

Cultural activities enjoy big boom

By LEONARD POGER



Members of the Livonia Regional Ballet Company add to the area's cultural benefits. It was organized just over two years ago and has helped increase ballet popularity in the community.

50 active members and 150 subscription members.

An indication of the importance of culture in the suburbs is the creation of arts commissions within the city governments, such as is done in Farmington and Livonia.

In Farmington, there was a privately-operated arts council, formed in 1968. It disbanded in 1976 when the two municipal governments formed a public arts commission to create a larger awareness and more encouragement of the arts and provide a support group for performing organizations.

In Plymouth, there is a private community arts council, formed in 1969, and a leader in providing programs in schools and before the adult public.

Livonia organized its arts commission under the city government in 1974 and it has been instrumental in bringing the Michigan Opera Theater to the city and sponsoring its own "Music

Under the Stars" outdoor concert series during the summer months at Civic Center Park, Five Mile, east of Farmington Road.

The Wayne-Westland Community Theatre and Plymouth Theatre Guild are also active in the suburbs, drawing members and patrons from numerous communities to take part in their productions and enjoy them as audiences.

The drama groups of Livonia-Redford, Plymouth, and Wayne-Westland will combine their talents this month to produce a comedy, "My Three Angels" with the final performances scheduled for May 5, 6, and 7 in the TOLR playhouse in Redford.

For those who like music, there is the Livonia Community Band, organized two years ago, the Plymouth and Livonia Youth Symphony Societies, the Plymouth Community Band, Farmington Community Band, Plymouth Symphony Orchestra, West-

land Civic Orchestra, Redford Civic Symphony and Redford Music Society.

They perform in either outdoor or indoor concerts throughout the year.

Ballet is beginning to grow in popularity and interest and two good examples are the Michigan Ballet Theatre, based in Farmington, and the Livonia Regional Ballet Company, organized just over two years ago.

The MBT has maintained a tradition of performing "The Nutcracker" at Christmas time and the annual graduation ball in May.

Farmington's cultural groups have a new resource to take advantage of in the Oakland County Cultural Council, formed in 1976 and the only one in the state. It operates as part of the county government and helps coordinate 100 art groups in the county along with 13 arts councils.

Two other regional groups have brought many hours of enjoyment to area residents—the Oakway Symphony, which is directed by Franco Diblasi of the Madonna College music staff, and Schoolcraft College, which has sponsored many musical and cultural events on its campus.

The same can be said of the Plymouth Symphony under the baton of Wayne Dunlop.

For those who like to paint, sculpt, or make ceramics, there are numerous artists clubs, including those in Farmington, Livonia, and Plymouth.

Livonia has expended its activities with the arts commission organizing separate subgroups, such as the ballet company, and Visual Arts Association of Livonia, which holds monthly art shows in City Hall.

A new private group, the Livonia Cultural League, was recently organized to promote and encourage arts groups and make people more aware of what is available.

The Kendallarks, a women's chorus in Farmington, has been performing for more than 20 years and Livonia has the Civic Chorus sponsored by the city's recreation department, and the private Suburban Chorus.

In Plymouth, there is a community chorus.



1933 - 1978 45 Years of Walker & Buzenberg Furniture Sales

Fred E. Walker, my uncle, former head furniture buyer of Crowley Milner's, started the business at 5301 Grand River, corner of Loraine, in 1933. He moved across the street at 5400 Grand River at Kirby in 1935.

Also in 1935, my father, Jay Buzenberg, went to work with my uncle, Fred Walker. My mother, Mavourreen (Walker) Buzenberg, helped with the bookkeeping for a short time so you can see it is a family store. In 1940 my sister, Eleanor (Buzenberg) Neynaber, took charge of the bookkeeping and she is still in charge of the office activities. She was a former partner in the business.

Many of the old time customers remember my uncle and mother's father, Edward Walker, (my grandfather). He was at the Loraine, and also the Kirby store on Grand River in Detroit. He passed away in 1951.

I started to work for my uncle when I was going to school at the age of 14 doing odd jobs. After graduation from Northwestern High School in 1942, I started to sell furniture. In 1949 Fred Walker passed away suddenly and the Walker & Buzenberg family decided to carry on the business.

Also in 1949 the State Highway Commission wanted our building for the Edsel Ford Expressway (south of the Olympia), so we built a store in 1951 and moved into our new building at 13131 Grand River (between Meyers and Schaefer). My sister and cousins were partners with me in this joint venture.

In May of 1965 tragedy struck when lightning and fire completely destroyed the store and all contents. My former partner and cousin, Harvey Walker, and I decided we would carry on the store and moved to 20924 West Seven Mile Rd. The name was changed from Walker Furniture Sales to the new name of Walker & Buzenberg Furniture Sales. We opened in July of 1965.

My father, "Jay," worked until he was 80 years old at the Grand River stores. He passed away in 1962 at the age of 84 and most people thought that the "Old Dutchman" was not that old. We have made many friends over the 38 years or so that my sister and I have been working.

My former partner, Harvey Walker, wanted to leave last year by either dissolving the business or having me buy his half of the business. I was undecided as to what to do but finally decided to buy him out and keep the business going. I feel that I have at least 10 or 15 years to give my all to the business with God permitting. I have three sons and I hope maybe some day at least one, two or possibly all three will continue on the family business.

We have had many wonderful people working for us through the years that have contributed so much to making this business a success as it is now. We are MOVING AGAIN with strength and vigor in 1978 with the thought of saving people money and giving them quality merchandise at good prices and good service. We hope our new location will help serve everybody. We are not fancy but do save you money.

We would like to be in our new location by the middle or end of May. Our new location will be right in the center of Plymouth, Michigan at 240 North Main Street (next to Kroger's at the railroad tracks and in front of the building where the old Daisy Air Riffles were made (now the Adira Corp.). We are close to I-96 and I-275 so it should be only a 5 or 20 minute ride for most people. We will have plenty of free parking. We are notifying only customers of the last 4 years by mail because of possible address changes. We realize some former customers may thus not be notified, therefore, please tell your grandparents, your parents, family and friends. We want your business but also want you to feel free to come in and just browse if you wish. We would like to see familiar faces and hope to make new friends. Thank you.

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Edward (Eddie) Buzenberg

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Contractors report business is up

The local construction industry is alive and growing. That encouraging word comes from William Stewart, executive director of the Association of General Contractors of the metropolitan Detroit area.

"Commercial and industrial construction in this area have picked up significantly," said Stewart. He said there's a considerable amount of work in the public sector, backed by federal money.

"We're looking forward to an increase in projects from the federal government—sewage treatment, clean water and so on," he said.

Stewart also pointed to the fact there is currently an increase in private construction, "particularly in the automotive area," he said. "All signs point to an increase in all areas of the construction industry at the moment," he said.

William Rice, president of the Associated Underground Contractors, Inc., says there is a lot of work to be done in the metropolitan area and "a continuing tremendous amount of work financed by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)." He added that business in the underground construction area (tunnels, sewers and

water) is definitely up from last year.

One negative aspect in the otherwise bright picture of underground construction industry deals with the completion of a new sewage treatment facility in Detroit.

"The city is under a court order to build the facility and stop the pollution of Lake Erie," said Rice. "The metro Detroit area is suffering because Detroit can't handle a sewage increase until the facility is complete. It's having a domino effect on surrounding communities."

RICE POINTED to the fact that Michigan has \$202 million allocated by the EPA for clean water work. "There is a tremendous amount of work to be done here," he said. "\$50-60 million has been allocated to Oakland County alone," he said, adding that the money was released in April. "Bloomfield Township itself has access to \$5 million," commented Rice.

Although much remains to be done in underground construction in Michigan, Rice finds nothing in Wayne County specifically on the high priority list. "Oakland County has three fairly top jobs in Waterford Township, Avon and Bloomfield Township," he said,

"but I see nothing of high priority in Wayne County at this time."

Business in the above ground industrial area is up from last year, but only by a fair amount, according to Tom Landary, secretary of Elkin, Johnson, Korb, Inc., construction company in Oak Park. "We're experiencing steady growth right now," he said.

A major construction job the corporation is handling in Wayne County is an addition to the General Motors assembly plant in Westland. "We're working on a \$5,000 square foot automotive warehouse there," said Landary.

Dearborn Heights is acquiring a new 5,000 crypt mausoleum in St. Hedwig cemetery, and West Bloomfield is preparing for the new Temple Israel, according to Landary.

He also said his company is constructing a 1,200 car parking structure adjacent to Renaissance Center in Detroit, additions and modifications to the administration buildings at the Detroit-Windsor tunnel and an 1,100 car parking structure at Harper Grace Hospital in Detroit.

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION in western Wayne County and Farm-

ington Hills is up roughly 10 per cent from last year in new home building, says Marry Dembs, owner of Dembs Building Company in Southfield and president of the Michigan Homebuilders Association.

"Now is the time to buy," he said, listing Plymouth Township, Canton Township and Farmington Hills as the areas of prime location.

"People are coming out in droves to buy," said Dembs. "They're anxious to buy for several reasons. One is that they can deduct the interest from their income taxes, and the other is investment," he said. "We have found buying a new home is the best investment going today," said Dembs. "It is one of the only purchases that has appreciation value — and it gives people a feeling of greater security to have their money in a house rather than a bank," he said.

Dembs said people are moving from suburb to suburb now, leaving Garden City and Westland for areas such as Plymouth Township and Canton.

"People are trying to upgrade themselves," he said, "and they want all the residential features — bedrooms, two and a half car garage, and so on. They're looking for triple A locations."

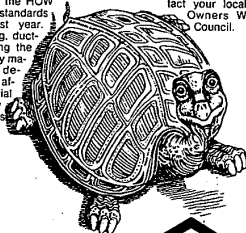
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