Some merchants disappointed

Continued from Page 1
for the last-minute Christmas rush, one store owner, Harry Wingerfer, president of the Parmington Down to the Parmington Down to the Parmington Down to the Parmington Down to the Christmas cheer early; spread to Christmas cheer early to the Christmas cheer "phenomenal" this year, More popular items this year, tetermined by the number of times each sold out, were simmering pois (ceramile pois that hold water in a container below a saucer of potpurit,) jewelry and the ever-popular stuffed animals.

THIS YEAR'S most-sought-after animal was the talking or musical bear, said Marie Laethem, assistant manager at the Bon Too Shoppe in the Downtown Farmington Center. The Avani label, stuffed animals from Italy, soid extremely well, she added, despite the \$40-plus prices. Wingerter, who said his store experienced a "double-digit increase" in sales this year, attributed the store's popularily to the array of merchandise available.

**Most merchants agreed that gift

Most merchants agreed that gift hops traditionally do better during

Most merchants agreed that gitted shops traditionally do better during the holiday season.
"Small glit glving versus glits of clothing usually wins out," said one store manager.
While the sale of clothes may have

'While the sale of clothes may have been on the wane this year, stores such as Radio Shack and Pler 1 Imports in the Downtown Farmington Center noted increases.

This year's most surprising new bestseller, beating out the popularity of computers in years past, were radio-controlled cars, computer software and strangely enough, robots, at Radio Shack. Robble, Sr. and Robble, Jr., \$180 and \$80, respectively, vide for the attention of holiday shoppers and apparently won them over, said store manager Russ Jedlick. Both robots

can be programmed to make turns or wake up the kids in the morning, he added.

PIER 1 Imports manager Jeff Prusbour decided the audden in-crease in sales during the past week was due to "shoppers just getting scared" that Christmas was nearing. Brass, clothes and furniture re-mained strong sellers this year, along with traditional favorites of wicker baskets and rugs. Merchants who didn't worry about holiday sales were those who oper-ate record and book stores. In both cases, sales were up and

holiday sales were those who operate record and book stores.

In both cases, asles were up and expected to rise "up to the last minute" as shoppers reached the end of their Christmas lists and opted fine old standays of books and music.

Managers at both Harmony House stores in Farmington and Farmington Hills agreed that compact discs were best sellers this year, attributed, they said, to so many people receiving disc players last year for Christmas.

Sales were phenomenal, manager

Sales were phenomenal, manager Cheri Brunette said, as were the de-mands for Bruce Springsteen's las-

mands for Bruce Springsteen's las-test allums at Pages and Pages in Hunters Square were brisk, said owner Grace Gilmore, one of the few merchants in that shopping center noticing increased Christmas sales over last year.

"Books are the best buy," she said.
"You can get them at the last minute and they suit anybody."

WHILE MOST merchants at Hunters Square in Farmington Hills dismally noted the lack of last-mington the shoppers, Leona Weinberg, owner of Leona's, proudly displayed her latest wares from New York for fashion-conscious women.
"Two been in business for 27 years and have my own following," she said.

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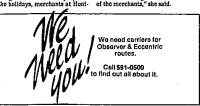
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added.
Another store that witnessed the mad rush of shoppers was nevely arrived Metro Gifts at Hunters Square.
Specializing in unique gifts ranging from car-shaped car phones porcelain masks, Metro Gifts caters to the "untraditional" gift giver, said manager Brian Holmes.
While most Farmington an Farmington iiills residents prepared for the holidays, merchants at Hunt-





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