

Consumer panel eyes jeweler's complaints

By MARY CONNELLY

It was their first case, and it involved changing the black box that displeased some customers.

The committee decided the box needed altering, perhaps wrapping it in white paper or putting a bow around it.

In all likelihood, the box will be changed because the committee thinks it's a good idea.

The committee is a consumer panel established at the three Charles W. Warren jewelry stores located in Troy and the metropolitan area. The panel is a first for the jewelry industry, according to general manager of the stores, Ben Frogett.

THE TEN PERSONS who sit on the panel are responsible for judging service, merchandise and assorted operations at the stores, which are headquartered at Somerset Mall.

They are handling the black box because some customers are not enthused about sending wedding gifts, shower presents and house-warming tokens swathed in black.

According to Frogett, box decorating options are under consideration. In a consumer-conscious period, the panel has been designed to serve as a feedback mechanism between customers

and management at the store.

"One of the pitfalls of being a merchant is that you become unaware of your surroundings," Frogett commented. "Primarily your goal is to sell and make money. You really don't criticize yourself from within."

ESTABLISHED in September, the panel has met three times and most recently decided to take action against the respected manufacturer of Dalton china in England.

The committee objects to a set of children's china, which Frogett said has been widely sold in the United States and carried in the Warren stores for nearly 40 years.

The pattern on the \$9, three-piece set of cup, saucer and plate depicts young rabbits on horseback dressed as cowboys and Indians encircling a mother rabbit tied to a stake.

The committee has drafted a letter voicing their objections to the violence pictured on the dishes.

Frogett said he also opposes the portrayal on another place setting of rabbits gathered around a television set.

"CAN'T WE SOCIALIZED our children to anything else?" he asked. Along with product, merchandise and service evaluation, the volunteer

panelists will judge sales personnel and their performance.

Panel members have been asked to shop the various stores and rate sales clerks for product knowledge and presentation.

The panel was developed at the suggestion of Joseph Freedman, president of Dayton Hudson Jewelers. The Charles W. Warren stores are one of six divisions within the company.

"The idea was to critique ourselves," Frogett explained. "To let us know where we're right, but more importantly, where we're wrong."

INITIALLY, THE meetings have been planned by Frogett. Now with the panel in progress, he said, the members will assume the reins.

"If I have a sore spot, I might steer them away from it," he said. "I want to let them go for the jugular vein if necessary."

Chosen from store customers, the panelists include George Arns of Farmington, Mrs. Karl Aronsson, of Bloomfield Hills, Mrs. David DiChiera of Bloomfield Hills, Mrs. Morris I. Goldin of Southfield, Barry Parsons of Birmingham, Mrs. Thomas R. Swanson of Bloomfield Hills and Mr. and Mrs. John D. Leighton, also of Bloomfield Hills.

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OU sets program on death

A day-long conference titled "Living with Dying" will be presented Friday at Oakland University, Rochester.

Designed for individuals as well as for professionals and para-professionals who are involved with the dying, the conference features Dr. Eric Bermann, associate professor of psychology, University of Michigan. Dr. Bermann is the author of "Scapegoat: Impact of Death-Fear in an American Family."

"I began thinking about the ubiquitous fact of death when my mother died. It primed me for a raising of consciousness. It is like delivering mail at Christmas, which I did as a young man. There is a mail-box every two blocks in New York City but I never paid any attention to that until I delivered the mail. It is like that with awareness of death, until you are involved you don't notice. I also realized the affect of premature death on

my young brother-in-law who is my ward now.

"In meetings with colleagues I found that death - not dealing with death - was the problem in 80 percent of our cases. It was my involvement

with a particular family whose whole life reflected death-fear which started me on the book."

For additional information contact the University's conference department at 377-3272.

Baked goods to aid League

The Child Research League, located in Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit, will receive the proceeds from several types of baked goods sold in Awrey bakery outlets this week.

Proceeds from the sale of cinnamon buns and molasses and oatmeal cookies will be channeled to the fund-raising efforts of the League, which researches childhood diseases.

The items will carry special labels and members of the League will be on hand at the stores to outline the programs of the League.



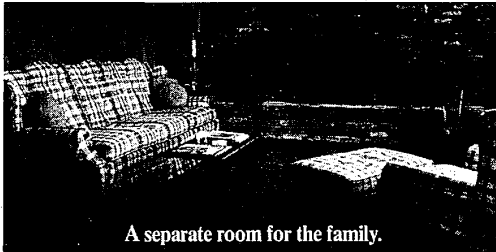
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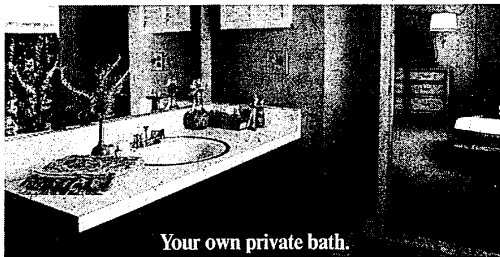
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