

'Babies' waiting for adoption

Thursday, October 11, 1979

(F7A)

By KATHY PARRISH
Adoption usually is a long, involved process. But an Avon Township store has a whole basketful of babies waiting for good homes.

Tucked into the new "adoption center" at Mary Jane Flowers and Gifts, Inc. are several "Little People" dolls recently arrived from Babyland General. The soft-sculpture "babies" (not "dolls," a term which offends the one-of-a-kind newborns) are products of "designer-physician" Xavier Roberts of Cleveland, Ga.

A birth certificate complete with footprints and the artist's thumbprint

comes with each polyester baby. New parents receive adoption papers with a registration number.

On his or her first birthday, each hand-sculpted tyke will receive a birthday card from the creator.

"Most people buy them because they're so appealing," says Patricia Potts, who owns the flower shop with her husband Richard. "They fall in love with them and can't resist."

THE TROY mother-of-three speaks from experience. She spotted the babies this summer in a nursery display at the Chicago gift show — complete with nurse salespeople — and just had

to buy them as gift items for the holiday season.

She and her sister-in-law Vicki, who owns Mary Jane Flowers and Gifts, Inc. in Royal Oak with her husband Alan Potts, insisted on placing an order over their husbands' objections.

"We talked the men into it. Every time one is adopted we rub it in a little bit," she smiles.

Although confident the \$100 items would sell eventually, the storeowner admits she was amazed by their quick success. "They're expensive, but there's a lot of workmanship in them," observes Mrs. Potts, whose hobby is

doll-making.

"They're just so lovable people can't resist. We even get attached to them and hate to see them go."

All limited signed editions, the "Little People" have dimples, navels and birthmarks (the artist's signature across their pudgy bottoms).

An elaborate public relations campaign has been worked up by Roberts to sell the babies. The maker requires stores which stock them to set up an adoption center or special corner, with a crib if possible. "This promotes adoptions," reads the extensive literature delivered with the soft-sculptures.

SALESPERSONS ARE asked to ease the diaper down when showing each baby's special features "so as not to embarrass" him or her.

A tag pinned to the baby's outfit, actually newborn clothing, carries his name and a little background.

Prospective parents are advised that the youngsters were "found in a cabbage patch" and that some are "mischievous, others have fussy tempers, most just love to be held — some even have diaper rash."

Mrs. Potts said her employees have enjoyed the babies — which carry exotic names like Cleve Alston, Rose Polly, Henley Gate, Veronica Libby and Courtney Duke. And she'll probably stock them as long as they're made.

"We've had fun with them," she said, hugging Veronica Libby. "We think of them as people."

Art, craft event has a Renaissance theme

Northminster Presbyterian Church, 3633 West Big Beaver, Troy, will present its seventh annual art and craft show, Friday, Oct. 19 and Saturday, Oct. 20. The selected artists will offer their work in a colorful setting with a Renaissance theme.

The Friday Night Show will run from 7:30-10 p.m. with an opening reception scheduled for 8:30 p.m. A concert will feature bell ringers, madrigal singers and special music.

Saturday hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Artists and patrons alike will be entertained by medieval musicians and guided by hostesses in period dress.

A "Lost 'N' Round" cheeses, mulled cider and coffee will be available.

Patrons will take special note as

they enter the contemporary interpretation of the rose windows at Notre Dame Cathedral. Done with translucent fabric, these stained glass "illusions" will be hung to achieve a cloister effect in the central hallway of the Yamasaki-designed church. Leslie Masters, well-known Troy artist, has fashioned this work of art.

Over 70 artists will display their work. Specialties represented include paintings in all media, graphics, jewelry, metal engraving, china painting, photography, sculpture, toys, glass, weaving, leather, and pottery.

Northminster is located just west of Somerset Mall between Coolidge and Adams. Ample parking is available on the church grounds.

Artist to share views

Bloomfield Hills artist, Thelma Abel will give a slide program on her work for the Women's Alliance of the Birmingham Unitarian Church. In "A View of the Artist," she will cover her paintings from the beginning to the present along with her work in clay.

tours for the same group, "A Beginning Exploration of Contemporary Art."

The slide lecture will be open to visitors. The gallery tours will be open to the public only if the maximum of 15 participants is not reached within the church group. For information on the programs, call Mary Valpey, 855-9872.



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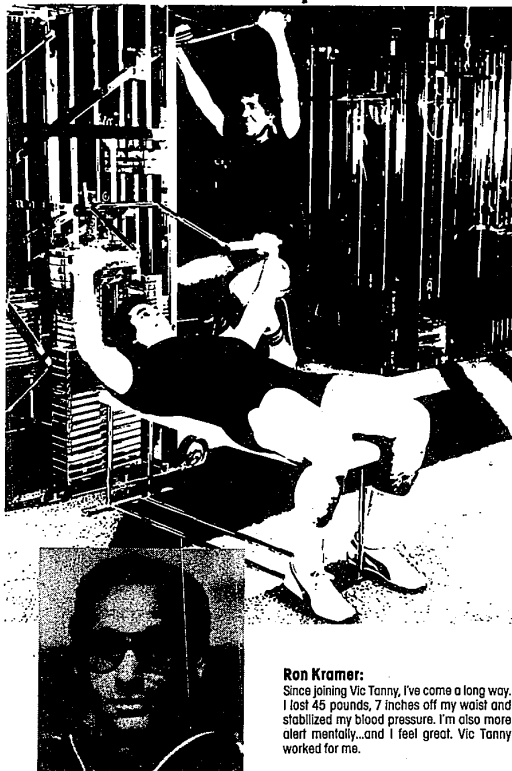
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