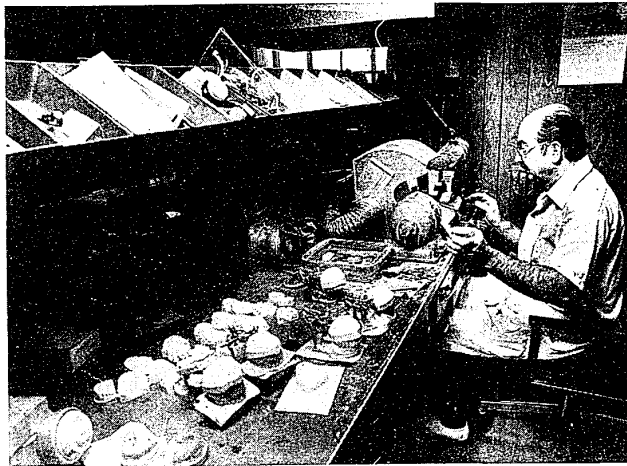


Business

Trio sink teeth (and dentures) into new venture



Jack Mooridian trims teeth at the House of Dentures. Beside him are rows of dentures in various stages of completion. (Staff photos by Randy Borst)

Three men in varying stages of retirement decided to return to work on their own terms last year.

The trio combined their talents in dentistry to open the House of Dentures, 28350 Grand River in Farmington Hills.

Their intent is to cater to senior citizen patrons and turn out quality work at their own pace. They price their work to fit seniors' budgets.

Technicians Jack and Jerry Mooridian and dentist Dr. Robert Vernier rely on advertising and word of mouth to attract the amount of business they want to handle.

"We wanted to break even. When we started, we projected the amount of business we needed to do that. We've gone over that now," said Vernier.

To start off their new venture, the trio took advantage of the profession's new freedom to advertise and placed small ads in the local newspapers.

Advertising was the key factor the group considered when they opened.

"That was the basis of the thing," said Vernier. We can advertise. I still believe that dentists wouldn't advertise a \$50 crown or something along those lines. But dentures, yes."

Keeping productive outwits making the kind of salary they did before they went into their own brand of semi-retirement, the three say.

"It's a hobby," said Vernier, who sees his patients in the clinic on the first floor of the two-story green building. The Mooridian brothers shape dentures, partials and bridges for the patients in their top floor work area.

"The satisfaction makes up for the income," Vernier said.

"Yes, it's a great satisfaction to see the dentures actually being worn by someone," said Jack Mooridian.

The upstairs-downstairs arrangement in the clinic allows the partners to consult while a patient is still in the dentist's chair. It also allows the business to promise fast repairs and delivery of a new set of teeth to the patient.

Vernier admits that his semi-retired status allows him to give more time to patients and counsel them on what to expect when they receive their new dentures. Counseling, Vernier says, can reduce the amount of anxiety a patient might have about wearing the teeth.

Vernier quit his practice in July 1978 with the intention of looking after his investments. Six months later he was joined by the Mooridians, slightly weary of babysitting his investments after 26 years of dentistry.

The Mooridian brothers worked with Vernier's father and brother before joining with him.

THE ELDER brother, Jack, has logged 42 years at the bench fashioning teeth to replace what Mother Nature discarded. Jerry Mooridian followed in his brother's footsteps and has put in 34 years in the field.

Both men began their craft while in their teens. Jack Mooridian was still a high school student in New York when he began looking for a trade during the Depression. He chose mechanical dentistry because he thought it dealt with making tools for dentists.

Instead, he learned to make the vul-

'We gave her the Hollywood treatment. She looked beautiful. But she didn't like them at first. Her boyfriend said they looked horrible.' She returned in two weeks ecstatic. She dropped her old boyfriend, met a new man and married.

canized rubber gums for false teeth until celluloid was introduced. But the Mooridians and their patrons soon discovered that celluloid faded into a light pink after wearing. It was replaced by acrylics which were nicely but looked unnatural. Now, fibers are placed in the acrylic gum to make it appear more natural.

As the trade changed, so did Mooridian's practice. His brothers joined him at the bench until World War II. After the war, they returned to work but one brother, John, plagued by failing eyesight, left for a less detailed occupation.

Materials used in fashioning the teeth changed after the war. The coloring in porcelain teeth was shaded so the tips were almost translucent, as with real teeth.

WHILE porcelain teeth look nice, acrylic teeth are easier on the jaw, ac-

ording to the elder Mooridian.

One innovation which goes unreminded by the brothers are teeth fashioned by a Japanese manufacturer. While the teeth are attractive and natural, alcohol leaves an indelible stain on them.

Another aspect of the craft involves placing the teeth in the gums. Years ago, teeth were placed in a straight row, like piano keys. The current trend is to place them in a slightly irregular row to mimic a natural setting.

Beyond cosmetics, the placement of the teeth are important to their usefulness. A proper bite must be built into the dentures. Without that, the teeth could cause the wearer's jaw to set crookedly. Difficulty in chewing food also follows a bite alignment.

Health, weight loss and age affect the fit of a set of teeth.

The lower jaw of a diabetic will shrink so the dentures will lose their fit. Porcelain linings help the denture to fit, according to Mooridian. Weight loss will make dentures looser but a weight gain won't affect the fit.

AGE cause tissues to shrink thus changing the fit of a pair of dentures. Trimming after wearing a new set for a while can help the fit and eliminate some sore spots.

An attractive set of well-fitting teeth can have interesting effects on a personality, the brothers contend. Years ago, they knew a young waitress in a diner near their office in Detroit. The waitress had worn dentures since she was about 15 years old.

"They looked horrible," Jack Mooridian remembered. "I told her, go to a dentist, get an impression done and we'll give you a set of teeth that will make you look your age instead of looking like an old lady."

"She did. We gave her the Hollywood treatment. They looked beautiful. But she didn't like them at first. Her boyfriend said they looked horrible. I told her, wear them for two weeks and then come back. If you don't like them, we'll make you a set just like your old ones."

She returned in two weeks, ecstatic. She dropped her old boyfriend, met a new man and married.

"I never saw anything like it," said Jerry Mooridian, shaking his head.

market place

THE SALES and Marketing Council of the Southeastern Michigan Builders Association is looking for judges to help select the top Idea Home for 1980. The 1980 Parade of Idea Homes includes 50 new models on display throughout southeastern Michigan. The homes are being exhibited in conjunction with the Builders Homes Flower Furniture Show, March 15-23 at Cobo Hall. Those interested should submit a card with their name saying they would like to be a judge in care of Dallas Nagy, Sales and Marketing Council, 8th Floor, One Northland Plaza, Southfield 48075.

A NATIONWIDE decline in home prices was recorded in November, a time when prices traditionally have risen by \$200-500, according to the National Association of Realtors. "Tight money, declining sales and sales of smaller homes are directly responsible for the modest decline in prices," says Jack Carlson, executive vice president of the group. "The median price of a single-family home fell from \$55,500 to \$55,000, or 1.2 percent from October to November 1979. However, despite the monthly price decline, resale properties are still priced 9.7 percent higher than one year ago."

SHAREHOLDERS of The Wayne Oakland Bank approved affiliation with the First American Bank Corp. at a special shareholders' meeting Jan. 9. The Wayne Oakland Bank has 13 offices and assets of \$448 million. First American operates affiliate banks with more than 118 offices around Michigan with assets totaling \$1.7 billion.

COMPUWARE Corp. of Southfield became an authorized dealer for Digital Equipment Corp. and will market Digital computer products. Compuware specializes in providing general business systems to perform accounting functions.

CORE Industries, Inc. of Birmingham announced a three for two split in its common stock. The company also announced an increase in its quarterly cash dividend to 18 cents per share from 14.5 cents per share, an increase of 24 percent. This marks the company's 21st consecutive year of cash dividend increases. The stock split and the cash dividend are payable on March 19 to stockholders of record on Feb. 25. The new quarterly rate after the stock split will be 12 cents per share.

BUSINESSES wishing to submit items for Marketplace should send them at least one week in advance to Ron Garbinski, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48012. Please include a contact person and telephone number along with your release.

D'ARCY—MacManus & Masius has reached an agreement in principle to acquire de Garmo, Inc. with offices in New York, Miami and Bogota, Columbia. DM&M is the 10th largest advertising agency in the world with offices in Bloomfield Hills. Its major accounts are General Tire, Pontiac and Cadillac car divisions of General Motors and Florist Transworld Delivery. de Garmo is an international advertising agency with billings of about \$50 million. With the addition of de Garmo, DM&M will have 37 offices in 21 countries with annual billings nearing \$900 million.

PERRY Drug Stores' 1979 prescription sales climbed to a record \$17.4 million, up 32 percent from \$13.2 million in 1978. The number of prescriptions filled by the chain increased 15 percent to a record 2,454,000 from 2,131,000. That amounts to 16 percent of the total corporate sales of \$108.3 million, up 23 percent from \$89.2 million in 1978.

FAYGO Beverages, Inc. reports its 1979 sales in Michigan were down more than 10 percent and up over five percent in out-state markets. The company's 1979 earnings will show a more than 50 percent decline in soft drink sales. The company noting a 30 percent increase in employment during 1979 and said costs of handling glass, can and plastic containers on a returnable basis proved greater and more persistent than the company anticipated prior to Michigan's bottle law going into effect. Faygo operates in 20 states. Michigan is the only one which requires deposit-return packaging.



Gums are molded using a hand press (above left). Teeth are then placed in the gums (center). The finished product (right), a complete set of dentures.

Inventor concentrates on selling those great ideas

By BRIAN PATTERSON

If you are an inventor with what you believe is a really great idea but can't figure out how to open the doors of opportunity, Paul Angott may have your key.

A 1970 graduate of Oakland University, Angott will teach a course on the Rochester area campus this winter semester called "I've Got a Great Invention, Now What Do I do?"

The typical inventor, Angott said, can create imaginative and useful ideas but lacks the business sense to sell and license it. His course will concentrate on marketing techniques.

An inventor in his own right, Angott owns Innovative Products Corp. of Madison Heights. He holds one patent on a thermostat regulator and has another pending on a light-weight ceiling fan.

"The typical inventor has an engineering or technical background. They're the type of guys you slide a paper under their door; they solve the problem and slide it back out."

"I know one guy with a terrific invention, but he couldn't sell lemonade to the Arabs," Angott said.

FORMERLY A management consultant with Touche Ross and Co. and a staff supervisor in engineering with Michigan Bell, Angott said marketing, and not the idea itself, is the key to successful inventing.

"My strong suit is marketing and sales, not inventing. You win in the marketplace. The key is whether or not

the idea sells. I'm not suggesting people sell poor products, but that they learn to market inventions well," Angott said.

The 31-year-old Troy resident said he was inspired to teach the course after consulting with numerous inventors who had good ideas, but couldn't sell them.

The course is being offered as part of OU's continuing education program. It will be held Tuesday evenings from Jan. 22 to Feb. 19.

While his "door is always open" for free consultation with serious inventors, Angott said he has never heard of a similar course ever being offered or seen a book adequately dealing with inventions.

THE COURSE will teach how to present ideas, how to sell them and how to judge the marketplace to test the viability of an idea, Angott said.

A patent attorney and a marketing expert will be among others included as guest speakers, he said.

"You've got to see the need in the market place and invent to that need. I've seen some inventors come up with some pretty crazy things," Angott said.

After determining a specific market need, Angott said the next step is to perform product-costing.

"Say you plan to produce 10-25,000 units and the raw materials cost \$10 for each. By the time it reaches the market, it's going to cost the consumer between three and five times that \$10," Angott said.



Inventor Paul Angott will teach a course in "I've got a great invention, now what do I do?" at Oakland University beginning Jan. 22. (Staff photo by David Frank)