Angelic Thoughts," a newsletter devoted solely to angels. Yantz said she became motivated



to write the newsletter after reading a book about angels. At first, she acknowledged, she was embarrassed to talk about her new interest. But the more books and articles she read, the more excited she became.

"It sort of tied my faith together," Yantz recounted.

After reading a somewhat "technical" newsletter about angels, she decided to make use of her writing skills and experiences to produce her own newsletter.

"I thought about people like me who wanted to write their thoughts and feelings and make it lighthearted," Yantz said.

Vito and Yantz are not alone in their interest in angels.

Indeed, numerous books about angels have flooded the market over the last few years, some regularly appearing on many best-seller lists. In addition to being studied on television specials, angels are featured in songs and movies — including this summer's hit "Angels in the Outfield."

Although some of the current interest in angels has a faddish aspect to it, Vito and Yantz's beliefs are in keeping with church teachings.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "The Church venerates the angels who help her on her earthly pilgrimage and protect every human being." (#352)

Moreover, Pope John Paul II, on July 9, 1986, declared, "All of the Church's tradition is unanimous in affirming that they do exist. One would have to alter Sacred Scripture itself if one wished to eliminate this teaching."

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By
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