

Dairy products are still home delivered

By Casey Hane
staff writer

JULIE SHIFFMAN doesn't receive old-fashioned bottled milk with cream on top, but the Farmington Hills resident still opens her porch box to fresh dairy products.

In this age of the fast-paced consumer, milk and other dairy products are packaged in throwaway containers, and bought mainly at grocery stores. Many dairy products are self-packaged by the major grocery chains, which have their own plants.

Home delivery, for most, is a thing of the past.

Most companies offering home delivery do so in a restricted geographic area because of the cost, those in the industry said.

Neighborhood milkman David Laskowski begins his 12-hour day at 2:30 a.m., arriving in the Farmington area by 8:30. The Borden Inc. employee visits a variety of Farmington Hills neighborhoods, including that housing the Shiffman family on Apple Blossom.

HOME MILK delivery is a career for Laskowski and his family. The Sterling Heights resident has delivered Borden products for 20 years, his father for 40, and his younger brother for the past two.

His delivery truck is a simple, unlabeled van loaded with goodies the Shiffman family enjoys, saving them that extra trip to the store.

Since November 1983, "he's never missed a day, or been later than 15 minutes," Julie Shiffman said of Laskowski. The family began home dairy delivery "when our daughter was little. We had it for the convenience."

At least half a dozen of her neighbors enjoy the same convenience, she added.

Ken Feighner was surprised to hear there were still retail milk routes. The Michigan Department of Agriculture employee thought they had given way to the supermarket, which arrived on the scene 40-50 years ago.

"A VERY high percentage — I would say most milk — was delivered to the home 50 years ago," Feighner said. In the late '30s, as more families bought their own automobiles, "people were becoming more mobile," he added. Many began buying dairy products at supermarkets.

Milk delivery in the Farmington area goes back to the turn of the century, when "milk was delivered directly from can to pan," according to historical information. "The milk 917 railroad cars with a capacity of 24,000 pounds each."

Although Farmington was "not primarily a dairy area," there were two local dairy companies located in to-

business talk

A page of local business news

'Up until 1965, milk was handled the old way. A truck — or horse-drawn cart — would come to the farm and gather up the cans and haul them to the local dairy.'

— Kenneth Cole

Michigan Milk Producers' Association

day's present downtown area, according to Farmington Hills Historical Commission member Jean Fox.

The Warner Dairy and The Himmel-spach Dairy were on Grand River, west and east of Farmington Road, respectively.

The Warner Dairy was a product of Warner's Cheese Factories and met its demise around the time of the Great Depression. The Himmel-spach Dairy burned to the ground about 25 years ago, ending local dairy ownership, Fox said.

LOCAL FARMERS, each owning eight to 12 dairy cows, would bring their milk into town to sell, Fox said.

"Most towns over 1,500 (residents) had their own creameries as the industry progressed," added Kenneth Cole of the Michigan Milk Producers' Association (MMPA) in Southfield.

"Up until 1965, milk was handled the old way," Cole continued. "A truck — or horse-drawn cart — would come to the farm and gather up the cans and haul them to the local dairy."

Horse-drawn carts were used until the late 1940s, when truck use became necessary to haul milk a greater distance.

In the Farmington area, a lot of milk was hauled during the Warner Dairy era. One local account from 1898 said the three Warner Cheese Factories in Farmington, Novi and Franklin "consumed the immense quantity of 22,000,000 pounds of milk — enough to fill 917 railroad cars with a capacity of 24,000 pounds each."

LOCAL FARMERS earned \$160,000 in milk revenue during the years Warner's Cheese Factories operated,

according to the historical account.

Traditional milk cans — now found mostly on antique store shelves — were used in Michigan until refrigerated storage tanks came into being, Cole said. "Cans are still used in some parts of the country," he added.

His cooperative MMPA group — founded in 1916 — is owned and controlled by 5,300 farmers throughout the state, compared with a record 17,000 in the early 1950s.

But Michigan farmers today produce three times the milk, and have an average 60 cows per dairy farm, Cole said. He attributes the changes in dairy product marketing, production and sales to "advances in the technologies of the industry and how we handle herds."

In the 1960s, milk production and feeding of the herds was automated and computerized, bringing a greater yield, he added.

IN ADDITION, the larger supermarkets "really started taking hold" at that time, Feighner said. "As people became more cost-conscious, most people began buying (milk) in the store."

He estimates the major decline in home dairy delivery occurred during this time.

"I have to believe they're delivering only in more affluent areas, where money or cost doesn't matter as much to the people," Feighner added.

Today's milk is still picked up at farms for processing, but is placed in insulated trucks and taken to one of 25-30 milk plants throughout the state.

Only "a handful" of the plants are owned by large companies — the rest are small family-run operations, Cole said.



Borden milkman David Laskowski delivers milk, bread and other dairy products to Farmington Hills resident Julie Shiffman.



AT LEFT: David Laskowski, a neighborhood milkman for 20 years, begins his 12-hour day at 2:30 a.m., arriving in the Farmington area by 8:30. The Borden employee visits a variety of Farmington Hills neighborhoods.

Staff photos by
Randy Borst

short takes

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion or are planning a new venture or project — and there's a Farmington-area business angle — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Farmington Observer readers. Send items to: Short takes, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

JOINS AD AGENCY

Christopher Siminski has joined Ross Roy Inc. advertising agency in Detroit as product specialist. The Farmington Hills resident will be responsible for verifying product information on the Chrysler/Plymouth and Dodge accounts. Siminski will handle the Gran Fury, Diplomat, Fifth Avenue, Omni, Horizon, Charger and Turismo car lines.

NEW IN TOWN

Southfield resident Ron Asmar has bought the Vineyards, a wine and gourmet shop at 32418 Northwestern Highway, Farmington Hills.

The fare includes "baked-on-the-premises" croissants and cookies, cheesecakes and other desserts; gourmet cheeses, wines and liquors, and sandwiches and salads.

Asmar has 16 years of experience in the food business.

CORPORATE VP

Harold Carney was appointed corporate vice president of franchise operations at Little Caesar Enterprises, Farmington Hills.

Carney has been a Little Caesars franchisee for five years and owns restaurants in Michigan, Indiana and Illinois. His appointment is an innovative approach to management for a franchising company. One-third of the Little Caesars across the country are owned by the company and two-thirds by franchisees.

Carney's initial contact with the company came through his position as an officer with the Bank of the Commonwealth in Michigan. He was in charge of Little Caesars' corporate accounts and helped many franchisees with their financial arrangements to become part of the Little Caesars chain.

Carney opened his first carry-out in Lake Orion in 1980 and one in Oxford in 1983. Since his first carry-out opened, Carney has established two other franchise partnerships.

He joined Ed Hurlik in a venture to develop Little Caesars in the South Bend, Ind., area. Their first location opened in February 1982 and has grown to nine units.

Carney's third franchise area took root in June 1984 when he and partner Bruce Kroposchek began development in the southern suburban area of Chicago. This franchise has grown to eight units.

HE'S PROMOTED

Robin Carr was promoted to group account supervisor at D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles/Bloomfield Hills (DMB&B/BH) on the Florists' Transworld Delivery (FTD), Dow Chemical Co., National Bank of Detroit and Detroit Diesel Allison accounts.

The Farmington Hills resident joined the agency in 1979 as an account executive on the FTD account. He became account supervisor on FTD in 1981.

Carr was named a DMB&B/BH vice president in 1983. He is a member of the Adcraft Club of Detroit and the Detroit Advertising Association.

OPENS OFFICE

Southwest Research Institute (SWRI) has opened a Farmington Hills project office to facilitate research and development activities in computer-integrated manufacturing.

Staff members will concentrate on network design and systems engineering related to the automation of plant processes and the integration of automated equipment into unified plant systems.

Melvin Schrader, assistant director for automation and data systems, is in charge of the new operation. Steven Hugg is manager of the on-site staff.

The new office, in the Arboretum Office Park, is at Southwest Research Institute, 34405 12 Mile, Suite 233, Farmington Hills 48018, telephone 553-5800.

Southwest Research Institute is an independent, not-for-profit organization engaged in applied research and development programs conducted internationally in many areas of science and engineering. With a staff of 2,000 and an annual volume of \$140 million, SWRI is headquartered in San Antonio, Tex.

SHE'S ELECTED

Jacki Kay Work of Farmington Hills was elected musical director for Sweet Adelines' Oakland Shores Chapter, based in Waterford Township.

She has directed choruses in Millington, Flint, Berkley and, most recently, the Royal Oak Singers. Sweet Adelines is an international organization of women dedicated to "harmonize the world" through the art of singing four-part Barbershop Harmony.

Membership is open to female singers 18 years and older. For more information, write: Jacki Kay Work, 23717 Springbrook, Farmington Hills 48024, telephone 478-2327.

NAMED VP

Richard Allen was named vice president-human resources of R.L. Polk & Co., Detroit.

The Farmington Hills resident will be responsible for all personnel and labor relations functions as well as employee benefits and equal opportunity employment functions.

Allen joined R.L. Polk & Co. in 1973 as manager-labor relations. He became vice president-manager, labor relations, in 1979.

Prior to joining R.L. Polk & Co., Allen was an attorney in private practice.

R.L. Polk & Co. employs 5,000 people in 50 offices and production locations across North America and overseas. The company publishes 1,000 city directories annually, serves as statistician for the automotive industry, publishes international bank directories and is a direct mail marketer.

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