

Fest from page A1

Erika Clayton and Kellie Kelly. The retractable, collapsible hats double as flower pot covers.

"I'm so versatile, I like it as both," Clayton said. "I can wear it (as a hat) to pick the flowers and use it to hold the flowers when I'm done."

Kelly described it as a "very unique item, fun," and said she liked it better as a hat.

Amid stations touting Tupperware and ceramic photo mugs was another intriguing craft display, by Duane Scherer of Lathrup Village.

He assembled decorative garden art "faces", using wood, metal, beads and rhinestones.

"Where does any art come from?" Scherer said. "It just comes."

Tasty treats

Food, as usual, was a big hit with the festival crowd. On the menu was a mix of typical carnival fare and more-diversified, specialized items.

Those with a sweet tooth were well taken care of. One booth featured freshly squeezed lemonade. Wendy Lohmbeck, of Flat Rock, doled out hearty helpings of apple, cheese and cherry strudel at another.

Hungry customers chowed down on corn on the cob, elephant ears, hot dogs served from a cart and meatball subs. There was the oxle of steak, seafood and chicken being prepared by

'So far, this show is ranking up there with some of the better shows we've done in recent years.'

John Troia
—Photographer

Benihana, or of meat-filled bows, sold at The Great Wall booth.

Pie lovers also had their moment. Thursday night's "Ice Cream Social" and pie-eating contest at the First United Methodist Church of Farmington again proved to be a tasty destination point for many who wanted a break from browsing tables and tents.

According to Catherine McCarthy of First United Methodist, who chaired the social and contest, Maribeth Gioia and Stacey Ruff captured first-place honors in their respective age groups.

Gioia's white chocolate mousse pie was judged the best of the senior bracket (over age 18) while Ruff's "hoppin' granshopper pie" won for the junior bracket.

Although there was plenty to see and do — with lawns covered and canopied sidewalks filled — early estimates indicated fewer people were there to enjoy the 35th annual festival, the first presented by Farmington Area

Founders Festival, Inc. and managed by Sandra and Mike Watts of Watts-Up! Inc.

Many patrons and vendors, asked at random, also noticed a drop in the number of available crafters. But Mike Watts Friday afternoon cautioned against making an early evaluation and expected activity to pick up when the weather improved.

One of the best

"Crowds? They're fair, given the weather," said Farmington City Manager Frank Laubhoff, who made numerous trips up and down Grand River to check on festivities.

Friday's turnout was dampened by morning showers and drizzle for much of the afternoon. But Thursday couldn't have been better from a weather or business standpoint, said one of the crafters.

"I had a very good day yesterday," said Cleveland-area photographer John Troia. "So far, this show is ranking up there with some of the better shows we've done in recent years."

Not only did John have his photos on display on the lawn outside the First United Methodist Church of Farmington, so did sons Keith and Scott, a Livonia resident.

"I think we'll definitely come back and do this one," the elder Troia said.

Crafters from page A1

Laubhoff said some of the Masonic-area vendors were relocated to the parking lot behind the civic group's facilities, or along Farmington Road.

But, according to Farmington resident and crafter July Quesada, a number of others just asked for refunds and pizza on writing letters of complaint.

"Meanwhile, Glass said, "all the customers who have come through my area have expressed disappointment that there's not a full contingent of crafters on this corner like there's been in the past."

But others "preached patience."

"Given time they'll fill this area down here," said Fred Dion, who shelled out \$160 for a spot at Memorial Park just a few feet from where crafters spent only \$100 to set up in front of the Masonic. "People don't care if it's the Masons or the chamber or who it is running the place."

Laubhoff, who said Watts-Up! is "doing a good job," the festi-

'We took this contract with the understanding that we were getting it later. And we asked to not be evaluated on our performance until we had a year to organize one.'

Mike Watts
—Watts-Up! Inc.

val would be reviewed in September to see where improvements might be needed.

"I would hope that the city would keep a closer eye on what this outside outfit is doing," Glass said.

Mike Watts, contacted late Friday afternoon, said there is a "comparable number" of vendors this year, although they are more spread out over downtown. He firmly defended the festival, citing rainy weather and the fact his company only had several months to plan the event.

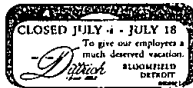
"We took this contract with the understanding that we were getting it later," Watts said. "And we asked to not be

evaluated on our performance until we had a year to organize one."

Watts also said he didn't think it was fair to judge the festival "in the middle of it, especially with the weather conditions we've had."

He added that those vendors complaining Thursday and Friday might be singing a different tune by the end of the weekend. Weather was expected to be sunny both yesterday and today.

"We're just doing the best we can. But I think they (crafters) are going to be surprised when it's all over," Watts said.



Don't stay at any old hotel. Try a brand new Fairfield Inn.

Visit us during our Grand Opening at Fairfield Inn® by Marriott®, where you'll always get a clean, comfortable room, free continental breakfast, a pool and smart, friendly service. And Marriott Rewards® members earn points toward a free vacation. Call your travel agent or 800-228-2800. Or visit us at fairfieldinn.com.

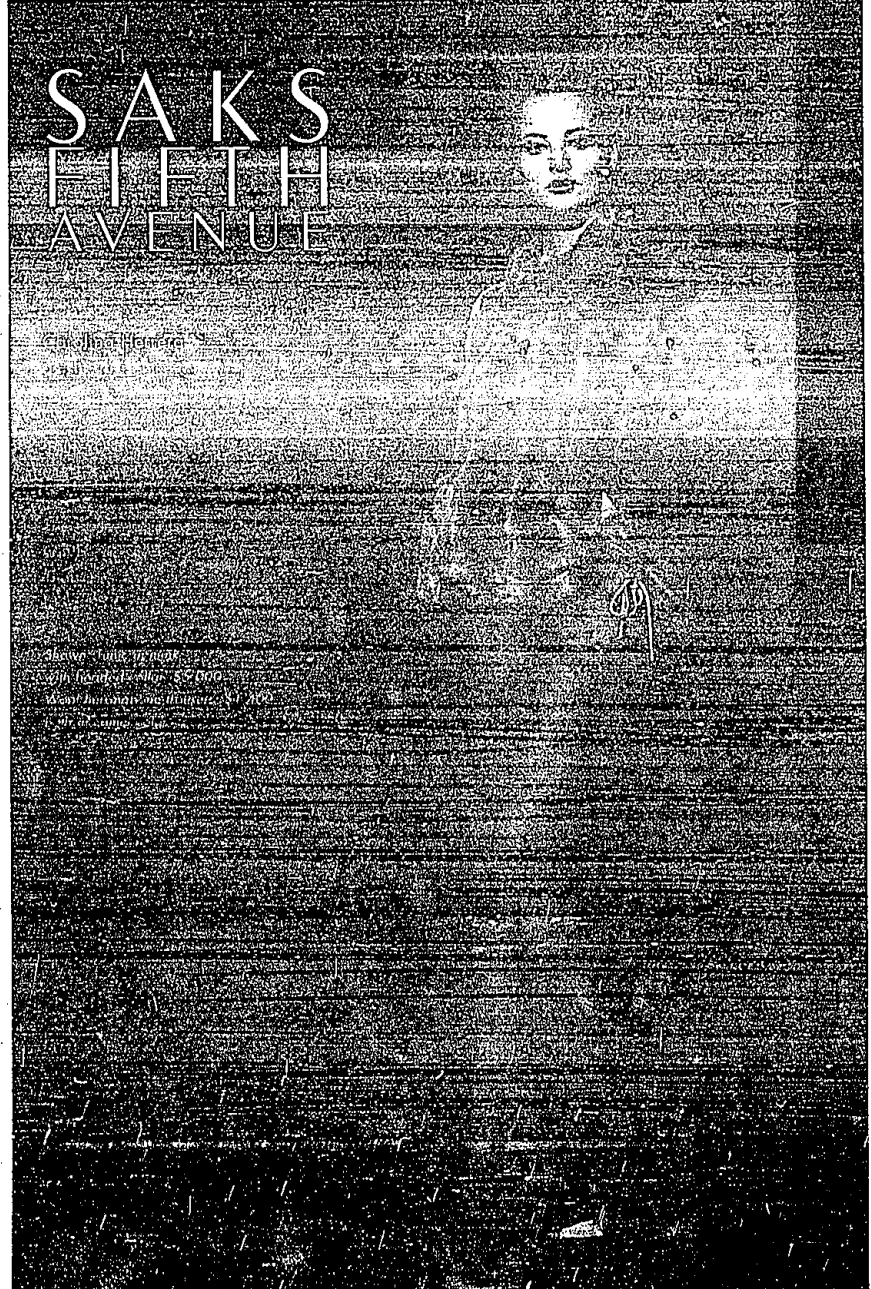


You can expect more™
Visit our new Fairfield Inn in Livonia
17350 Fox Drive
I-275 & 6 Mile • Livonia, MI
(734) 953-8888
Rates: \$69.00 Introductory Rate



GREENSTONE'S
CREATORS OF FINE JEWELRY SINCE 1925

528 N. Old Woodward, Birmingham, MI
4 Blks. North of Maple
248-642-2650
MONDAY-FRIDAY 10-5:30 • THURSDAY UNTIL 7:00 • SATURDAY UNTIL 5:00



The Somerset Collection, Big Beaver at Coelidge, Troy (248) 643-9000. Monday through Friday 10 to 9; Saturday 10 to 7; Sunday 12 to 6. Fashion Town Center, Dearborn (313) 336-3070. Monday through Saturday 10 to 9; Sunday 11 to 6.