

Selling the green: Celtic Shamrock in downtown Farmington offers a wide variety of goods calling attention to Irish culture with a smidgen of Scottish wares thrown in.



STAFF PHOTO BY DATAN MITCHELL

Store promises more than blarney

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Take a guess what's sold at a place called The Celtic Shamrock. And, no it's not Larry Bird memorabilia.

The recently-opened downtown Farmington business deals in Irish imports — not the artifacts commemorating retired Boston Celtics stars. If it's Irish, sisters-in-law Barbara Horrigan-Goins and Doris Ryan have it in their store or can, at least point the procurer of Emerald Isle gems to the right place.

The Celtic Shamrock operated in downtown Milford for two years but outgrew the building. The new outlet is in the Village Mall on Grand River and Farmington, which was home to another Irish import store that closed nearly four years ago.

The business of Irish ancestry — which more than 40 million U.S. citizens claim — is becoming bigger and more sophisticated.

"Heritage is on a crest now," said Horrigan-Goins, whose shop opened Aug. 1. "It's always been a close-knit community. With 'Riverdance' coming out, people are becoming more aware of their cultural heritage."

"We're trying to make people aware there's

'We're trying to make people aware there's more to Ireland than Guinness and leprechauns.'

Barbara Horrigan-Goins
—Celtic Shamrock co-owner

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Serious consumers of Irish history can find books ranging from the Famine to the first female president of Ireland Mary Robinson. For rebel hearts, there's a framed copy of the Irish Proclamation from the 1916 Easter Uprising on the wall.

For those who enjoy the spoken or sung word as much as the written one, a whole line of Irish music from the Chieftains to the Clancy Brothers is available in compact discs and cassettes.

Other goods include Erin knit sweaters, Bellock china, Galway Crystal, Royal Tara bone china, Celtic brass ware and claddagh jewelry.

Souvenirs more likely to be found in any hotel on Dublin's O'Connell Street — analog watches with shamrocks circling the dial to

Guinness bottle candles — add a jovial mix to the selection.

At least 95 percent of the merchandise is dedicated to Ireland. The other 5 percent?

An if to extend a favorable nod to its Celtic-influenced cousins across the sea, the store also features Scottish items like Fraser Collection Castles and Orkney jewelry from the Orkney Islands.

Like the merchandise The Celtic Shamrock specializes in, everything about the store is location. The Village Mall is a perfect setting for an Irish import store, Horrigan-Goins said.

Horrigan-Goins became acquainted with the area through one of the most storied Irish traditions, a wake. She's been to Heeney-Sundquist for funerals, she said.

The store has more than luck going for it. For one, the store's customer base is from the surrounding area and both families are extensively involved in this area's sizable Irish-American community.

"We enjoy the heritage and enjoy what we are," Horrigan-Goins said.

"And it helps to be across the street from an Irish pub," she added in reference to Cowley's Village Inn.

City: No health risks in removing tanks

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

There is no health risk to residents connected to the recent removal of three underground storage fuel tanks at the city of Farmington's department of public services building at Nine Mile-Farmington roads.

But, just to be sure, the area is being extensively studied by Brighton-based Innovative Environmental Solutions, Inc. At Monday's city council meeting, Farmington council members approved plans for IES to determine soil and water conditions.

The company also will perform a 90-day assessment of soil previously found to have a trace of fuel. City manager Frank Lauhoff assured that the trace is not a health threat, and that it was probably caused by routine fuel spillage at the site since 1978 — when the single, steel-wall tanks were installed.

It will cost nearly \$16,000 to complete the work, required in order to comply with stringent rules and regulations established by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

That cost, however, could increase by \$4,500 if IES, while doing soil borings, encounters groundwater.

"We didn't want to wait and expose the city to any catastrophic failure of the tanks," said Lauhoff, Tuesday, about why the tanks were removed in the first place. "That could result in very costly remediation efforts."

Removal of the tanks was planned about six years ago. Meanwhile, temporary fuel tanks now used at the DPS building, as well as those planned to be permanently installed, are above the ground, Lauhoff said.

"We'll be utilizing above-

ground tanks in the future," he said, "with an enclosed pan system. That will eliminate any potential" for groundwater contamination in the city.

Museum business

Two items pertaining to the Historical Museum on Grand River were delved into during the meeting:

■ Council members approved the purchase of 11 custom-made redwood columns for the Historical Museum on Grand River, at the cost of \$769 each, from Jack Humphrey and Pythagorean Builders of Mt. Clemens.

Two of the columns will be installed soon after they are delivered, which might be as long as six weeks.

They will replace original pillars, built around 1910 according to city historian Dick Carvell, on the southeast and northwest corners of the museum's main porch. The other nine columns, will be stored for installment at a later date.

Carvell said the pillars now are rotting, likely due to a roof drainage system that "ceased to function over the years."

■ Mayor JoAnne McShane discussed the formation of a citizens' "idea committee" that would help sustain funding for the museum. She said she has the names of five people interested in signing up; about 8-to-12 persons would be needed.

"They (committee members) will come to us with recommendations on how to aid funding" for the museum, McShane said after the meeting. "It's very important. It creates a wonderful image for the city. It gives anybody who goes through Farmington a chance to learn about our history."

During the meeting, Lauhoff told McShane that "once you have a list fairly formed, then council needs to meet in study session to define (committee) goals. But the first step is to get people interested."

Farmington teachers star in space camp adventure

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

What do teachers do during their summer vacation? Hike, swim... sample a career in space flight?

The latter is exactly what Farmington district teachers Kathy Koperski and Amy Ort did, during the recent Space Camp for Educators held at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla.

"It's just a unique thing for teachers to go to something like this," said Koperski, who mostly teaches fifth-grade science at Forest Elementary School. "To be able to bring information back and teach it, it makes the curriculum that much more interesting. It's more hands-on."

According to Ort, sixth-grade science and social studies teacher at Power Middle School, the adventure is one she won't soon forget.

"It was just a tremendous experience," Ort said, "to the point I'll never think about space the same way again. So many times it was breathtaking, tear-invoking."

Always enthralled by the space program, Koperski said the camp heightened her interest even more.

"I would do it, I really would," said Koperski, about whether she'd take flight if given the chance. "But they (NASA) will never do it again."

The "it" refers to letting teachers travel into space. In January 1986, the first American teacher to get that honor, Christa McAuliffe, was among the victims killed when the shuttle Challenger exploded.

For Koperski and Ort, a VIP tour of the Kennedy Space Center was right at the top of their camp highlights list. So was a visit from retired Associated Press news reporter Howard Benedict, who covered the U.S.-Russia space race for decades, beginning in the late 1950s.

During the tour, the group of 11 teachers (which also included a third Michigan teacher, Diane Anderson from the Dearborn district) stopped by several famous launch sites. One was the lift-off point for the May 6, 1961 flight of Mercury-Redstone 3 — which was operated by Alan Shepard, the first American astronaut to go into space.

They also stopped by launching pads for the ill-fated Apollo 1, and for the recent shuttle Columbia, which was launched just a week or so before the camp.

Other activities included assembling and launching model rockets; experiencing the zero gravity life of an astronaut; participating in simulated missions; and studying living conditions in space.

"They do a space camp for kids (in Cape Canaveral) and we found out about the camp for teachers," Koperski said. "It was a chance to find out about space exploration... So we can pass



Suits them: Farmington Public Schools teachers Kathy Koperski, left, and Amy Ort don the NASA suits during space camp at the Kennedy Space Center.

along to the students to consider NASA as a career and to aspire to what seems to be impossible."

Tuition and airfare for the five-day trip — which cost about \$1,000 per teacher — were paid from the federal Eisenhower Grant, which is available to all districts on an annual, use-or-lose basis.

Ort said the Farmington district's science department needed to approve using the grant money, because it must report how the funding was or wasn't used.

"It's good for people to know what their money goes for," Koperski said, with a smile.

Koperski, Ort and Anderson plan on meeting after the school year starts, to swap updates on how the camp excursion is impacting curriculum in their classes.

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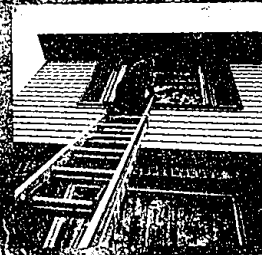
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