

# Malls & Mainstreets

Page 6, Section C

Sunday, August 2, 1998

Linda Bachrock, Editor, 248-901-2567

on the web: <http://observer-eccentric.com>



Perfectly polished: Ann Zousmer has her nails done by Lisa Zeskind.

## Customers lend a hand to Nail Suite

SHOPPING CENTERED



DONNA MULCAHY

Here's a story about a downtown Franklin business that catered to its customers and treated them like valued friends.

Two weeks before the Fourth of July, the owners of Gayle's Nail Studio in Franklin announced that the salon would be going out of business, effective July 3.

The closure came as a shock to customers and the five nail technicians who worked there, said Michelle McCue of Birmingham, a seven-year customer, and Chrissi Novak of Livonia, who was a nail technician at Gayle's for about 13 years.

McCue said she hated to see the salon close because, "I made a lot of friends there and you could just tell that all of the people who worked there were friends with each other."

"They were very accommodating," she continued. "If you couldn't make an appointment with your regular nail technician, you could make one with one of the other girls and feel good about it, because they were all equally talented and trained."

Novak explained, "We never felt like we were in competition with each other. We always worked as a team."

Patrons began urging the nail technicians to stay together and go into business for themselves.

Longtime customers Sue and Ellie Rontal told them about some office space that was available above their store, Mesa Arts. The office had been used as a storage room for several years and was a mess. But as it turned out, the rent was within the technicians' budget and the location couldn't have been better. One of the technicians decided to take a job at a Birmingham salon. But the other four—Novak, Suzanne Gardner, Angel East and Lisa Zeskind—agreed to set up shop. They got the keys on July 6 and immediately began ripping out the old carpeting. Their salon, called The Nail Suite, opened a few days later.

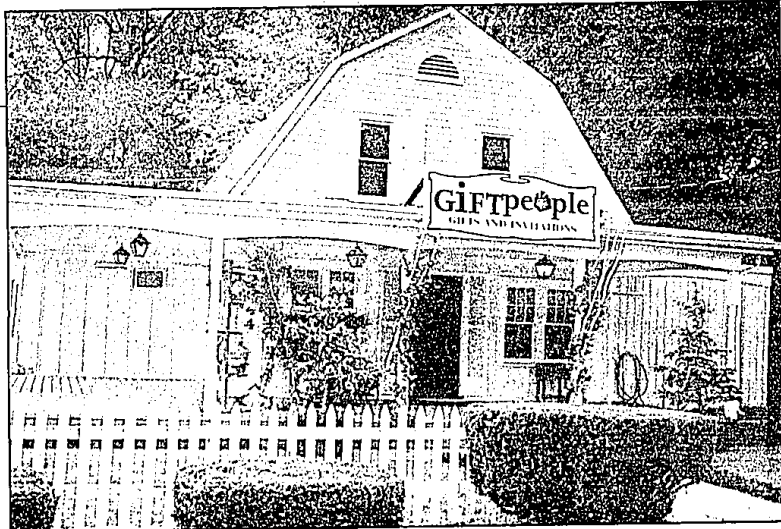
Knowing that the technicians are working on a shoestring budget, many of their customers have volunteered to help out. Connie Scaglione of Dearborn helped them pick out new light fixtures and paint. She's also donating a couch, Gardner said.

Dan Fink, husband of longtime customer Ann Fink, helped install the new lights, and the Rontals donated a small table and "an incredible piece of art that's also a coat rack," Gardner said. A client named Mrs. Galassi donated an antique shelf, and Julie Plencus, a graphic designer, has volunteered to design a logo for the new salon. Kim Finster of West Bloomfield and Judy Borger of Birmingham donated a big floor plant. And Sue Schwyder has offered a magazine subscription.

Beth Lipin and Jill Stone sent over a tray of assorted candies and nuts; Linda Levittin and her sister-in-law, and Paullette Lerman brought over candy dishes.

Countless other customers have helped just by offering encouragement. Gardner said she was totally surprised by this outpouring of affection. "You know, I'm just a nail technician," she said. "I'm totally dispensable. But I guess our customers feel otherwise. I feel like Jimmy Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life*. You just never realize how important you are to people."

The Nail Suite is located at 32800 Franklin Road. For more information, call (248) 538-6245.



Franklin facade: Giftpeople's yellow house with the wide porch and white picket fence is typical of Franklin village's vintage architectural styles.

## Sidewalk Stroll Franklin retains a timeless ambience

There are few sidewalks in Franklin's meandering little one-road business district. And it's not the sleepy village that it once was, as mammoth-sized new homes have encroached upon the older, more genteel neighborhoods. But the town's charm still is evident in its quaint shops, white picket fences, wide verandas and New England-style architecture.

Nestled between 13 and 14 Mile roads, just a stone's throw from busy Northwestern Highway, the village was settled in 1825 and its active historical society has dedicated itself to preserving its 19th-century ambience. In fact, in 1969, the downtown historic district (a few blocks along Franklin Road), was the first in Michigan to be recognized by the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to its vintage cider mill and one-of-a-kind shops, Franklin village is home to a picturesque cemetery that is the resting place of Levi Warner, an early settler who is believed to be the first resident buried here (1929). The town also has preserved acres of green space for a park, complete with a large white gazebo, tennis courts, a baseball diamond and a playground. Adjacent to the park is the Village Library, 32455 Franklin Road, a tiny wooden cottage that, in addition to serving as a book repository, is a friendly gathering spot from a June through September. History buffs will want to peruse the shelves for *All About Franklin*, a primer to the village's colorful past, with legends and lore about the historic buildings in the area and the interesting characters who peopled them.

### From the Cider Mill to the Cemetery

We begin our stroll at the Franklin Cider Mill, a landmark situated at the bottom of the hill where 14 Mile Road intersects Franklin Road. The rustic facade once housed a grist mill, built by Peter Van Avery in 1832. Today, visitors can ogle one of the largest and oldest waterwheels in the country while they sip cider and savor warm doughnuts. The cider mill is gearing up for its opening on Labor Day weekend.

On the east side of Franklin Road, at 32800, stands a pillared home with green trim and giant wooden tulips that tower over the blooming annuals in the flower beds. Inside, find the Curiosity Shoppe Ltd., a cluttered room filled with decorative home accessories, furniture, artwork and reams of fabric swatches. Interior design services are available. Check out the animal-skin painted metal spheres on stands.

Down the hill is Mesa Arts, a contemporary space filled with Southwest painted furniture, pillows, pottery, rugs and lamps. Native American art

and jewelry also are featured. The gallery will soon move to new digs in Birmingham, so visit here before the summer ends.

Next door, you'll see longtime storefront Gerald's hair salon and just across the driveway, The Village Barn, 32760 Franklin Road, a welcoming red mews that resembles the original circa 1825 buggy works barn that burned to the ground in 1979. The shop's display vignettes carry a bumblebee theme right now, with wooden beekeepers, beeswax candles, bumblebee glassware and table linens. Climb the stairs to The Christmas Attic for holiday finery. On Saturday, Aug. 8, breakfast at The Village Barn while shopping its sunrise sale from 8-10 a.m.

As you leave the barn, peek around the corner to see if Franklin Buggy Works is open for browsing. The rustic wooden shed houses garden and patio fixtures, including cement statuary.

Tucked in the corner at 32744 Franklin Road, Escapades may be diminutive but it's filled with exclusive table linens, painted trays and Gail Pittman's charming handpainted pottery. Also find



Christmas in August: Hollyhujah ceramic tableware at Escapades.

unique gifts and vanity items.

See Spot Run, a stamping and stickering emporium at 32716 Franklin Road, is like a candy shop for arts and crafts lovers. It offers children's birthday parties and classes in stamping, stenciling, calligraphy and sticker art. Just around back at 32722 Franklin Road, is the jewelry making studio called Fritzwillis. Workshops in silversmithing are offered.

Time for a lunch break? The only gastronomic game in town is the deli counter at Market Basket, 32652 Franklin Road. Tables out front offer unobstructed views of the street scene. Enjoy fresh soups, salads, sandwiches and pastries. The mini grocery store also shelves gourmet foods and party supplies.

Intrigued by the big yellow house with the wrap-around porch and old-fashioned screen door? It's home to Giftpeople, a custom invitation, stationery and gift emporium. Look for vibrant ceramics and a huge selection of bath accessories.

Cross the street to Yanko Designs, 32611 Franklin Road, and find cases filled with award-winning jewelry creations. Kim and Frank Yanko's innovative custom designs are recognized throughout the area.

Who says customer service is a thing of the past? In Franklin, the BP gas station is full-serve and a bevy of eager young attendants use elbow grease to keep your car in tip-top shape.

Don't miss the window display at Gorbach photography studio. The experts there specialize in copying and restoring old photographs, and some of those photos give passersby a glimpse of the village at the turn of the century. You'll recognize the facades of several of the shops you've visited.

Franklin's lone clothier is Apple Tree Room, 32749 Franklin Road. Pretty handknit sweaters line the shelves, along with great silver-buckled belts and other supple leather goods.

The building next door at 32751 Franklin Road contains several unique shops, including Dead Works, Thing-A-Majigs and Paige Stanton. Thing-A-Majigs plans and hosts arts and craft parties, from doll making to collage, and ceramic painting parties that include firing. Paige Stanton is a tiny boudoir-like space that displays decoupage furniture (check out the rocker), quilts, pillows, broken china jewelry (bring in your cherished fragments and see them transformed into pins and bracelets). Eighty percent of the merchandise is made by the owner or her friends.

Save Monday, Sept. 7 for Franklin's Labor Day Parade and Art Fair in the park. It's a memorable extravaganza in "the town that time forgot."

## ADDED ATTRACTIONS

The fashion extravaganza is scheduled for 8 p.m. \$27.50-\$150. Call the Flash Bash Hotline for tickets (313) 833-6954.

### FUNNY MAN

Ventriloquist Richard Paul performs his family-fun-filled show at Livonia Mall at 1 p.m. Join him and his puppet friends.

### VAUNTED VERSE

Borders Book Shop in Birmingham hosts a discussion brunch in honor of U.S. Poet Laureate Robert

Pinsk's National Favorite Poem Project. Members and guests are invited to bring a copy of their favorite published poem to read to the group. A discussion will follow. Coffee, fruit and pastries provided. 1 p.m.

Borders Book Shop, 31160 Southfield Road, Birmingham.

### THURSDAY, AUG. 13

### COOL KIDS

Jacobson's Laurel Park Place store hosts a back-to-school fashion show in the Children's Department at 7 p.m. Receive a tri-fold silver-plated picture frame with a \$25 purchase of children's merchandise.

Jacobson's, 37600 Six Mile Road, Livonia.

None of special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 6005 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009; or fax (248) 644-1314. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

### MONDAY, AUG. 3

#### EVENING GLAMOR

View an extensive collection of evening gowns from Melinda Eng, Badgley Mischka, Bob Mackie, Donald Dool and more at the Neiman Marcus fall couture show. Informal modeling 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Continues on Aug. 4. Somerset Collection, Troy.

### WEDNESDAY, AUG. 5

#### BRITISH ISLES BASH

There's still time to get tickets to Hudson's Flash Bash celebrating British Isles Style. The show benefits Founders Junior Council of the Detroit Institute of Arts and is held at the State and Fox theatres.

### SUNDAY, AUG. 9