

# Franklin band to sound music at festival

By LORRAINE McCLISH  
Dr. Conrad R. Lam and the Franklin Village Community Band return to the Farmington Founders Festival for the 14th consecutive year, with a concert in Downtown Shopping Center July 26.

Following tradition of former festivals, the band's 25 members, custom-fitted with maroon blazers, straw hats and string ties, once again will play the music to herald the new Miss Farmington.

The band's concert will run simultaneously with the Miss Farmington Pageant. When the new Miss Farmington is announced in Vladimir's, a motorcade will form to travel west down

Grand River to the Downtown Shopping Center, where she will make her first public appearance, welcomed to the music of the Franklin Village Band.

The bandsmen accept the challenge of being called "America's Number One Community Brass Band."

The group is a perennial winner of trophies at the Michigan State Fair. The musicians are regularly invited performers in Greenfield Village and in Tiger Stadium.

The band scheduled 38 concerts a year and is consistently booked solid one year in advance.

THE MUSIC runs from polkas to

Tschaikowsky, tailored to the event, stemming from the musician's 500-piece repertoire.

"And we do exceptionally well with marches," said Bill Ellison, president, manager and all-round bag-man for the group.

Ellison and Lam are the two remaining members of the band which began almost 20 years ago when four men with horns from college days took borrowed music, props from the nearest Salvation Army Store, and started playing

together. "The biggest thing we had going for us was Dr. Lam (a cornetist) who gave us a strong determination to succeed," Ellison said.

"We still have that determination, coupled with the belief that every town should have a community band."

The four were all Franklin Village residents, and rehearsals are still held in Franklin Community Church, but residency has never been a requirement for member-

ship. The band now is made up of engineers, doctors, dentists, salesmen, a newspaper man, machinists, realtors, retirees, housewives and students, who live in many parts of the metropolitan area.

"We thrive on achieving new heights in the rendition of music," Ellison said.

"The glue that holds us together is a close esprit de camaraderie and Lam's excellent leadership."

Ellison, who plays clarinet, alto and tenor saxophone, says his

managerial position is held with pretty loose strings.

"But they've got to show up for rehearsals or have a pretty good reason why they're not there," he said.

If something takes one member of the band away from a scheduled concert, Ellison said he has a long list of high quality musicians he can call for fill-ins.

"Then we go with what we have and we come up looking good. We always have."

## Tickets rile residents

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"They always make the same comments," Miss Malfert observed. The guides all said they try to take the joshing with good humor, although it can try the patience. Sometimes they even keep count of the number of times they hear a particular comment during a day. Miss Petrella said that once while she worked at the Clinton Inn, tourists jokingly asked her to "set 'em up" at least 15 times in 20 minutes.

Even the genuine questions can be repetitive. In almost every group that visits the Lincoln courthouse there is someone who wants to know if the hair oil stains on the headrest of Lincoln's theater seat from the Ford Theater are actually traces of the president's blood. "Everybody asks that one," Miss Malfert said.

NOT ALL OF THE village guides are college students. Virginia Willoughby of Southfield is one of the housewives who work from fall through spring when the younger guides are in school.

Guides start at the minimum wage, so money was not a consideration for Mrs. Willoughby. "I hadn't planned on going to work," said Mrs. Willoughby, whose children are grown, "but it sounded like something I'd want to do all my life."

She enjoys meeting people from all over the world, and spoke enthusiastically about the surroundings.

"It's an extremely interesting place to work," she added that being in an atmosphere so rich in American history sometimes leaves her awestruck. She recalled a quiet afternoon last winter when she was working in the Wright brothers' bicycle shop.

"I noticed a jet cutting across the sky and it struck me then that I was sitting right there where aviation

began," she said. "You realize that the Wright brothers' first flight wasn't even as long as that jump jet."

Kay Pearce of Troy is another winter guide.

"I like the public contact," she said. The variety and history of the village keep her job from becoming boring, she added. "It's sure not like sitting behind a desk."

Mrs. Pearce said she tries to convey to visitors what Henry Ford had in mind when he conceived of and put together the village.

"He was trying to preserve the history of the United States and how people here lived," she said.

School groups provide a special challenge for Mrs. Pearce. "I try to reach out and get them interested in some little thing." In the Thomas Edison workshop, for example, she asks children to imagine their homes without electricity. "They just can't do it," she exclaimed. "It's so much a part of their lives."

But if she can capture the imagination of the young people who visit Greenfield Village about them some aspect of the way life was lived in America's past, Kay Pearce believes she is meeting the challenge her job presents.

## Olivet College honors Farmington resident

Farmington resident, Sue Flessa, was named to the academic achievement list at Olivet College during spring term.

Miss Flessa, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Flessa of Farmington, is a junior majoring in music at Olivet.

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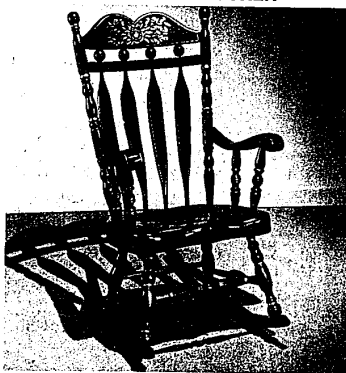
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