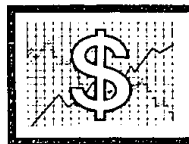


Business

Marilyn Fitchett editor/591-2300

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(F31C)





Reduce risk by diversifying Financial Position

By Alan Forre and Dan Boyce
special writers

INVESTED ASSETS

 Checking and savings	\$1,800
 Money Market	\$10,300
 Life Insurance Cash Value	\$4,200
 IRAs	\$18,800
 Stock Savings Plan	\$88,000
 Stock Mutual Fund	\$31,600
 Collectibles	\$20,000
Total	\$174,700

USE ASSETS

 Home	\$160,000
 Autos	\$5,000
 Motor Home	\$15,000
 Other personal assets	\$10,000
Total	\$190,000

Total Assets \$364,700

LIABILITIES

 Home Mortgage	\$65,000
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Net Worth \$299,700

Local financial planning experts reviewed the data of the family profiled here and made general recommendations based on the participant's resources and goals. The information is for educational purposes only; references are not intended as discrimination or endorsements by Observer & Eclectic Newspapers or the advisers interviewed.

To receive a free financial planning brochure, or to obtain a questionnaire to have your finances reviewed in this column, contact the Center for Financial Planning, Dept. 100, 877 S. Adams, Suite 202, Birmingham 48009, or call 642-4000.

This month's profiled couple, Bob and Sharon Bell, are progressing well toward their financial goals, but they realize there is room for improvement. Bob, 40, and Sharon, 39, both have secure administrative positions with large companies. Their combined income is \$93,000 per year.

FAMILY FINANCES

One of their primary goals is an ambitious program to save for their retirement. Bob and Sharon would like to retire with an inflation-adjusted income equal to their current combined income. Although they both have good retirement plans through their employers, they must personally save a great deal between now and their retirement to meet this goal.

Two factors weigh in their favor. First, they do not intend to retire until they reach age 62 to 65, providing them with 22 to 25 years of growth and compound interest on their investments. Second, they are saving significant amounts of their combined gross income each year (10 to 15 percent).

BOB IS contributing 10 percent of his salary to a regular stock savings plan.

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The Bottom Line

Financial strengths

- Steady employment and good incomes
- Automatic savings plans in place
- Relatively little debt outstanding
- Good insurance coverage

Financial weaknesses

- High tax liability
- Collectibles not adequately insured
- Portfolio unbalanced - too much stock

Learn the 'trade' of speechwriting

By Peggy Aulino
staff writer

Alan M. Perlman writes speeches for a living, but last week it was his turn to face a crowd from behind the podium.

The occasion was a luncheon meeting of the Detroit Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators. Perlman, a speechwriter on the public relations staff at General Motors, used humor and catchy phrases to make his points.

But the first rule of thumb he offered — that a speaker should not start out with a quote about public speaking because "they're so damned negative" — was one he found necessary to break.

"What orators lack in depth," he recited, "they make up for in length." For the next 30 minutes, he told the audience of about 90 how to avoid being shallow and long-winded.

The speechwriter's product should be "a warm, living, human piece of communication," Perlman said. But he told the group at the Radisson Plaza Town Center in Southfield that before creating the speech, the writer needs some tools of the trade.

FOR PERLMAN, a West Bloomfield resident, the tools range from the obvious to the obscure. The tape recorder he showed the group is used while gathering information from the person who will be giving the speech. But the next thing he held up was a utility knife, an item more likely to be found on a carpenter's belt than in a writer's desk drawer.

"Think of it as your hunting knife," Perlman said, explaining that he uses it to clip idea-inspiring articles from periodicals.

Perlman is the author of a soon-to-be-published book, "Write

Choices: New Options for Effective Communication." He has a doctorate in linguistics and is a former university professor.

"My goal is to help you follow some old advice: Don't learn the tricks of the trade. Learn the trade," he said.

Perlman also recommended using sports metaphors in speeches. "There are a lot of parallels between corporate life and sports."

But some audience members said later they are not always comfortable using — or hearing — sports metaphors.

"If I use something about boxing, some of the men may get it, but I have totally just blown away my female audience," said Roger Watkins, a management systems specialist at General Dynamics. "One of my prerequisites is consider your audience."

Kimberly Welch, special projects coordinator at MVP Communications in Troy, said she has "been at places where I've been offended" by sports-related remarks.

"Maybe because I'm a woman I don't relate to sports metaphors much," said Welch.

She suggested that Perlman pepper his speeches with references to sports because the people for whom he writes — GM executives — usually speak to primarily male audiences. Perlman agreed with the assessment.

He also said he is "not a great sports fan" but his work forces him to "remain conversational" in the sports arena.

"I could just as well pick something from Homer and have GM be the Greeks and Ford be the Trojans, but that wouldn't fly," he said.

Etkin marks 50 years as general contractor

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

By night Alex J. Etkin is an architectural student at the Detroit Institute of Technology. By day he worked in the newly constructed Brewster housing projects with plumbing and heating and electrical contractors.

"I like architecture but I didn't like the functioning and design," said Etkin, who today presides over one of the top general contracting companies in southeastern Michigan.

Armed with his architectural degree, Etkin admits "I never practiced a day in my life. I've done everything but since then."

Etkin's appreciation for good design remains intact. On the wall of his Farmington Hills office are two large photo reproductions of sketches of the Lafayette Towers under construction. They are signed by Miles van der Rohe, who designed the twin towers east of downtown Detroit. Etkin had asked the world famous architect for the original sketches, but they were already wanted by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

"After that job, we could do anything. We earned our merit badges," said Etkin, who as general contractor put up risk money to ensure the architect would get paid.

"During construction, I visited him regularly in Chicago. He was one of my favorite architects. This was his only Detroit project."

The two 22-story towers were erected almost 30 years ago. But Etkin's career started two decades before that.

FROM A MODEST two-person office above a drugstore near Livernois and Davison, Etkin built his company on jobs ranging from the Herman Gardens housing projects on Detroit's westside to airport paving at Selfridge Field.

"When I actually got started in business for myself, an electrical contractor asked me to put in all the underground work for him — foundations for lighting, cable. He originally put up the money. He thought I



Alex J. Etkin recently hosted an open house at his company's new headquarters to mark his 50th year in business.

should be able to do it in three months.

"I did it in two months. I had the work men and the organization. I made \$1,700. From then on, I was a contractor."

Through the 1940s Etkin worked with electrical contractors in auto plants, then mostly did steampipe distribution work in housing projects.

After a four-year stint in the U.S. Army during World War II, he spent four years constructing air bases in northern Michigan, including Wurtsmith in Oscoda and Sawyer near Marquette.

In the metro Detroit area, his

work is everywhere. Following Lafayette Towers, A.J. Etkin Construction Co. built the Pontchartrain Hotel. Terminals at Metro Airport, the Oakland Mall in Troy and the Northland Mall enclosure followed.

Etkin is especially proud of the Metro Airport terminal.

"It's one of the better reinforced concrete buildings in the country. Six columns support the whole thing," he said.

ETKIN'S REVENUES have exceeded \$100 million annually for the past three years. A business publica-

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