

# Flight 103 victim was urbane, unpretentious

The Pan Am flight from Detroit to Frankfurt and back starts to feel like a big, lumbering airborne taxi to auto executives and other machine connections between British and German auto companies and suppliers. The connection through London and through to Detroit saves a couple of hours over standing around New York's JFK, where most international flights terminate, a point of convenience that crowds the route with business travelers.

When Pan Am Flight 103 crashed last week in Scotland, returning from Frankfurt, it seemed inevitable at least one of the victims would be familiar. When I learned that Jim Fuller, vice president of Volkswagen Division, was killed in the crash,

somehow I wasn't surprised. Fuller, who grew up in New Jersey, had made a career of the vagaries of the international auto business. He left Ford in 1975 to join Renault, spent a short time with the joint venture when Renault bought controlling interest in American Motors and then left for Volkswagen.

SOMETIMES HE seemed to be surging just slightly ahead of some wave of catastrophe. His main job at Renault was shopping up dealers who were fast losing confidence in the U.S. organization. Then at AMC he had a similar job.

Porsche was more his style, particularly since they built the sexiest sports cars in the world, and my tele-



auto talk  
**Dan McCosh**

was an unabashed car enthusiast. But the corporate edict was to set Porsche off on its own, and Fuller moved over to Audi division. You know what happened there.

You could sense the Don Quixote instinct returning as Fuller took over Volkswagen. There he had the idea that you could hook up a VW

Rabbit and pass it off as a poor man's Porsche. Luckily, the strategy was credited for turning Volkswagen around, or someone would have caught on that what he really wanted was to have them make a car so that he could have fun driving to the airport.

It was difficult to be in his company for long without catching some

kind of enthusiasm. You were better off letting him order the wine and listen to a good story about scuba diving off Australia's Great Barrier Reef, where he also had some advice about the best guides and boats. He was, in fact, one of the most urbane individuals I've ever met, with a knack for communicating his gourmet tastes without a trace of pretentiousness.

LIKE SO many executives in the auto business, he was tough to keep up with, whether following his time on a gymkhana course or following a line of thought about how this new model was going to set California on fire. Even a new ad campaign ended up seeming like some Hollywood

opening. It's easy to describe something as an international business. In Fuller's company you could feel it, as tangible as the excitement of the next big auto show.

The 747's on overseas routes are as big a part of the auto business today as the telephone and computer. Business travelers sometimes treat the flight as uneventful as a subway ride. But in the end it's a fragile network of technology and cooperation that keeps the system operating.

Fuller's untimely death brings home the need for sufficient peace in the world to allow this thing called business as usual to continue. Dan McCosh is the automotive editor of Popular Science.

## Looking ahead

Best advice may turn out to be no advice at all

With 1989 just around the corner, business forecasters have been having a field day in their attempts to predict what will be happening next year, the year after that, and well into the 21st Century. According to the "experts," the national economy may or may not experience a recession by year-end 1989. With such a clear-as-mud projection to guide long-term investment strategies, the best advice may be no advice at all.

And then there's the "matter of fact." All I know is that one day I read about a local businessman who used his facsimile machine to try to get dates, and the next thing I know, I'm reading about how the "facsimile boom may change the way business corresponds." Considering that these machines run from \$600 to



focus: small business  
**Mary DiPaolo**

\$20,000 and that I am happily married, I'm inclined to continue the business communications process as I always have — by using my telephone lines and trusty computer system.

SPEAKING OF computers, we've been told that computer chips will be 1,000 times more powerful in the years ahead, meaning they will be

faster, cheaper and "friendlier." It is estimated that 70 percent of homes will have personal computers by the year 2000, and we should be able to order our systems to perform routine tasks like turning on the lights, making the coffee and paying the bills. In the meantime, helpful husbands and wives will just have to do.

In a recent issue of Crain's Detroit

Business, an article written by James Melton indicated that Detroit's service economy will continue to expand, creating new jobs much faster than the manufacturing sector. Nationally, more than 800,000 manufacturing jobs are expected to disappear by the year 2000.

How will this projected trend influence growth among the state's small- to mid-size manufacturing firms? In a study by Michigan Bell, Michigan's manufacturers have access to 54 percent of the country's manufacturing activity. Of companies doing business in Michigan, 89 percent are also headquartered here, representing a strong indicator of economic stability.

Michigan also is home to about one-third of high-growth manufacturing industries such as chemicals, plastics, wood products, machinery and electric/electronic components. With these kinds of statistics, I doubt that any predicted slowdown will significantly upset the progress that has been made and can be made in the future.

And what about the future of forecasting? Well, let's put it this way: Crystal balls have been around for centuries, and so have the countless "victims" willing to place their future in someone else's hands.

Mary DiPaolo is the owner of MarketTrends, a Farmington Hills-based business consulting firm. She is also producer and host of the cable television series, "Chamber Perspectives."

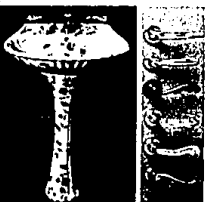
## Avoid procrastination trap

It's that time of the year again. If you are like the rest of us, you are ready to put the year 1988 behind you and await the arrival of the new year with great resolve. In making your resolutions, however, make sure you do not fall into the procrastination trap alluded to by the following poem:

I meant to do my work today  
But a brown bird sang in the apple tree . . .  
The wind went sighing over the land,  
Tossing the grasses to and fro,  
And the rainbow held out its shining hand —  
So what could I do but laugh,  
and go?

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finances and you  
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"I Meant to Do My Work Today" by Richard Le Gallienne  
The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and I wish you the very best in the coming year.

Seminar: "How to Tame the Volatile Stock Market," "Creative Ways of Using Single-Premium Deferred Annuity," "High-Yielding Brokered CDs" and "What to Do About Taxes in 1989"

The seminar, sponsored by the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and Coordinated Financial Planning, will be 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, in the offices of Coordinated Financial Planning, Sheffield Office Park, 3250 W. Big Beaver, Suite 540, Troy. For reservations, call 645-8888.

Sid Mitra is a professor of finance, school of business at Oakland University and owner of Coordinated Financial Planning.

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## datebook

● **ACCOUNTING ASSISTANTS**  
Tuesday, Jan. 3 — Free job opportunity seminar to learn about accounting assistant career offered 7:30-8:30 p.m. in Rochester. Information: continuing education staff, 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● **LEGAL ASSISTANTS**  
Wednesday, Jan. 4 — Free informational panel about legal assistant career offered 7:30-8:30 p.m. in Rochester. Information: continuing education staff, 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● **DIRECT MARKETERS**  
Thursday, Jan. 5 — Direct Marketing Association of Detroit will hear Susan McIntyre, director of the mail order division for the Stash Tea Co., at 11:30 a.m. at the Michigan Inn in Southfield. Information: 455-8911.

● **GRE PREPARATION**  
Saturdays, Jan. 7-28 — Workshops in preparation for graduate record examination offered 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Jan. 7 and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 14-28 in Rochester. Fee: \$125. Optional math refresher course offered 6-10 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 4. Next GRE examination is Feb. 4. Information: continuing education staff, 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● **GMAT PREPARATION**  
Saturdays, Jan. 7-21 — Workshops in preparation for graduate management admissions test offered 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Rochester. Fee: \$155. Optional math refresher course offered 6-10 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 4. Next GMAT examination is Jan. 28. Information: continuing education staff, 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

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