

# Sea Creatures: Salt water is alive with a kaleidoscope of color

By: KATHY PARKER  
Photos: DOUG BAUMAN

When police phoned Larry McLean late last year and told him a shark was scrambling around on the floor of his store, did he panic? Not a bit. He reacted like any young businessman would—he went inside and wiped up the water.

"I guess he really wanted to get out," the 38-year-old marine aquarologist said. "He turned his way through three-quarters of an inch of glass."

Occurrences such as that are rare, but not unheard of in Larry McLean's line of business. A specialist in the display and sale of salt-water sea animals, McLean's "Sea Creatures" store houses everything

from the delicate and brilliant blue damselfish to the deadly stingrays and stonefish. He currently runs 34 salt-water aquariums in his Avon Township store, but will soon move to a Troy location at Long Lake Road and Livernois, affording him the extra space to install newer and larger tanks.

AN ARRAY of ocean life, from the starily beautiful to the shockingly bizarre, thrives on McLean's scrupulous care and extensive knowledge of the necessary ecological balance that must be maintained to keep them alive so many miles from their natural habitat.

"Of course it is impossible to replicate the exact ocean conditions," McLean said.

"But with the proper knowledge and equipment, the keeping of salt-water fish can become a super hobby." McLean's interest in the sea creatures was piqued when his biologist father-in-law suggested the alternative to stamp collecting. He made use of his own biology background and began studying the life and conditions that maintain existence for thousands of creatures in foreign waters. He now imports them from all over the world.

"Seawater is amazingly the same all over," McLean said. "There are differences in salinity and temperature, but those factors are controllable in the right aquarium."

The proper conditions in an aquarium take about a year to achieve, McLean said. The system is identical to all biological life-cycles, he added, with every living organism in the tank interdependent in order for any to survive.

AMONG THE creatures he displays and sells are chameleon sea-horses, clinging to the coral and slowly changing color until they are barely visible at first glance. The archaic horseshoe crab is a "living fossil," said McLean, subsisting on very little and living hundreds of years. He also carries starfish, sponges and the salt-water sea-anemone, which is not a fish at all but a "flower animal." Giving the appearance of a pale flowering manure, it secretes a bacteria that is dangerous to humans. There are many other aspects of keeping sea creatures that are pleasant and exciting, McLean said.

"The colors are impossible to find in any fresh-water fish," he said. "The yellow tang, for instance, is only yellow off the coast of Hawaii. Everywhere else it mutates to a dull grey. It is very exciting to know you keep fish and animals that just are not found anywhere else—except in the depths of the ocean."

Most of the fish in his store come from the South Pacific and the Caribbean, McLean said, although he does carry some items from other oceans and seas.

Currently on display is a 35-pound, three-year-old sea turtle named "Sidney," that was the size of a half-dollar when it arrived in the Avon Township store at 284 Tienken, west of Rochester Road. It will grow to be at least 300 pounds in a few years, McLean said.

"And it will undoubtedly outlive me," he added.

McLean opened his "Sea Creatures" business in September 1973 and has found customers from every walk of life.

"Because of their poisonous nature in many cases, we don't sell any fish to persons under 18," he said. "When people leave this store with a fish, they know its nature, its habits and what is necessary to keep it alive."

McLean teaches marine aquarology at Oakland University and insists that his business is still little more than a hobby.

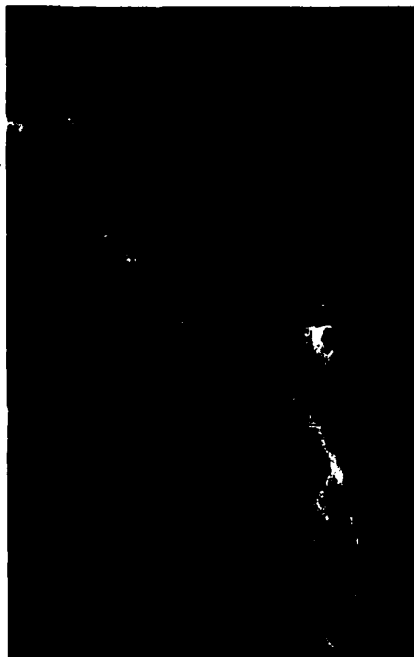
"It's my job and it's one of my interests," he added. "But, if he knows how, anyone can keep a shark."



This flower-like sea anemone uses its tentacles to capture unsuspecting prey.



Most of McLean's strange-looking sea creatures come from the Caribbean and the South Pacific.



Store owner Larry McLean has raised this sea turtle since it was the size of a half-dollar.

## Observer & Eccentric BUSINESS

6D(10) (S 10C-F 1B-R 13A)

Thursday, July 15, 1976

# Turn-of-the-century village about to expand



The design of Youth Center, a children's department store, aims to make shopping fun for youngsters.

Seven more businesses will soon open their doors in Oakland County's only theme shopping center—Meadowbrook Village Mall.

The new businesses will blend in with the mall's overall design motif, a fanciful recreation of a turn-of-the-century Victorian village.

Survivors of all the businesses were designed by the mall's designers, architects Roger Sherman and David Peterhans of Sherman & Associates Inc. of Dearborn. Other buildings designed by the firm include many of the Chuck Muer restaurants.

Theme of the Avon Township mall was selected to complement the Victorian character of many of the old homes in the Rochester area, says Carol Schultz, mall promotion director.

Design details include wood-planked and brick-paved floors, a water-powered, old-fashioned cider mill and a children's merry-go-round that resembles an old peddler's wheel.

"The mall is at the corner of Adams and Walnut," Schultz said. "The ribboned pattern in the glass of the street lamps that light the mall interior, for example, were current around the turn of the century."

Bright colors and art nouveau add a whimsical touch to the Victorian approach, says Ms. Schultz.

Among the new businesses set to open around the beginning of August is Book Cousins Travel, a full line travel service

agent. Opposite the showboat theater, the travel service offices will resemble an antique train station with planked wood, bright colors and gingerbread trim.

Well-known in the Detroit area for 30 years, the agency's office will be the first new branch in recent years.

A replica of an old, white-washed dairy barn will house a new mail shop, slated to open around July 28. Krukenbocker's Cheese and Sausage. The shop will stock special imported domestic cheeses and sausages and will feature a sandwich take-out service.

MORROW'S NIT HOUSE, to open around Aug. 1, will sell candy and nuts by weight and scoop. Part of a national California-based corporation, Morrow's originally began in Detroit on Woodward Avenue 15 years ago. The new Avon store marks a return to the Detroit area.

Like the other stores, Morrow's design seeks to recapture imaginatively the Victorian spirit with paneled glass windows and pegged wooden floors.

The exterior of Firehouse No. 11 Toy Emporium is designed to duplicate that of an old-fashioned fire station. It is decked with hoses and ladders, an eagle statue and a brass bell.

The store's stock will include imported adults and children's games, as well as toys made by recognized toy manufacturers like Playmobil and Mattel, and art supplies by Grumbacher.

The Pickwick Shop will carry apparel for young girls and teenagers. Though scheduled to open Aug. 1, the store will

participate in the Rochester area Sidewalk Sales on July 29, 30, and 31. Ms. Schultz says the store's owner called the sidewalk sales "an event too good to miss."

The Avon store will be the fourth Pickwick Shop in the Detroit area. Other stores are in Birmingham, Oak Park and Orchard Lake.

EMBELLISHING THE shop's exterior is wood lattice work. The interior features art nouveau patterned wallpaper with yellow accents.

An import gift shop, World Bazaar, will open around Aug. 15. A division of the Munn Corp., it will be the 75th World Bazaar store nationally, but the first in the Detroit area.

Merchandise for the new store is hand-picked for the Rochester area by Lucille Green of Rochester, store manager. Stock will include household accents, kitchen implements and better-quality glassware. Specialty wrapping papers, posters and trinkets like origami and European wood craft also will be sold.

Ms. Schultz says the store will accent quality in its merchandise, although prices range from all levels.

Youth Center, a children's department store, will open this week. The store will carry clothes for children sizes 0 through 14.

Decor in the children's store is geared to making shopping an enjoyable experience for youngsters, with the colors predominantly bright green, yellow and orange, says Ms. Schultz. (Outside the shop is an old-fashioned carousel.)

# Seasonal sports lure a year-round following

By: GLENN BUNTING  
Photos: DOUG BAUMAN

Once upon a time, sports sales were strictly seasonal, especially tennis, water skiing and snow skiing. But according to Mike Griffin, owner of The Summit Ski Shop, the story has changed.

"Sales are indicating that people who enjoy a certain activity tend to engage in a year-round," said Griffin. "Water skiing used to be one of the most seasonal sports, but I've had better winters than summers in sales."

Griffin, whose shop is located in Campus Corners on Livernois and Walton in Avon Township, carries tennis, water and snow ski equipment 12 months a year.

Tennis is a primary example of a sport that has expanded from seasonal to year-round. Since the big boom and the upsurge of tennis houses and private clubs, more persons are playing indoors during winter months, creating a need for equipment in the so-called off-season.

WATER SKI equipment is a popular Christmas gift in December that often complements a new boat, motor or a variety of other gifts. Florida vacations also stimulate water interest in the sport.

Skiing sales range from \$75 to \$500 in price. The latter appears to be a bit heavy for one ski, but Griffin said money people prefer a hot ski rather than a moderately priced one.

Snow skiing is by far the one sport that has skyrocketed in interest and sales. With many instructional camps and the endless hunt for a deal in midwinter, Griffin carries a healthy stock of this in the off-season.



MIKE GRIFFIN

The Ski Shop will carry as many as 300 pairs of new skis in the summer, many of which are purchased by fall.

Griffin said greater Rochester is a hotbed for ski merchandise. "I'm not exactly sure what it is, but we've done better in Rochester since opening day (10 months) than our five-year-old store in Utica."

"There isn't that much competition with water skis, and tennis and snow skiing are taking off everywhere. We're also really big with people in Birmingham and Troy."

DESPITE the expansion of seasonal sports, Griffin said the four-month sales explosion from October to January still exists.

"Things get crazy around here in mid-winter with more skiing equipment sales," said Griffin. "I just stay open in the summer with tennis and ski equipment to stay alive."

The Summit Ski Shop, like several other greater Rochester merchants, has experienced a big sales interest because of construction on Walton and is anxious for completion in September.

With the recent switch to year-round activities, Griffin smiles every time he hears of a new resort club opening.

And as long as recreation enthusiasts insist on purchasing their interests, Griffin and his colleagues will be more than happy to accommodate them.



Clothing for tennis, water ski and snow ski buffs line the walls of The Summit Shop, which carries equipment year-round for the three sports.