

New gallery debuts as an indoor art fair



Father and son Ed and Andrew Baker have created an informal and comfortable atmosphere for visitors to browse through the collection of art in Pictures Galore & More that all comes from local artists. The two work with Joan Lane in downtown Farmington's new gallery which officially opens during Founders Festival days.

By Loraine McClish staff writer

The century-old building at Farmington Road and Grand River for a long while housed a drugstore and more recently a hardware store. Now the building has turned art gallery.

Potters from Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus will be doing green work and firing on the building's back porch during Founders Festival days, while welcoming guests to come in and browse.

"The work of the campus potters dominate the display windows this week. They are our featured artists now, so they are the ones who are here for our official opening," Ed Baker said.

Pictures Galore & More is owned and operated by Baker, his son Andrew, and Joan Lane, all Farmington Hills residents, whose goal is to create an indoor art fair.

"All of the work, without exception, comes to us from local artists," Baker said. "We're creating an informal atmosphere for the browsers and the buyers who won't have to wait for the next outdoor fair to find reasonably priced original work."

"THE HANGING art in all mediums and the broad selection of three-dimensional work in Pictures Galore & More will be held to a \$10-300 price range, "about the same prices you could expect at an outdoor sale," Baker said.

On even a cursory tour of the spacious gallery, a visitor can spot the work of artists whose names crop up over and again as prize winners in area shows: Marilyn Lillygren, Nancy Modloff Davis, Donna Vogelheim, Monica Leaning, Marge Chelstrop, Connie Powell Teeples, Dick Larson, Margaret Halava and Frank Lohman, to name just a few.

The three owners approached some of the contributing artists after they had seen their work in other shows, and many of those who have joined Pictures Galore & More are members of Farmington Artists Club.

"Few local artists ever get the opportunity to sell in a gallery," Baker said. "With the large amount of talent we have to draw from now we will be able to show about 1,000 pieces in a mix of work at all times. And the displays will be changing constantly because we hold strictly to keeping each piece no longer than 60 days."

ANDREW BAKER, a recent graduate of Michigan State, predicts Pictures Galore & More ultimately will be showing a continuous recycling of the works of about 300 artists.

"The cycle will work out to about 40 pieces coming in and going out every day, so every time you come in there will be something new to see," he said.

What passers-by see from the traditional store front windows are displays set up by the individual artist who is featured for each two-week period.

"There is an unusual amount of window space here, and it's all theirs to use as they will," Andrew Baker said, speaking of the show windows that circle around both corners of the building.

For the rest of the gallery the elder Baker drew on his experience as an industrial engineer in utilizing the available space.

Both Lane and Baker retired from their former jobs to enter the new business venture. Baker contributes to the gallery hangings with his photographs. His favorite subjects are flowers, photographed as an art form.

"I always took pictures of just what I wanted, and for some reason people always bought them. It seems to satisfy whatever artistic bent I have," he said.



The pottery featured in Pictures Galore & More, this week (at right) comes from Ed Cloutier, Ken Baskin, Joan Hermann, Shirley Ziems and Nancy Hurd. Potters from Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus will be working on the new gallery's back porch today through Saturday, festival days, in conjunction with the gallery's opening.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Scandia Downs

She plans to blanket the town with comfort

By Jeanne Whittaker staff writer

YOU CAN'T fluff off the accomplishments, determination and imagination of this local resident. Cynthia "Cindy" Adams Leonard, The Birmingham resident's involvement in area activities

stretches back over a decade to include the presidency of the Junior League when it worked out a plan to bring the Virginia Slims tennis tournament to Detroit.

Now, Leonard has gone into private business, which is a drastic deviation from an active volunteer career that encompassed board seats with agencies

such as the Merrill-Palmer Institute, Detroit Institute for Children, Now Horizons of Oakland County, and Tim-Hon-Go. According to Leonard, who owns and operates the Scandia Down franchise at Hunter's Square in Farmington Hills, the time had come for a change.

The shop, she explained, specializes

in down-filled comforters, pillows, and a line of accessories including sheet covers, down-filled robes and adult-size booties. It was founded several years before she bought the franchise by the Scandia Down Corp., a Seattle-based company which immediately bumped head on into Michigan's difficult franchise laws when it tried to divest

itself of operating the shop.

Months passed and what seemed hundreds of letters exchanged handed before Scandia Down finally persuaded the state to grant it the right to sell the franchise. And, said Leonard, that is where she, a former real estate broker with Weir, Manuel, Snyder & Ranke, came into the picture.

Actually, she said, taking on the franchise was an adventure into the unknown since she knew little about the difference between feathers and down at the time. However, since assuming the franchise, the biggest problem she has encountered is keeping clients from curling up for a snooze on the displays of feather-filled and down-stuffed comforters. To the surprise, and some dismay, of everyone in the shop, she said, one customer spent the better part of an afternoon rest-testing bed pillows atop a display.

PRIMARILY A bedding shop, Leonard said there are plans to expand the merchandise offered to a growing clientele who have discovered the benefits of the European steep style. Her franchise includes the option to open a number of other stores in the metropolitan Detroit area, including ones in Birmingham and Grosse Pointe. She also plans to add a line of beds by Christmastide.

Noting that each new career has presented an opportunity to learn something, Leonard said she spent two weeks at the Seattle headquarters to learn about the products she would be selling. It was, she said, an eye-opening experience.

"I went thinking that it wouldn't be too terribly hard to learn about what the products are," she said. Instead, she added, it was difficult to absorb all there was to know.

"The down comes from Europe. Did you know that the finest white down comes from Poland? It's the finest goose down you can get. Anyway, it is sent in huge bales to Seattle where it is made up to Scandia specifications.



Cindy Leonard

They use ticking woven in Germany of Egyptian cottons."

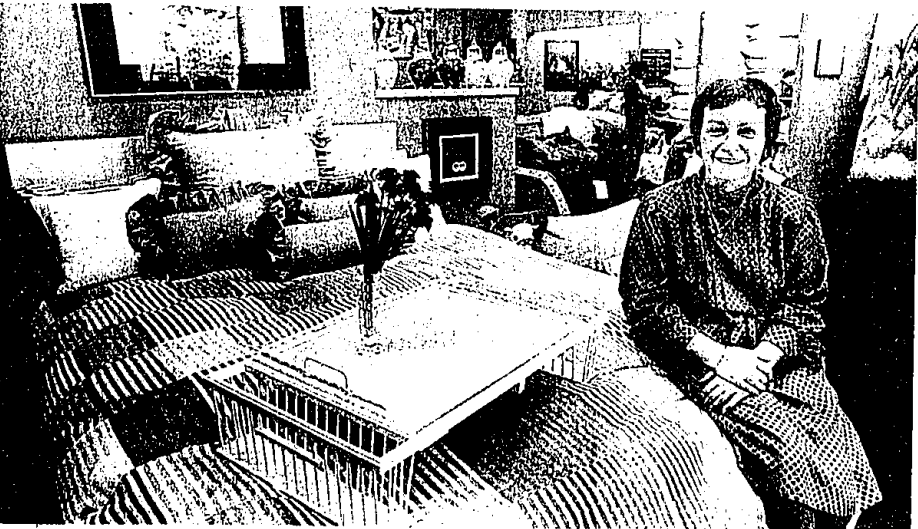
The down comforters are all designed to emulate Grandma's bedroom temperatures. The company is so sure of its products that it offers customers a limited 3-10 year warranty if the comforter is protected by a sheetcase, which she also sells.

"Dogs and cats create real havoc with comforters," she said with a knowing look.

Her sheetcases, which resemble huge pillow cases, and matching pillow cases, she said, are not only utilitarian, but useful. Produced in a variety of patterns, from classic eyelid edging to futuristic, sheetcase-covered comforters are growing in popularity, particularly with clients who not only like the ease and convenience but like to change the decor of their bedrooms with each season.

"We are trying to develop a summer weight comforter, and we plan to eventually get into towels and other accessories. We have a lot of customers who are adding to their collections over a period of time."

WHICH IS THE WAY that most people Please turn to Page 4



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

After many years of developing a career as a volunteer, Cindy Leonard is now into private business. Taking on a franchise was an

adventure into the unknown; but as in all her previous experience, it has presented an opportunity to learn.