

# Travel agents say business resists slump

By SUSAN AVERILL  
Farmington travel bureaus aren't doing a booming business, but they haven't dipped sharply either.  
Last minute decisions and devil-may-care attitudes were listed as reasons for travel business buoyancy.  
Although definite figures are still being calculated by accountants, Steven Fish, owner of Fish Travel Agency, Inc., said business this year was better than expected.  
"A lot of reservations were taken at the last minute, when people decided that no matter what happened, they were going to have a vacation," he said.  
December was described as a good

month, with advance bookings indicating a similar trend for January. However, Fish cautiously added, advance bookings may not be a stable indicator.  
"AS FAR as January is concerned, we're booked already. But because of last minute decisions, advance bookings mean nothing," he said.  
"Quite a few families call up and regretfully cancel reservations made long ago."  
The number of trips to Europe has sharply decreased, as people limit their journeys to the western hemisphere to cut costs.  
"It's not all gloom and doom," he

said. "It has been a far better Christmas than expected."  
Frank Sheehan of Elliot Travel Service agreed, saying that his business has not suffered a substantial drop.  
The reason for this, he said, is a special one-week charter cruise to the Caribbean, which is offered by his company.  
The peak travel season is between Dec. 20 and Jan. 5, he said.  
"People still have a high regard of the economic situation. So before and after that period, there's a substantial drop."  
Travel predictions for the future are almost nil as far as Europe is concerned, he said.

"EUROPEAN TRAVEL is down, now that the economy is slowing, but more and more people are going to Florida," said C.A. Spencer, Farmington branch manager for the Automobile Association of America (AAA).  
"Our travel to Florida has been as great as ever. People still have money and they'll spend it wisely, but they'll still want to travel."  
Not only have local trips increased, but "the north country is really flourishing."  
For those considering travel, Spencer has a word of advice: be careful to fill the gas tank before 9 p.m., as stations often close for the evening.

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### It's a slow year for some area banquet businesses

By SUSAN AVERILL  
It was neither feast nor famine in Farmington during the past year for the banquet business.  
A survey of area businesses offering banquet facilities showed that some were doing poorly, some managing to hold the line, and some doing better than ever.  
"Last year didn't hurt us at all," said Bill Vladimir, vice president of the company which owns Vladimir's of Farmington.  
It was an excellent season, Vladimir said, and the future looks good because booking is heavy.  
"New Year's parties were lighter, but we planned it that way," he said. "Last year we were overcrowded."  
THE THREATENED food scarcity hasn't yet materialized for his business, and prices haven't scared away customers.  
Although it's difficult to say what the future will bring, Vladimir is optimistic.

"It's hard to tell, but we're booked 80-90 days in advance," he said. Sharing his somewhat rosy view is John Anhalt, owner of the Botsford Inn, who said that business is "better than ever."  
"The month of December was as good as last year," he said, "although the parties were smaller. Business parties weren't held by the companies as much as they used to be, and we lost there."  
But by putting forth effort, you can

make up for the general business slack-off, he said.  
"You have to put your nose to the grindstone, and you'll be alright. We're not playing games anymore," he said.  
He attributes his inn's success in the face of downward economic trends to more personal contact, harder work and better cooperation between his employees.  
Grace Gibson, secretary at Glen Oaks Golf and Country Club in Farmington, reported that "everything is



### Talk to the plants for fun and profit

By HY SHENKMAN  
"Some of my neighbors think I'm crazy for talking to my plants," said Jeanne Vickery, an employee of McFarland's Florist and Greenhouses in Farmington.  
In her home she has Boston ferns, Norfolk pines, ivy and things of that nature. She gets a nice sensation when they grow new and green. It just makes her feel good.  
She even brings home sickly looking plants.  
"It isn't for the reduced price at all. Those are living things and need prompt attention. I take those neglected plants and place them in a more airy place, better light. I fertilize and water them."  
"I revive them and praise them when they perk up, or scold them like a baby when they don't do so well."  
"A little bawling out may make them feel bad and they'll start picking up. I notice improvements because I watch them often."  
"SOME LAUGH when they hear me address my plants. They don't believe that they can hear. But plants are sensitive to a pleasant voice or to shouting and respond accordingly by growing better or worse."  
Mrs. Vickery confessed that she greets them. "Good morning Mr. Fern or goodnight Mr. Pine."  
"What if a gossipy neighbor will spread a rumor?" "My husband and I would have a hilarious laugh," she said.  
Julie Rankin from Jacobsen Flowers has in her apartment English ivy, African violets, avocado trees, geraniums and others. All together, 50 plants are in her two rooms.  
"I'm a sucker for plants," she admitted. "I buy one whenever I see them."  
"I love to have them around. I enjoy the color and shape. They make me very happy."  
Among her most favored are cactuses.  
"THERE," she confided, "that is one plant I can't put but I love them. I have stayed in Israel two years, and there is where I got to like them. They remind me of the sparsely, peaceful desert."  
"My grandmother and father were plant lovers, and I guess I picked that hobby up from them."  
She believes that talking and playing soft music for plants makes them grow better. What about folks who think the whole idea of talking to plants is funny?

Julie had a ready answer.  
"Maybe some of those folks don't realize how funny they look while driving alone down the street and talking to themselves."  
THERE IS even a birth control pill for plants. Dennis Grushoff, from the L. & T. Floral Gardens Inc. claims that he dissolves a pill in water to promote new growth on top. He does it each month with dambanias. That birth control pill also prevents the leaves from getting yellow in the veins. It works with sandranas also, but not as well, he said.  
Boston ferns, thylodantrums and corn plants are his other favorites.  
Grushoff is a strong believer in entertaining plants but not babbling them.  
"Every morning I say hello to each one. I touch them and check their soil. I play a lot of music for them."  
"Do they respond?"  
"Positively," he said. "Plants pick up vibrations like a dog or cat. They all sense when talked to in a kind of angry voice and respond accordingly."  
"Talk to your dog," he suggests, "in a low pitched voice and he will wiggle his tail. Touch your plant and it knows what your intentions are."  
"I'M ALWAYS kind to my plants. Oh well, when a plant doesn't do too well I'll say, 'Better shape up or I'll put you outside.'"  
Grushoff doesn't consider himself an expert.

### Commercial construction climbs despite economy

FARMINGTON HILLS — The downward trend of the economy may have slowed the single family home aspect of construction in the city, but commercial and industrial construction continues to climb.  
Although the city's building department is still compiling figures for its year-end report on building activity, preliminary estimates place volume of permits from \$40,000 ahead of 1973.  
Unofficial totals show about 750 permits ranging from renovation to new construction projects for 1974.  
The number of permits is down, but dollar volume is up, according to Richard Miller, supervisor of zoning and building departments in the city.  
He said that multiple housing, commercial development and industrial

"I'm an experimenter, and I get good results," he said.  
A major in floral culture at the Michigan State College and the proprietor of his flower shop in Southfield, Henry Fenningdorf had been in the flower business all his life.  
How is it possible for a man of 47 to run a business established 47 years ago? "Very simple," he replied. "My father is 88 and still active."  
The Henry Fenningdorf Florists were awarded a plaque for the oldest business in Southfield by former Mayor Feder.  
AT HOME Fenningdorf grows plants that are in season like rubber plants, a mother-in-law plant and other green plants. He has four different vines of the Wandering Jew.  
As it grows, the vine trails all over in different angles and areas.  
"When a plant is broken a cardiograph will show pain, the same as if we cut ourselves," Fenningdorf said.  
"Plants do love music, and it has been proven by Michigan State University that they can hear but they can't talk."  
Soft FM music should be turned on, not too high—the sound we would like to hear while going to bed. Plants should be talked to in a soft voice—the kind we would like others to talk to us.  
"Before I go to work I greet them. 'Good morning babies, you all look great. Keep it up—I'll see you all tonight.'"  
The Farmington Hills — The downward trend of the economy may have slowed the single family home aspect of construction in the city, but commercial and industrial construction continues to climb.  
projects comprised the bulk of the construction in the city.  
He estimated that 85 per cent of the construction in 1974 fell in these three areas with the remainder in single family residential development.

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