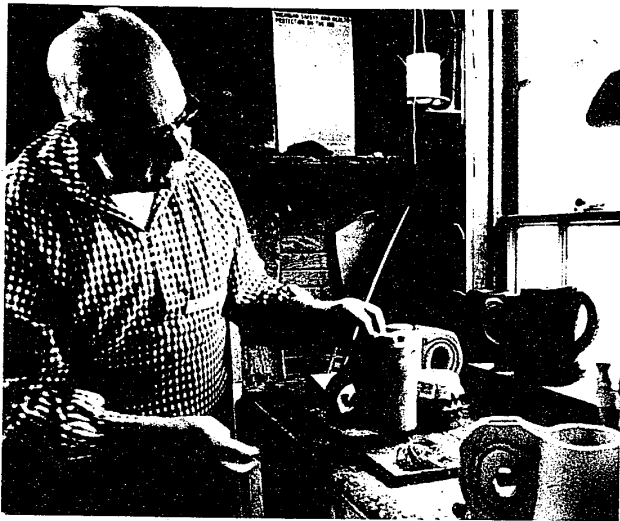


# Retiree moonlights as leather craftsman

By MARY GNIEWEK



Thomas Farrell works by the light of the window in his shop at Greenfield Village, just as ancient craftsmen did centuries ago. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

On snowy winter mornings, Thomas Farrell gathers wood for the stove in his 19th century New Hampshire shoe factory. As the small building warms, he begins to transform strips of leather into pitchers, bottles and mugs before the eyes of visitors to Dearborn's historic Greenfield Village.

The 66-year-old Farmington Hills resident performs his craft three days a week. He is a permanent part-time employee, a position he acquired after retiring from Ford Motor Co. three years ago.

"Some visitors are disappointed if I tell them I haven't been doing this all year," Farrell said. "They expect it. So I tell them my great-grandfather was a harness-maker during the Civil War and the trade was passed down in the family."

"Truth is, I taught myself to work with leather after I retired from data processing."

Farrell is a man who likes to tell stories. He winds his way through various tales of old to persons who wander into his shop.

"That's what makes him such a good employee," said publicist Ross Callaway. "He has a good rapport with the people."

Farrell's shop is stocked with authentic antique tools of the trade: A McKay leather stitchee (used in shoe factories in the 1800's) a steam engine, a polisher and a sander. The main good constructed daily and sold through the Village gift shop is black-jack leather mugs.

"They were first made in England in the middle ages, before the manufacture of glass. In these days, drinking cups were made of wood, leather or animal horns. The leather mugs, which are coated with black pitch tar, are practically indestructible."

"The English colonists brought them to this country. They were popular in the early colonial days, but they were used in taverns as late as 1900."

Farrell estimates eight hours of labor goes into construction of one mug.

The leather is soaked to become more pliable. Two strips are sewn together to form a handle. The rough shape is pressed over a wood or sand mold to give it round shape. Finally, softer leather is stretched over the bottom and sewn into place.

"For the coating that gives the mug its durability, tar is melted into pitch and the leather is dipped into the mixture a half dozen times."

"Pitch is extracted from the tar once the rosin, sulfurs and turpentine is burnt out. It leaves the mug with a smooth surface and is odorless and unbreakable."

"Another variety of the blackjack mug was made along the Scottish border. It looked like two bapagne bags sewn together and was used for smuggling whiskey."



Antique tools are used to sculpt the leather mugs which Farrell works on three days a week at Greenfield Village. (Staff photo)

"The bombardiers held three or more gallons of liquid. They survived through medieval times in the cellars of castles. They used to be hung on wooden pegs from the ceiling."

Farrell points to his own mugs hanging from the ceiling in various stages of construction.

"I had some English visitors through here last summer and they informed me that the blackjack mugs are still used in country taverns in Cornwall."

Another time, an elderly woman visitor recognized the McKay stitchee on sight.

"I didn't think they had been used in over a hundred years, so I asked her how she knew what it was. It turned out she had operated one in a shoe factory in Massachusetts as a girl."

"I enjoy the questions and the comments from the people that come through here. Of course not everyone asks intelligent questions. One man wanted to know if the steam engine was a whiskey still."

Farrell's link to the past is further emphasized in one of his favorite hobbies, collecting antique clocks and accessories. He and his wife, Virginia, a professional artist, have 16 European clocks on display in their home.

A former Vaudeville singer and musician, Farrell is a member of the Detroit Theatre Organ Club.

Visitors to Greenfield Village can watch the leathermaker at work every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Admission is \$3.50 for adults and \$1.50 for children.



These crude forms are on their way to becoming finished mugs which the purchaser can use for a lifetime and pass on to his children. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Israeli foreign minister to visit Hills institute

Former Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon will be at the Labor Zionist Institute in Farmington Hills on Sunday evening as part of a national tour of the United States.

Allon is the current chairman of the World Labor Zionist Movement, an organization which works toward strengthening the state of Israel as the home of the Jewish people.

Michigan's Labor Zionist Alliance (LZA) will serve as host to Allon during his stay here. He will meet with members of LZA's youth branch, Habonim, and their parents at the institute.

ISRAELI BORN and educated in Israel and England, Allon served as his country's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1974 to 1977.

He also held posts of Minister of Labor, Minister of Immigration and

Absorption, and Minister of Education and Culture between 1961 and 1974. He has been a member of the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset, since 1954. He also holds a leadership position in the Israeli Labor Party.

Allon will arrive at Detroit Metropolitan Airport on Sunday morning and will be the guest speaker at the University of Michigan's Institute of Public Policy in Ann Arbor. There he will address university faculty and students, focusing on the latest developments in the current Israeli-Egyptian peace talks.

The former foreign minister proposed the "Allon Plan," an official scheme for a solution to Israel's border problem after the Six Day War in 1967, and considered the inspiration for many subsequent peace proposals.

Local LZA members will meet with Allon for breakfast Monday morning at 10:30 a.m., he will hold a press

conference. At noon, he will hold talks with local leaders of the AFL-CIO, Teamsters and UAW. The purpose is to strengthen ties between the Israeli and American labor movements.

ALLON WILL THEN travel to Flint where he will be guest speaker at an LZA fundraising party. He will return to Farmington Hills that evening to attend an LZA membership social at the Institute.

Norman Naimark, president of the Detroit Metropolitan Council of the LZA, is the chairman of the committee planning Allon's visit. Other committee members include Alex Blumenberg, Sheldon Klimist, Morris Lieberman, Bernice Pinsky and Ethel Silberg.

For more information, call Aviva Matchnick, LZA executive director, at 831-1606.

## THE INSIDE \* ANGLE

**MONTE NAGLER**, owner of the Midas Muffler Shop, 2249 Orchard Lake Road, will spread a little warmth this Christmas season. Last week he contacted the Farmington Observer to help solve his predicament. He had 300 knit neck muffers left over from a Midas promotion sale last winter and wanted to know how to put them to use. Staffers put him in touch with Jim Stevens, a member of the Farmington Goodfellows, the group that distributes toys and goods to needy children in the area. Stevens will pick up the bright yellow scarves from Nagler's shop this week. They'll be distributed with other goodies to local families at Christmas.

**THERE IS STILL TIME** to contribute to the annual Goodfellows' Dress Drive and Boys' Shirt Drive. Dresses and shirts should be delivered to 3325 Oakland, Farmington. Those wishing to contribute may send checks payable to the Goodfellow Dress and Shirt Drive to the same address. Needed most are individuals to make permanent press dress or boys' shirts for an elementary school age child. Or if one prefers to make a donation, a \$7 contribution will buy a dress and only \$4 will buy a boy's long sleeve school shirt.

**DUNCKEL STUDENTS** also are active in the Goodfellow Drive this year. The junior high students have been selling nightshirts to raise money for the drive. They also collected canned foods which will be distributed to the needy for the Christmas holidays.

**BILL WOODS**, of Farmington, will be among local residents who will play golf with Brian Nicholoff, a pro at the Washtenaw Country Club, in the U.S. and Canada in the seventh annual Crown Royal World Invitational Pro-Am Tournament at the Pebble Beach course in Monterey, Calif., Jan. 14-19. The Washtenaw team will compete for the Crown Royal Cup in a 54-hole match.

**THE ENTIRE FAMILY** is invited to attend a special Hanukkah Service at 7:30 p.m. at the Birmingham Temple, 2861 Twelve Mile, Farmington Hills. The Youth Education Committee has prepared a new festival of lights service for children of all ages.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL** technicians can renew their skills in a basic refresher course at Madonna College in Livonia. Two sections will provide a better understanding of the continuing role of emergency medical technology, on Mondays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Section one will meet Jan. 8, 12, 22 and 26 and section two, Jan. 15, 19, 29 and Feb. 2. The course

follows the Michigan Public Health Guidelines and may be taken for \$60. Registrations are accepted daily in the administration building at the registrars office, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information call Sharon Greimel, director of Madonna's EMT program, at 591-1200, ext. 17. Madonna is on the corner of Schoolcraft and Levan in Livonia.

**THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT** of Social Services announces that beginning Jan. 1, food stamps recipients in the state will no longer be required to pay for part of the face value of the stamps they receive. Households who don't pay for their food stamps now will not be affected by this action. This major program change, along with other changes to be announced later, was mandated by enactment of the Food Stamp Act of 1977. Most food stamp households now pay a part of their household income for their monthly allotment of stamps. The amount paid is based on household size and the amount of net income after allowable expenses are deducted from gross income. The total value of the food stamps received always exceeds the purchase price under the present program. Excess food stamps are the bonus stamps the household receives by participating in the program. For example, a household may now pay \$50 to receive \$150 worth of food stamps each month. The extra \$100 worth of stamps is the amount of bonus stamps by household gains. Under the new system, the household will simply receive \$100 worth of food stamps without having to pay any money. Should the household's circumstances change, the number of bonus stamps issued will either increase or decrease as the situation warrants.

**IN ORDER TO BETTER** serve the mentally retarded individuals in the Oakland County area, the Oakland County Association for Retarded Citizens is moving from Pontiac to Birmingham. The Association's new address will be 690 Maple, Birmingham 48011. The telephone number is 646-4622.

**IF YOU THINK** you've got a hard time keeping off weight, digest this tidbit. The earth's surface is constantly gaining weight because of a steady dustfall of small meteoric particles.

**A HANGNAIL** isn't so called because it hangs. It just hurts. "Ang," in Old English, meant "pain."

### DEADLINE

Material submitted for the Inside Angle, 22710 Nine Mile, Southfield 48034, should include the name and phone number of the sender and should be typewritten if possible. Items should be received at least one week before publication.

## It's not a boy... It's not a girl... It's a new store!

We have a new member in our family. **Scan Design Interiors** proudly announces the opening of our newest location in Troy.

We're proud of our new store and want to introduce you to the beauty of fine teak and rosewood. Since we originated ten years ago, in West Bloomfield, our main objective has been to bring you the best crafted Scandinavian and domestic furniture possible.

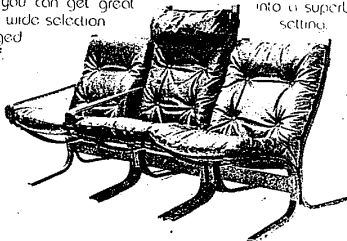
During our **Grand Opening Celebration**, you can get great savings on a wide selection of items tagged **25%-40% off.**

The Sesta chair featured here, is just one example of our high quality, uniquely designed imports.

This red top sale is now being celebrated at both stores through Sunday, December 10. Join us for a Scandinavian celebration at our new Troy location.

**Wine and Cheese Party**  
Sunday, December 10  
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Let Scan Design make your interests into a superb contemporary setting.



Celebrate in comfort and beauty.  
Celebrate in a Sesta.



**bransch interiors, inc.**

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528-9050

West Bloomfield  
3325 Orchard Lake Road  
Keego Harbor, MI 48033  
626-0031

Store Hours: Mon., Thurs., Fri. 10:00-9:00. Tues., Sat. 10:00-5:30. Sunday 12:00-5:00. Closed Wednesday.