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BUILDING & BUSINESS

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BUILDING & BUSINESS' SUBURBAN STARS

Suburban Stars highlights promotions, transfers, hirings and other key personnel moves within the suburban business community. Send a brief biographical summary - including the towns of residency and employment and a black-and-white photo, if desired - to: Suburban Stars, Building & Business, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Our fax number is 513-591-7279.

Joseph G. Horonzy of Bloomfield Hills has joined Plante & Moran, a Southfield CPA and management consulting firm, as director, focusing on strategic planning and marketing. He had been executive vice president at Comerica Bank in Detroit.



Horonzy

Gregory J. Barber of Westland has joined Schmalz & Co., a Southfield-based firm of CPAs and consultants, as an engagement executive. A member of the national and state CPA professional groups, he has seven years of experience serving closely held businesses.



Barber

Cynthia M. Dickinson of Livonia was promoted to vice president of operations at Schwartz Investment Counsel, a Bloomfield Hills-based registered investment adviser. A member of the Financial Analysts Society of Detroit, she joined the firm nine years ago.



Dickinson

Ronald W. Monchak of Rochester Hills was named publisher of Troy-based Momentum Books Ltd., a general book publisher. He'll develop Avonstroke Press, an imprint for privately published books. He retired as chairman of D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles, a Bloomfield Hills ad agency.



Monchak

See STARS, 2F



After. This is the shopping center's new look, after improvements designed by Ed Shinn were completed.

Droopy shopping center rejuvenated



An abundance of space still available in newer shopping centers makes it especially important for the owners of older strips to refurbish in order to remain competitive. Ed Shinn specializes in making silk purses from sows' ears.

By DOUG FUNKE
STAFF WRITER

Just as a new wardrobe can make for a new personal image, so can an exterior renovation do for a small, tired shopping strip. Ed Shinn, who bills himself as an identity and environmental graphic designer in Redford, knows all about it. He specializes in refurbishing

His most recent effort, a 22,000-square-foot center on Eight Mile, just east of Middlebelt, in Livonia, has drawn good reviews from tenants. Shinn added peaks, splashes of reds, turned posts into columns, upgraded the lighting and applied a light taupe paint. He also suggested trimming some large evergreen trees at the

curb.

The beast became a beauty of sorts - and all for about \$80,000. "It's added a lot of class," said Dianne Reardon, manager at Wate-Man, an exercise equipment retailer in the center. "I've been here about 15 years. I'm extremely pleased."

"I've had many people mention, 'Gee, I never saw you before.' The sign just popped out at them," she added. Lynn Himebauch, regional retail for Pepperidge Farms, said she's experienced the same thing with a bakery thrift store in the center and Dave Sney, too, with Capital Optical.

"We've had a lot of comments," Himebauch said. "He's done a wonderful job keeping it clean and looking nice." "I think it's tremendous," Sney said. "The landlord has done a helluva job." Shinn's assessment before he got involved with the center about a year ago: "It was pretty ugly." The shopping strip was built in the late 1970s and acquired by WLB Properties in a distressed property sale in December 1992. "My approach to the project, my philosophy behind it, was to establish an identity separating it from

See DROOPY, 2F

European flavor graces floral gallery

By DOUG FUNKE
STAFF WRITER

Tom and Grace Poyma, Farmington Hills residents, describe themselves as creative people.

Grace said she's always been interested in nature and flowers. "I've personally been in the floral industry more than 20 years," she said.

Tom said he spent upwards of 15 years in the hospitality business. "In the restaurant field, you can see instant satisfaction," he said. "You do a good job, the payoff is there. Same in this business."

Sixteen months ago, the husband-wife team opened Twigs Floral Gallery in West Bloomfield.

A European style of selling, where fresh flowers are displayed in vases in the center of the store rather than behind glass doors of coolers, is the cornerstone of their business marketing strategy.

The couple also is working to develop a home, office and special events decorating clientele.

The Poymas invested an aggregate of \$125,000 - their own money and that of family members and friends - to open their shop. They said they made a profit during the first year of operation and have applied for a Small Business Administration loan to help fertilize future growth.

Following are edited excerpts from a recent interview.

How are you different from other florists?

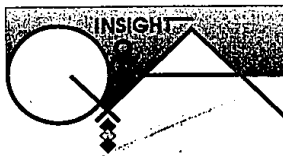
Grace: We're pretty diverse. We go beyond what the typical flower shop does with walk-ins and weddings.

Floral decorating is an up-and-coming trend, creating a natural environment in any type of home regardless of what the design is.

Tom: A lot of people in glass and steel towers all day are leading nano-second lifestyles. What they're trying to do is de-stress the environment, soften the environment with fresh-cut flowers, plants. I understand that you have a different way of selling fresh-cut flowers from your store.

Grace: In Europe, the consumer has grown up living with flowers on a daily basis. Florists display in carts right out in the open.

Tom: We try to involve our guests in our store as much as possible. When they can come in and experience the fragrance and beauty of blooms, they become involved. When people get involved, included, their enthusiasm spreads and they realize the value of flowers.



What's the scope of your business?

Tom: I would have to say it's mostly an even mix between walk-ins and events - anything ranging from a wedding to a gala - and corporate accounts.

Grace: Fifty percent of walk-in and phone-in orders we do at Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day and other holidays. The other 50 percent are birthdays, sympathy, weddings.

Tom: We're doing anywhere, from say, on a slow day \$700 to a busier day \$2,000-\$3,000 in gross sales. That includes everything.

Why did you happen to set up shop where and when you did?

Tom: The market research we did showed opportunity was there. West Bloomfield is virtually an untapped market. I knew if we didn't open when we did, someone else would.

People were looking for trend-setters. We came in and filled a void. People came into our store, looked around and said, "Finally, someone different."

Where do you get your fresh flowers?

Tom: We have a couple of local wholesalers. We go through Century Floral Supply in Detroit. We do a lot of direct buying through a company called Import Connection out of Madison Heights. We use a couple of in-state growers, Mount Clemens Rose Gardens.

The flowers come from The Netherlands, South America, Hawaii, Australia, New Guinea.

How do you divide the workload?

Grace: Tom and I each have our expertise. Tom has an excellent business mind, an excellent marketing strategy. I'm more a creative director. I do design.

Where do you get your ideas?

Grace: Nature is a natural inspiration. We use wonderful reference books. Our customers inspire us, changing trends in interior design.

They can have anything they want. You don't have to spend a fortune to add decorations to the home.

Tom: We don't turn down anybody. Some people come in and say "Can you refresh my wreath? I only have a few bucks to spend."

Others come in with a house that's very high tech and say, "This is phase one, that is phase two. It could be thousands of dollars."

Do you have any employees other than yourselves?

Tom: We do have Jim Tucker. He's our primary designer. He completed a floriculture program at Michigan State University. He's one of the best designers I've seen.

Where do you want to go with the business?

Tom: We would like to do more gala-type events.

Grace: Home interiors, corporate interiors.

Tom: I'd like to expand here, maybe open a second store.

Grace: The real feeling of success for me is to make a comfortable living, but have clients who enjoy and respect your work.



DAN DEAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Selling point: Tom and Grace Poyma prefer a European method of displaying fresh-cut flowers.

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