

# MALLS & MAINSTREETS

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 1996

8A(F)

## SHOPPING CENTERED



LINDA BACHMICK

## A winter view of swimsuit styles

Well, I don't know about you, but I'm ready to hit the beach. Unfortunately, I have no condo awaiting my arrival in Florida and my husband has no cruises, so I guess I'll have to ride out the icy winter.

However, I know there are those of you who are heading down south this month, and while the rest of us envy you snowbirds, we do want you to look smashing on the seashore, so we'll reluctantly introduce you to the new-for-'96 swim and beachwear styles.

Actually, I can almost feel the sun on my face when I peruse the hot looks of the Gideon Oberson Cruise Collection. The Israeli-based designer is distributed in 16 countries and is poised to make a huge splash in the U.S.

### Delicious designs

Inspired by "the greatest show on earth" and the enchantment of Morocco, Oberson's newest swimsuit styles are at once playful, exotic and extremely wearable. The brilliant colors and patterns are reminiscent of faraway Marrakech, while the collection's overall mood evokes the glamour and grandeur of the circus. The "show off your tan" favorite white suit is embellished with sheer plisse, which hides as much as it reveals. The underwire bra enhances the plunging neckline.



(888). For sunset cocktails, just add the ankle-grazing stretch-waist pleated plisse skirt (\$94).

A new kind of animal print pairs exotic beaute with scrollwork on a terracotta background. The silhouette is a glamorous '40s sheath; a softly draped sheer sarong adds more sophistication.

How about Star Dust, a navy blue bikini studded with tiny silver stars at \$100? The coverup is an oversized gauzy shirt in the same starry pattern for \$150.

This suit is also available in tank and high-neck styles. Oberson is known for his attention to fine detail, and this includes spending as much time designing the backs of his suits as he does the fronts. The back of the high-neck Star Dust features wide multi-strap details.

### Innovative twists

One suit, the Neptune, crosscrauses the body with thin interwoven sheer and opaque triangles, creating a lattice effect, while multi-colored triangles add interest when strung along the back of a carnival-inspired tank called Tango.

Look for delicate macrame and gossamer inserts, overlays of fine crochet and faux "vesta" that knot and tie under the bodice of a tank.

For a bold dose of shine, there's a metallic silver tank with sheer horizontal panels or a high-neck maillott (\$88). I dare you to rev up the silver suit with the little pink tulle "Hollywood" jacket sprinkled with sequins. Wow! South Beach, here we come. I love the suit called Vision, fashioned in a bronze-textured rib lycra with a stylized black floral print. This style is available in a bikini, as shown, a tank and a one-piece with a surprise silhouette (\$96). The "go anywhere, from ship to shore" coverup is a sleeveless cropped jacket (\$96) and a short wrap skirt with side tie (\$72).



The Gideon Oberson Cruise Collection is available at Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue in the Bonaventure Collection in Troy.

Ben Voysey! Bring us back a little sunshine. Linda Bachmick is a Birmingham resident. She welcomes merchandise information to share with readers. To reach her, call (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1889, or send a fax to (810) 644-1314.

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Malls & Mainstreets next week:

- Presence II explains why it's a destination store.
- A conversation with the woman who will manage Hudson's flagship store at Bonaventure North.
- Linda Bachmick offers a woman's view of the Auto Show.
- Retail Details be the one on the latest marketplace news.

## Local malls end the year on an up note

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO  
STAFF WRITER

Citing Michigan's record low unemployment, stability in the midwest economy, and a confident year for the auto industry, area malls report holiday business was better than last year.

"And there was so much pessimism going into the season," said Susan Azar of Laurel Park Place in Livonia. "Without their final figures (due in late January) mall managers were reluctant to post a percentage, however, many said sales were up about 4 percent over 1994, adding much of that business came in the last week before

Christmas.

"It was swamped at Lakeside on Christmas Eve," said spokeswoman Janita Gialletti. "In year's past most shoppers were home with family on that day, but not this year. Also, on Dec. 26 the mall was packed with shoppers. Everyone was looking for those half-off specials."

Twelve Oaks manager Philip Morocco estimated his center saw business gains of 4-6 percent over 1994.

"All four of our department stores were up," he said. "I noticed longer lines for Santa, and on weekends families were lingering in the center

longer enjoying the festiveness of the season."

Livonia Mall manager Jeanne Hildebrandt said her mall anchors, Sears and Crowleys, each reported gains. She agreed with Morocco that more families appeared to be shopping together this year.

"Afterall, Christmas is for the kids," she said. "Our luncheons with Santa and tree decorating contests were filled with children."

Laurel Park's Azar said a 95-percent increase in mall gift certificate sales was an unexpected phenomenon.

At Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield,

manager Richard Fair put sales up over last year by "3 to 6 percent, without actual figures." He added "and that's not a small increase for the holidays." He said the opening of Media Play at the mall, helped boost shopping traffic and was in part responsible for the sales increases.

Sally Victor of The Somerset Collection in Troy reported that some of its stores had "double-digit holiday increases," while others saw sales fall flat.

"Unlike other centers, though, we had a great October and November

See MALLS, 8A

## Fairlane/Lakeside mark 20 years in '96



Lakeside and Fairlane celebrate their 20th anniversaries this year so Fairlane will close early Saturdays to host special events and Lakeside will host community activities to be announced.

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO  
STAFF WRITER

Back in March 1976, the Taubman Company of Bloomfield Hills opened two regional shopping centers with great fanfare and much publicity.

The gigantic Fairlane Town Center in the heart of Ford Country in Dearborn drew thousands of fascinated shoppers anxious to ride the people mover from the Hyatt Regency to the mall and browse along three levels of retail collections.

Lakeside Center opened at M-59 and Schoenherr in Sterling Heights. It was almost too hard to find back then in what was known as "Mommy farm country." But marketers knew the plans for community growth ahead.

Miles McFee, general manager of Fairlane Center, has operated both shopping centers in the last three years. He shares his insights with Malls & Mainstreets readers.

**M&M:** Describe the typical shopper at each center?

McFee: There really is no typical shopper at Fairlane. We serve a diverse population in Wayne County — Afro-Americans, the largest group of Arabs outside the Middle East, Hispanics, Asians, the suburban shopper, hotel guests from the Hyatt Regency and Ritz Carlton on the perimeters of the center, and 60,000 office workers employed at AAA and United Technologies.

I'd say the market is static; there is no growth around the area unless you look downriver or out past Plymouth.

Lakeside serves the middle-income post-war suburban family audience, although the market is changing with new subdivisions going in north of the center featuring houses priced from \$200,000. It's not unusual for three generations of a family to be seen shopping together at Lakeside.

**M&M:** At Fairlane, was business up or down over last year's holiday shopping season?

McFee: Without actual totals which we'll have at the end of January, business was up a bit at Fairlane about 4 or 5 percent over 1994, and that's just about what we predicted going into the holidays. It seems we were against the national trend which indicates things aren't so healthy in other regions of the country.

**M&M:** How is Fairlane marking its 20th anniversary?

McFee: We're focusing on the family and attempting to give back to the community that has supported us over the years. We're closing the mall

for 20 Saturday nights (Jan. 6 to May 26) at 6 p.m. to host functions for 20 of Wayne County's charities and civic organizations. We're also contributing \$5,000 to each of these organizations to defray the cost of these special events.

The early Saturday closings do not

apply to our department stores, movies or the sit-down restaurants.

In May, we'll premier the Fairlane Youth Pop Orchestra, awarding 20 area musicians \$1,000 scholarships, and hosting a series of concerts in the mall's Grand Court. Auditions for the orchestra will be held at the end of January.

In April we'll open two new family restaurants that front on the mall and are brightly lit. They'll have separate entrances for men, women, and families near Saks Fifth Avenue and the United Artist movies, so young fami-

lies don't have to send children down dark corridors or out of the way lower levels to use the bathroom or change diapers.

Last month we debuted our Frug Hop play area for toddlers, which also caters to the needs of younger families.

We'll continue our free valet parking service Monday through Friday from 6-9 p.m., especially for our female shoppers who don't feel comfortable walking across a parking lot

See 20 YEARS, 8A



Fairlane pushcarts: Earlier this year the Fairlane Town Center in Dearborn added aisle way vendors to its retail mix, naming them The Common Market.

## Neiman's promotion touts fitness

No excuses.

It's the year to get fit or be tied to sluggishness, excess body fat, the problematic effects of stress, and heart disease.

Neiman Marcus understands and wants to help shoppers stay healthy. From Jan. 8-16 the retailer is hosting "Recreation Solutions." With any \$50 purchase, customers will receive a one-liter bottle of Evian water packed inside a limited edition black nylon Neiman Marcus logo backpack, and a special behind-the-scenes preview tape of supermodel Claudia Schiffer's new workout series "Perfectly Fit."

The routine was created by national fitness expert (and Royal Oak na-

tive) Kathy Kaehler who stopped by the store to kick off the promotion.

Kaehler graduated from Avondale High School and Hope College before landing a job as Jane Fonda's Colorado spa director, which eventually led to a career personal trainer to the stars (read Claudia Schiffer, Melanie Griffith, Michelle Pfeiffer and Candace Bergen).

Kaehler also hosts fitness segments on NBC's Today Show. Her inspirational down-to-earth comments about fitness were presented to a lunch crowd in the Neiman Marcus Cafe who immediately pressed her with questions about the effectiveness of diet pills, green teas, and certain ex-

ercise equipments.

"In addition to all the medical reasons for good nutrition and regular exercise, I've found physical activity gives you a positive attitude, puts you in a great mood, increases your metabolism, your self confidence, burns fat, strengthens the muscles needed to support the skeletal system with age, and makes you a better time manager," she said.

"The ideal prescription is exercise that is regular, constant, performed four to six times a week, for anywhere from 15 minutes to 1 1/2 hours. And work at a comfortable pace, that's all

See FITNESS, 9A

## ADDED ATTRACTIONS

Retailers can submit news of upcoming events and promotions for Added Attractions. The deadline is the Wednesday before publication on Monday. Send facts to: Malls & Mainstreets, Observer & Excite Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009. Or fax to: (810) 644-1314.

MONDAY, JAN. 8

### BABY CONTEST

Send your favorite baby snapshot (infants to 4-year-olds) by Feb. 20 to the mall for a chance to win \$100 first prize in "Smile, Baby Smile" snapshot contest. Studio photos disqualified. Send to: Bill Chicks, C/O Livonia Mall Merchants Association, 29514 Seven Mile, Livonia, 48152. Livonia Mall, Seven Mile/Arden. (810) 478-1166.

### GENOE DANCE

Area senior citizens invited to attend mall-hosted dances, first Monday of each month (except holidays) 11 a.m. Coffee and refreshments at 12:30 p.m. Dance ends at 1 p.m. Lower level auditorium. First Westland Center, Wayne/Warren, Westland. (313) 425-5001.

### SPRING MAKEOVERS

Trish McCoy's line is introduced to Saks Fifth Avenue customers. Call for personal appointments through Jan. 12.

Wednesday, Jan. 10

### INFORMAL MODELING

Fashions from Herby's presented noon to 2 p.m. during lunch at Stage & Co. Boardwalk, Orchard Lake/Maple, West Bloomfield. (810) 855-6622.

### WALKERS MEETING

9-15 a.m. Bill Prattmann and Mary Bonowald of Commercial Underwriters answer walkers' insurance questions. Mall doors open for walking at 7 a.m. through Arcade 2 near Olga's Kitchen. Walking program ends at 10 a.m. Westland Center, Wayne/Warren. (313) 425-5001.

Thursday, Jan. 11

### SEAWALK SALE

Clearance-priced items throughout the center through Jan. 15. How low will they go? On Jan. 13, the American Heart Association offers free blood

pressure screenings at the mall from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. near Montgomery Ward. Wonderland Mall, Plymouth/Middlebelt, Livonia. (313) 622-4100.

Saturday, Jan. 13

### KIDS PROGRAM

Kidsworld Members invited to create a hot chocolate mug and decorate it. 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. While supplies last. Tel-Twelve Mall, 12 Mile/Telegraph, Southfield. (810) 353-4111.

### WEDDING SEMINAR

How To Plan The Perfect Wedding. 9:30-10:30 a.m. Jacobson's Bridal Salon. Reservations required. Complimentary. (Next bridal event is a tea on Jan. 18. Call for details.) 336 West Maple, Birmingham. (810) 645-8554.

Monday, Jan. 15

### ANNUAL SALE

Mall's famous "Spot The Dot" semi-annual clearance sale through Jan. 21, regular business hours. Reduced-price merchandise tagged with large dots throughout the center. Oakland Mall, 14 Mile/John R. Troy. (810) 788-4356.