

Chinese art lures merchant

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

The two girls stood side by side their grins fluttering as if caught in a gentle breeze. Two butterflies were perched on their raised hands.

I don't know how they got so much movement in their grins, Debbie Davidson of Farmington. That's what the Peking carvers were known for.

The two ivory figures are the most valuable pieces in Ms. Davidson's Farmington Hills shop, Dynasty. Even the butterflies delicate attire are carved from ivory.

Ms. Davidson left her job as an interior designer to open a shop that deals in Chinese art.

Ms. Davidson's shop is a treasure trove of Chinese art. She has some Korean and Japanese pieces in the shop. She concentrates on Chinese art.

My mother always had it in her house, she explains. The more you get into it the more you want. It's kind of like an addiction.

I started collecting when I was about 12, Mrs. Joan Davidson her mother says. Ms. Davidson's addiction extends to adopting many of the pieces in the shop. She's disappointed when she has to sell her favorite things.

I've cried many times, she says. The piece is this eggshell porcelain. It was so light and beautiful, she says holding her cupped palm upward as if the treasure was still in her hand. I cried when she took it out.

Most of the articles in the shop came from mainland China, even before it was officially opened to American importers.

The good craftsmen just aren't there, she says, shaking her head.

While the craftsmen in the People's Republic of China stick to the old ways the artists from Taiwan go through different trends.

Certain colors will become popular. One year everything was yellow, Ms. Davidson says.

ANCIENT CRAFTS are being lost on the mainland as a result of the older generation dying, she says.

There are things we'll never get again, she says in a tone of regret. The old ones won't tell the young their secrets because the Communists won't go away.

Nothing was made just to look at, she explains. In a display cabinet at the back of the shop there are two tall, wide porcelain vases decorated with blue-green figures.

Ms. Davidson says she runs her shop like an ad-priest agency. If she doesn't like a customer, she'll talk him out of buying a real piece.

She says she doesn't like people who don't care about a piece of the reasoning behind it.

The biggest aggravation is when they see it in House and Garden and just have to have it and don't care about the piece.

She would like to see people care more about the history and culture behind each Chinese piece, she says.

A LOT of customers and friends want to know more about it, she explains. She is part of a Chinese study group started by students and faculty at the University of Detroit.

I never really had a friend until I had a Chinese friend, she says. You never see their emotions, but that warmth still comes through.

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—Debbie Davidson

Storm tragedy kills workman

By RON GARRINSKI

While many Detroit Edison Co. crews worked around the clock this weekend to restore electric power to Farmington Hills residents, a group of Edison linemen who missed a tragedy Sunday afternoon much worse than last week's severe ice storm.

Edwin J. Sanders, an apprentice Edison lineman, was electrocuted while working on a damaged utility pole near Old Bedford Road in the northwest corner of Farmington Hills.

A company spokesman said Sanders, a 37-year-old Detroit resident, apparently touched a high voltage conductor while on the pole and at the same time came in contact with a ground wire.

Edison officials say this deadly event happened at about 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

While his death upset repair crews, the first Edison reported that only a few individual homes in the Farmington area were without electrical power by late Tuesday afternoon.

BELL TELEPHONE Co. also reported that most downed phone lines were repaired by Tuesday, with less than a dozen lines still to be fixed.

At one time last week, we had more than 80,000 homes in Oakland County without power, Maurice Vermeulen, director of customer and marketing services for Edison's Oakland Division, said Tuesday afternoon.

But around Saturday morning we got the bulk of them back on power and began eating away at the damage that the high winds caused Thursday and Friday, he continued.

Now, Tuesday afternoon, there aren't any large areas in the county without power. Most problems are with individual homes and not large sections as was the case last week.

VERMEULEN SAID damage to equipment was not the major problem in Oakland County as in other areas of the state.

Edison spent about \$500,000 per day in the county, and most of that was not for materials as some might suspect, he explained. Edison spent about 10 percent on materials and 90 percent for labor because we had the crews working overtime to repair downed lines.

Normally, the company pays 50 percent for labor and 50 percent for materials. But the extent of the ice storms caused lines to fall from the pressure and didn't really do a lot of damage to equipment, he continued.

ANY RESIDENTS still experiencing power failures should call the Farmington area hotline at 424-2250 to report electrical problems.

We don't want anyone to go without service for much longer. If any Edison customers are without power, they should contact us immediately, he said. Even if they have already contacted us before, they should do it again to make sure they get their power restored.

Warner Junior High School, 3000 W. Fourteen Mile, was open for classes Wednesday morning after being without power for almost a week.

Several other schools in the Farmington district also were closed last week for several days due to electrical problems.

We're in pretty good shape, said Jan Kahn, customer relations manager for Bell. We had a little over 300 dropped wires associated with the storm.

About half of them were down and working and the other half were down and not working.

But we have had our repairmen and linemen out working on repairs to clean up the trouble and everyone in the area should have their phone working by tonight, Tuesday.

Kahn said most telephone repairs were completed by Sunday night and the phone company was back to normal business Monday morning.

IT COULD have been a disaster if the poles were down but there were hardly any poles reported knocked down, he said.

We were hit, lights equipped to the power company.

As electrical power is being restored in Oakland County, Edison officials say they are conducting an investigation into the electrocution death of Sanders.

Sanders, who completed about 17½ years of his apprenticeship, was one of more than 300 linemen and apprentices working overtime to repair power line damage in Detroit Edison service areas.

Another company spokesman said that Sanders was the fourth linemen to die on the job in the past eight years. Three were electrocuted and the fourth was killed in a fall from a pole.

Sanders is survived by his wife and six children ranging in age from 11 to 18.

Several citizens have started a fund for Sanders family and donations may be sent to the Detroit Edison Oakland Office, Address all letters to Al Marraccon, superintendent of lines, Detroit Edison, 30400 Telegraph Road, Birmingham 48010.



Hills volunteer fire fighters Charles Richard (left) and Robert Zelnor battle the blaze that caused an estimated \$21,500 damage to the Wingle residence in Farmington Hills.



Debbie Davidson peers into a funerary urn while under the watchful eyes of a Chinese temple guardian at her Farmington Hills shop, Dynasty. (Staff photo by Harry Mautner)

Suspects nabbed while selling police stolen car

THE TEMPLE GUARDIAN would allow no prisoners to go past him, she says. He wears a birdlike headdress and a suit of armor. I don't ask me who he's hiding an ear of corn, she adds.

In the center of the store stands a stone statue she brought from her garden. It's the figure of Kwan Yin, the house wifely guardian. Originally a male, the goddess decided that women needed a gift after a visit to earth. He changed the spelling of his name to the feminine form and turned into a woman.

Everything changed except his hands and his feet, that's why they're so large, she explains.

I keep her here because I need the blessing, she says.

Blind for the first year was set at \$3,000 and for the remaining 40 years, \$200.

Bethesda was charged with handling all the money from the property and had a net of \$2,900.

He said that when he was out of the house, Bethesda would call the police and get the car back.

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