



focus: small business

Mary
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Business does well through 2 art fairs

Summer represents the time of year when cities and towns throughout the state celebrate festivals, art fairs and other community events. Of those, the Ann Arbor and Wyandotte art fairs are ranked first and second largest in the state.

Both serve as excellent examples of how the business, industrial and residential communities can be linked in setting and accomplishing specific goals for everyone's benefit.

The Ann Arbor fair now attracts nearly 1,000 artists and 500,000 potential buyers each July. Of the three separate fairs that comprise the event, the original fair in the South University section of town will be celebrating its 30th year in 1989 by displaying the work of some 200 artists from more than 30 states.

According to Bill Hart, president of the Main Street Merchant's Association, art fair weekend also represents the biggest selling days of the year for many local merchants.

"People are ready to buy when they come to Ann Arbor, so we get ready for them."

The Wyandotte fair celebrated its 27th birthday this year as a single event that hosted more than 400 artists and attracted 250,000 people.

It is hard to believe that both art fairs started out as small events, involving only a handful of organizers and artists.

The Wyandotte fair officially opened on a cold, wet September day in 1962 when six artists "clustered under the dripping overhang of a vacant storefront on First Street." About a dozen visitors were the first to view the art on display.

In 1963, the Acanthus Art Society Fair, originators of the fair, scoured the city for money while the fair co-chairmen sat at the drawing board designing the booths that have become a permanent feature of the event.

Twenty-four booths were erected in 1963, welcoming 69 artists with merchant-donated coffee and doughnuts. Entertainment was provided by Mae Syc School of Dance and the Royal Lancers. The Wyandotte Community Theater Players gave makeup demonstrations and performed bits from their plays. By the end of the 1983 art fair, some 4,000 had toured the show.

By offering local merchants, residents, artists and visitors the opportunity to meet one another in a hospitable and festive atmosphere while promoting cultural enrichment and understanding, I'd say Ann Arbor and Wyandotte have accomplished their goals. Wouldn't you?

Mary DiPaolo is the owner of MarkeTrends, a Farmington Hills-based business consulting firm. She is also producer and host of the cable television series, "Focus: The Small Business Environment."

Penske earning his money

We've been getting a little mistrustful of entrepreneurs lately, between the Wall Street raiders and one-too-many late-night commercials with the company president dressed in a funny suit.

This is probably with good reason, since lately most of the major shifts of wealth have been coming from somebody or other changing the rules — fiddling with currency, credit and unpaid loans, rather than building up productive businesses.

That's why I was more than a little startled last year to see that Roger Penske got rich enough to buy out a majority interest in GM's Detroit Diesel Allison.

PENSKE WAS already famous in racing circles when he was in college, was racing anybody's car who would pick up the check. Even then, he was a dogged, determined competitor who managed to win, even when he was racing something as unlikely as a hopped-up Rambler.

He was one of a group of hopefuls at the time that included Carroll Shelby and Bruce McLaren, who



auto talk

Dan
McCosh

were mainly interested in piling up enough cash to burn it up at the track.

Ultimately, all these guys got rich — at least rich enough to play with high-rollers, support their racing enterprises and expand into other businesses.

But Penske got serious. STARTING WITH a Chevy dealership on Telegraph, then Hetz, Penske Leasing, more dealerships, heavy-duty diesel distributors. And even more racing.

A private detective on a show I was watching once said about money "I won't kill for it, and I won't marry for it, but I'll do about anything else." A quick review of his business career makes it almost seem as if

Penske has a similar philosophy when it came to building his personal fortune.

The common thread is simply buying into one piece of action after another, building each up and reinvesting the profits. It's textbook business management, without junk bonds, subsidies, cartels or fluctuating currencies.

IT'S SOMETHING of a mom-and-apple-pie approach to making money, but the unanswered question is whether it will work running Detroit Diesel, an enterprise more in scale with a small auto company than a dealership.

In some ways, the Penske take-

over is the last chance for GM chairman Roger Smith to prove his strategy of putting GM assets in the hand of independent entrepreneurs. It was a strategy that led to the selling of the Terex division, then the contracting of much of GM's computer services through EDS Corp. The first ended with the collapse of the West German company that took over Terex, the latter ran afoul of the Ross Perot debacle.

NOW COMES Penske — probably more the kind of businessman Smith had in mind when he launched his program of decentralization of GM management.

Odds are that Penske will do just fine. On the other hand, the Detroit Diesel deal is more of a direct buy-out, not an entangled stock deal as were the first two efforts.

That means, of course, that Penske himself, who takes the risk by investing in Detroit Diesel, also gets to reap the profits.

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marketplace

Language Enterprises of Southfield opened in Suite 2104, 5000 Town Center in Southfield is offering companies on-site lessons in German and Spanish. The telephone number is 357-5413.

Merrill Lynch Realty moved its Troy sales office to Venture Plaza at Big Beaver and Livernois roads.

Seltzer, Kaufmann & McGraw of Southfield was appointed advertising agency and marketing firm for the Michigan Inn Southfield.

T.H.E. Producers Network Inc. of Rochester Hills, a video consulting firm, coordinated the development and production of a corporate marketing videotape for Alpha Bolt Co.

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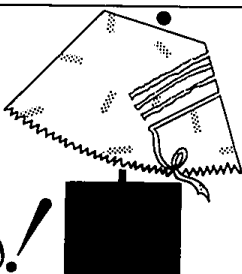
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