



Hills store a haven for science buffs

By Lisa Simon
staff writer

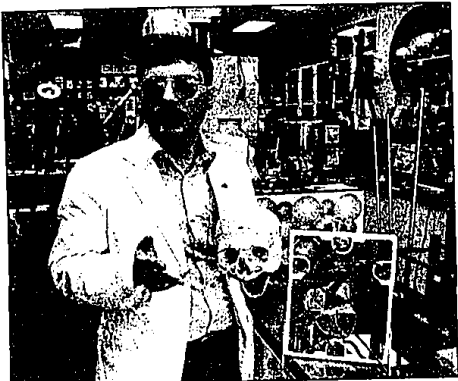
FROM GRAND RIVER Avenue, a nonintrusive sign heralds "Science and Things," a small store in a shopping center.

When you approach the store — with its welcoming, full-bodied skeleton just right of the door — a sense of mystery and the unusual prevails.

Science and unusual gadgets make up the store's stock, said Steve Franks, store manager.

Eerie electronic music is softly piped throughout the store, creating a mood of mystery and the unknown. Everywhere one looks, there are tools for the backyard or basement scientist of any age or ability.

Dinosaur kits, model rockets, microscopes, perpetual motion machines, decorative prisms and globes are all shelved goods for sale.



Science & Things' Steve Franks shows off a real human skull.

"KIDS ARE too passive today," said Phil Padula, Science and Things owner. "I always felt kids should have more — more than sports and television."

A Southfield resident and the father of six, Padula chose Farmington Hills in 1979 because of an instinct that "science-minded people," were in the area. He also owns an automotive design engineering firm in Lapeer, and Vi-count Industries, a tool die shop in Farmington Hills. Padula is a design engineer by training.

While Padula is interested in magnets, coils and Fresno lenses — "stupid kids do in school" — Franks is more excited by astronomy.

Telescopes, ranging in price from \$99 to \$23,000, constitute the majority of the store's sales, Padula said.

Most customers make telescope purchases in the \$900-\$1,000 range, Franks said. Children's telescopes cost much less.

"WITH HALLEY'S comet coming this fall, the interest in astronomy is becoming more hectic," Franks said. Telescope sales worldwide this year are the greatest in history, he added.

The store has 700 regular astronomy-minded customers. It sponsors

weekly astronomical observations at a Detroit Edison site east of Plymouth.

Padula hired Franks two years ago to "build a decent astronomy department," Franks said. A five-member sales staff is on hand for explanations and scientific input. Jon Warren, a salesman, also designs chemistry experiments and kits for individuals and science classes.

Items for sale in the store are designed to stimulate the imagination. "They're nice rainy-day toys," Franks said.

"We try to appeal to the child in everyone," he added. "It's an unusual business. No one is really taken with the idea. That's why we appeal to a select market."

There are low-power helium lasers for optical experiments; ant farms; worm, frog, and egg hatcheries; or biological specimens for dissecting starfish, sharks, worms and fetal pigs.

"Chemistry sets are one of our main-

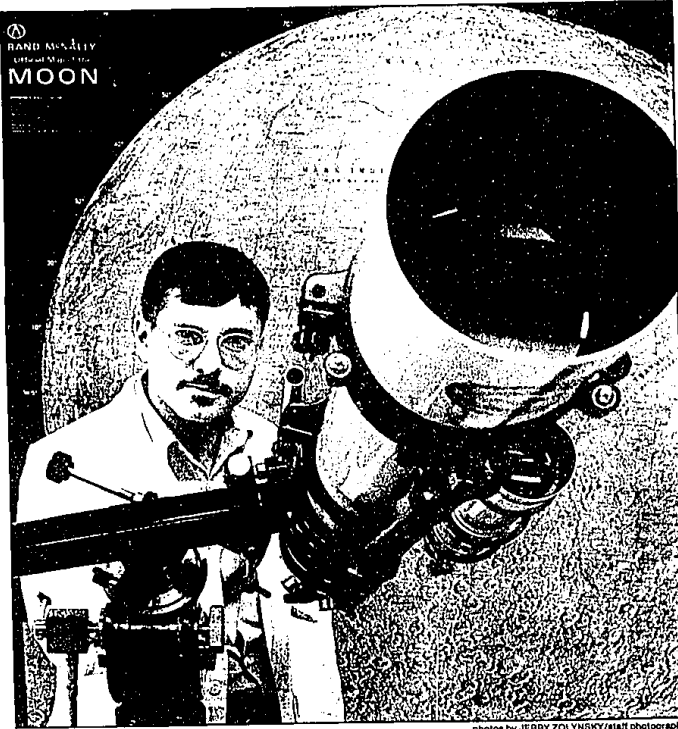
stays," Franks said.

PROJECTS LIKE crystal radios, electronic lie detectors, elaborate kites, plastic human anatomical models, and hydroponics for growing plants without soil are available, as well as space games involving unusual thinking.

"I try to stay away from role modeling," Franks said. "The winter holidays spark the best sales time."

"Parents are out looking for think toys, atlases, books and small telescopes," Franks said. "We sell to schools on a regular basis, and both teachers and school systems are eligible for discounts."

Padula called himself "a frustrated research scientist, trying to do his bit." Although sales have increased every year since 1979, the business has not yet broken even. But, as he put it: "It's coming along."



Store manager Steve Franks stands behind a Unitron four-inch refractor telescope. photos by JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

short takes

FRESH FISH
Monahan's Seafood Market opened Sept. 13 in Farmington Hills.

Six years ago, when Monahan's Seafood Market opened in Ann Arbor, the owners committed themselves to quality and service. Pooling their years of experience in the food industry as restaurateurs, they developed a seafood market with an extensive selection of fresh fish.

"We want our people to enjoy fish as much as we do, and we're doing everything possible to meet every kind of fish need," said Frank Carollo, an owner of the new Monahan's in Muirwood Square.

The new market will sustain the Monahan tradition of offering a variety of fresh fish and seafood. "By the time you walk out of our seafood market, you can have everything to make a seafood meal complete," Carollo said. Appetizers, seafood salads and soups are available to facilitate meal preparation or party plans.

For eating-on-the-go, Monahan's Seafood Market offers a carry-out menu. "The fish sandwich is as tasty cold as it is hot, cooked in a batter that's been carefully developed and repeatedly tested before it ever reaches the customer," Carollo said.

For special occasions, Monahan's will offer lobster bakes, clam bakes, shrimp cocktail trays, pates and smoked fish.

Monahan's Seafood Market is in Muirwood Square, northwest of Grand River and Drake. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The phone number is 676-3770.

Joining Carollo as owners are Michael Monahan and Paul Saginaw.

Carollo has nine years of managing large operations in the food industry.

Monahan is an avid fisherman. With Saginaw, he is co-founder of Monahan's Seafood Market and Zingerman's Delicatessen, both in Ann Arbor.

NATIONAL ACCLAIM
For the second year in a row, Farmington resident Joan Lorenz, a sales associate for Real Estate One's Farmington office, is a national winner in a contest to recognize sales associates who provide outstanding service to transferees and their families.

The contest was sponsored by RELO/Inter-City Relocation Service.

Lorenz earned free round-trip air fare to San Francisco, where she was a guest of honor at the recent annual conference of the RELO Services, the nation's oldest and largest referral network of independent real estate brokers. Last year, she won a trip to attend the RELO conference in New Orleans.

Licensed with Real Estate One in 1980, Lorenz is a member of the Million Dollar Round Table. She was honored by Real Estate One in 1982, 1983 and 1984 for outstanding achievement of outgoing referrals.

The mother of five, Lorenz is active on several parents' committees at Farmington High School. She's a lifetime member of the Farmington Beautification Committee and a former member of the Farmington Jaycees.

She's also active in the Goodfellows and has participated in several fund-raisers for the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce.

VIDEO SYSTEMS
New York Video Systems in Farmington Hills recently completed production for the Detroit Heart Institute.

The 30-minute patient education program, called "Your Cardiac Catheterization at the Detroit Institute," was shot on location at Detroit Osteopathic Hospital. Editing was completed at New York Video Systems, with Dan Nowak serving as cameraman and editor.

Production also has been completed on a 20-minute marketing program for Chion Perfumes, Detroit, with Nowak again serving as editor.

TOP SALESMAN
Chris Brown, a new vehicle salesman at Town and Country Dodge, Farmington, was honored for individual sales performance.

The Farmington Hills resident reached the "silver" level of recognition in Dodge's Sales Professional Club.

Specially designed incentives and awards are provided for outstanding product knowledge and sales achievement at three performance levels — bronze, silver and gold. Membership in each level is determined by points earned for sales of new cars and trucks.

ONE YEAR OLD
The Children's Shoe Mart, 33225 Grand River, Farmington, has celebrated its first anniversary.

In recognition of the store's first year, 10 pair of shoes were given away free to 10 different children.

Having all shoes on open display and discounting brand-name children's shoes are two of the store's attractions.

HE'S PROMOTED
Grace & Wild Studios has appointed Victor Vettorello to the newly created position of video engineer for remote services.

Vettorello will work as video engineer on remote productions performed by the Farmington Hills company.

Before his promotion, Vettorello was a stage technician for Grace & Wild. He is a graduate of Wayne State University in Detroit, with a bachelor of arts degree in communication, specializing in television production.

Grace & Wild is a full-service video facility specializing in stage and remote production, film-to-tape transfers, post-production and special effects.

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