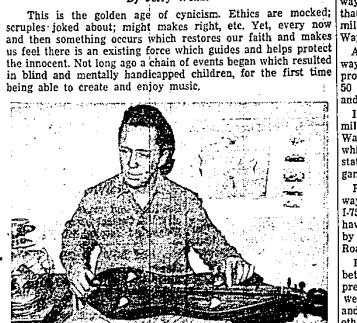


# Smart Businessmen Know It Pays To Advertise Their Business Here

## Music Comes To Forgotten Children

By Jerry Wendt



Ron C. Martin, a former industrial designer for American Motors, not long ago opened up his own studio at 3330 Thomas Street, in the City of Farmington. The long hours spent in designing intricate motors, the long hours spent in thumbing through a magazine, unable to sleep, he saw a picture of a dulcimer, was intrigued by its classic shape. He built one, then the next, then the next, and so on. He played without any lessons. Shortly afterward, the Martins attended a family reunion in Denver. Ron brought along a second dulcimer. In record time, the whole family was playing and singing folk songs.

Upon his return, a woman with a 10-year-old blind son walked into his studio. She explained that her son was having difficulty mastering social skills because of his handicap. Ron Martin decided to help him. He built a portable electric dulcimer on the instrument where the music reverberates, and guided his hand to the string. In a few moments the boy had managed to strum out a tune. Needless to say, he walked out with the dulcimer. According to his mother's later report, it has changed his whole outlook on life.

The next sequence began when a couple with a 15-year-old mentally handicapped daughter walked in. A sweet girl who wanted to play, but she had an attention span of only one minute. Ron Martin wasn't sure if he could just what the results would show. The girl, however, responded immediately to the dulcimer and was overjoyed at finding something she could master.

After hearing of this incident and witnessing the results, the Special Education group has begun the use of the dulcimer in dealing with mentally handicapped children in the South Redford School System.

The history of the dulcimer is fascinating. It is probably the oldest musical instrument. It is mentioned in the Bible, in the Song of Solomon. It was then known as the Hammer Dulcimer. From there it became the instrument of the wandering minstrel, and went into medieval history as the lute. Its introduction into America was through the Pennsylvania Dutch. After the area in which they had settled had begun to produce the necessities, the Dutch people began to leave for the West, taking their instrument with them. They reproduced from memory their beloved German Hummel. This became our present day Dulcimer. Johnny Appleseed carried these instruments in his pack through the Appalachian mountains. The dulcimer is strictly for the performers' enjoyment. Shaped not unlike a violin, it can be held on the lap. Different type melodies can be introduced merely by brushing a finger, or hammering with a light mallet.

Ron Martin finds his life has been considerably enriched through this instrument. He does not begrudge the time he gives willingly to demonstrate the use of his instrument among the ill and handicapped. He says, "You can not imagine what it is to see the face of a child who has lived in darkness, or the loneliness of having a mental handicap, light up when they at last realize that they are producing music through their own efforts."

"These children have been commercially neglected in the manufacture of toys. So many of them are geared for the average or bright child." (How many of us have tried in vain to assemble toys for so-called average children?)

But the possibilities of his instruments are limitless. We couldn't help but think of the VA hospitals where men are unable to leave their beds. This instrument requires no lessons and can be easily held, a great advantage.

Mr. Martin has used his own talent in designing an attractive look for the instrument. Mountain Dulcimer, telling the history and giving instructions on how to play. Also an illustration of a simple mountain tune.

His studio abounds in story material, and you literally have to tear yourself away. Little "Johnnie" has come a long way since he used to sit in his classroom and watch the other children at activities he was excluded from. Now, thanks to the Special Education Group, and the kindness of his fellowmen, he is able to create objects of beauty, and not just create music. As we left we couldn't help but think of the old adage, "God moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform."

## I'm Proud of Livonia

(Editor's Note: Submitted by Livonia resident Bud Nusly, 27476 Whitecomb, Livonia, this article won a prize in the national farm and small-town newspaper. He was awarded a \$10 prize.)

I am proud of my town for doing something about the needs of unemployed teenagers.

The project was launched by the Livonia Commission on Children and Youth. It developed into a program with a full-time paid director and four part-time assistants in the Youth Employment Service.

Nearly 8,000 jobs—from one-time lawn mowings or babysitting jobs to full-time, permanent positions in industry—have been provided. The response from the teenagers themselves was excellent. In early 1964 registered for full-time or part-time employment.

And all this in only 18 months!

## 2-Million Vehicles Registered

LANSING — For the first time in its history, Michigan's vehicle registration hit the 2-million mark with all categories of titles up over last year's previous high.

Secretary of State James M. Hare stated that 2,012,673 titles in all categories were issued in 1964. This is a 28% increase over the \$1,533,000 or 55 cents per share, earned during the comparable twenty-six week period in 1963 when there were 2,445,692 shares outstanding.

## Wayne Co. Is Getting More Roads

LANSING—The State Highway Department announced that it will add lanes to 31 miles of I-75 in Monroe and Wayne Counties.

At the same time, the Highway Department will seek approval to add lanes on nearly 50 miles of I-75 between Flint and Bay City.

Requests by the State Highway Department to add lanes on I-75 between Flint and Bay City have been turned down twice by the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads.

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