Downtown Farmington's 1-man shows

In a business world full of megamergers and multinational corporations, it is nice to know that some "one-man shows" still exist. In downtown Farmington, several businesses are one-man shows.

Two are Perry's Clock Shop of Farmington and Books Abound. These businesses are within the Farmington Downtown Development Authority's district — an area anchored by the intersection of Grand River and Farmington Road that consists of 150 businesses.

Perry's Clock Shop is tucked in a corner of Downtown Farmington's Village Mall. Owner Perry Swartz personally repairs the clocks and watches brought to his store.

Repairs are just part of Swartz's business. His main focus is the sale of antique clocks. Swartz claims his store has the largest selection of antique clocks (150) in the Detroit area.

"THE SELECTION in the store is constantly changing as I acquire clocks at auctions and shows and then repair them if necessary," said Swartz. "The clocks all have a story behind them, and they are well made — many are 100 years old and will last another 100 years."

Swartz, a retired mechanical engineer, opened his business seven years ago as an extension of his hobby, collecting and repairing clocks. He began repairing clocks 20 years ago when one was not keeping time.

The assortment of antique clocks at Perry's includes grandfather, cuckoo, wall and mantle clocks. The shop has several collector's items, including an American mantle clock made by the Ansonia Clock Co. around 1879. The clock has mirrored side panels. Another is a United States bicentennial lyre banjo clock that was one of just 350 made in Dearborn in 1975.

In addition to the antique clocks, Perry's has modern clocks and music boxes.

ACROSS THE street, Books Abound is another one-man show. Owned by the husband-and-wife team of Skip Rosenthal and Alice McCoy, Books Abound has 15,000 titles in hard cover and paperback, new and used books.

Rosenthal attributes the selection to the fact there are never more than two copies of each book in the store — one hard cover and one paperback.

Rosenthal, who has degrees in both music and library science, has combined his love for music and literature in his business. While working at the book store, he frequently accompanies browsing customers with his one-man show of 1920s ragtime music that he plays on his banjo.

"Customers really get a kick out of my banjo playing," said Rosenthal. "During the warmer months, we keep the door open, and passers-by hear the music and poke their heads in."

Rosenthal often plays for an audience outside the book store. Books Abound is next door to the Farmington Civic Theatre, and Rosenthal entertains movie-goers waiting in line for the show.

"I didn't realize how much the people waiting in line enjoyed my music until I stopped for a while," said Rosenthal. "They began to come into the store and ask where the banjo player went, so now I make a point to set up my stool at show time and play."

ANOTHER SORT of one-man show will be in Downtown Farmington Saturday, Sept. 9. Downtown Farmington Streetside Live! will be a free outdoor performance that will

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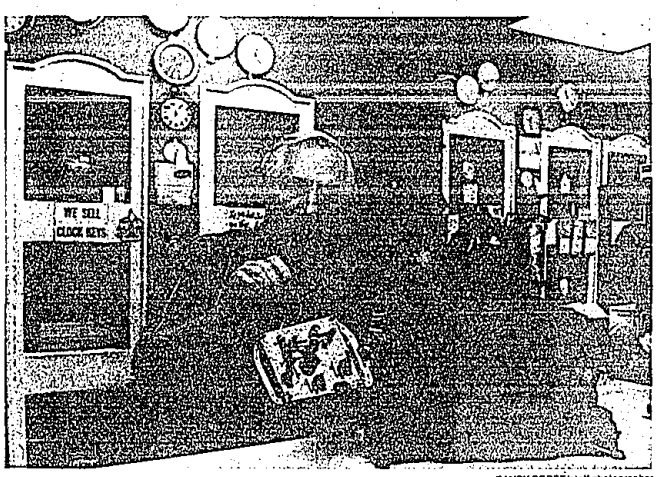
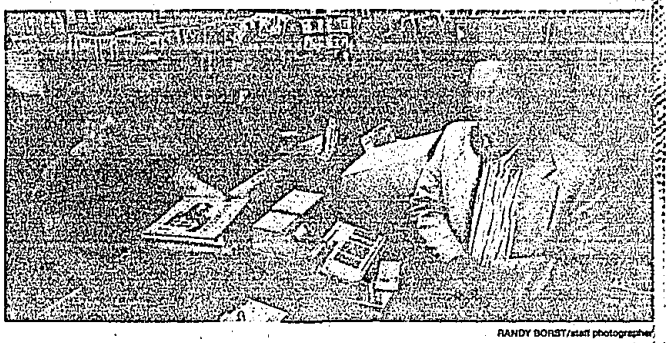


RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Perry Swartz opened up his business seven years ago as an extension of his clock collection and clock repairing hobby. Some of his collector items are on display in the shop.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Alice McCoy and Skip Rosenthal oversee the comings and goings of about 15,000 titles in hard cover and paperback, new and used books in Books Abound.

Peer counselors training starts

Schoolcraft College's Women's Resource Center is actively recruiting volunteers to participate in its peer counseling program. Peer counselors assist clients who are in some type of transition, noting that their own lives are enriched and rewarded in the process.

A requirement for volunteer peer counseling is an eight-week Empathy Training course. Participants will learn listening and communication skills as well as problem solving techniques. Upon successful completion of Empathy Training, volunteers are requested to serve a minimum of three hours per week for four months.

An informational meeting to describe Empathy Training and peer counseling in detail, is scheduled for 10 p.m. Monday, Sept. 11, or Wednesday, Sept. 13, in the Women's Resource Center. The center is in the second house south of the Schoolcraft College campus on Haggerty Road in Livonia.

For more information, call 462-4443 or stop in at the Women's Resource Center anytime between 9 a.m and 3 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Blending families is workshop topic

Remarriage with children does not always turn out like the "Brady Bunch." Issues such as the role of the stepparent, discipline, values, and legal questions complicate daily living. Men and women who are recently remarried or are about to remarry can enrich the quality of the new relationship and family life by enrolling in Encore I and/or Encore II, programs designed to help couples examine the special circumstances that surround blending families.

Catholic Social Services of Oakland County, a United Way agency, is offering Encore I and II 7-9:30 p.m., Thursday evenings beginning Sept. 14.

Encore I deals with the growth and cementing of the couple's relationship. Discussions include issues of finances, extended families, social values, resolving conflicts, and communication. Encore II helps couples define and communicate their expectations in areas concerning the children.

For more information or registration, call Sue Matlas 471-4140.

Furniture on display

"The Sensation of Contemporary Furniture," a preview of the new masters in contemporary furniture design, will premiere with a reception 5-7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 8, in Artpack Services, 31505 Grand River.

The Wetsman Collection will showcase the works of four artists: Dale Broholm, John Dunnigan, Charles Crowley and Jamie Robertson.

Broholm will be present at the opening reception to showcase his work in Detroit for the first time.

"I am looking forward to coming to Detroit to present the kind of art-crafted furniture that reflects the emergence of Decorative Arts," Broholm said.

WITH THE current move toward retreating to the home for work and entertaining, decorative art plays an increasingly significant role in the function of interior design.

"The movement has produced some important art styles from the '30s and '50s that function in the home and the office both as art as well as furniture," said Janis Wetsman, owner of the Janis Wetsman 20th Century Decorative Art Collection. "Hopefully, what is created now will have the same timelessness, and we will understand the value of that which is not mass-produced."

With the increased awareness of functional art, there is an increase in the use of furniture that has an intrinsic value, rather than pieces that will be replaced, Wetsman said.

Other artists who will have their furniture designs on display are Dunnigan, who specializes in fine furniture pieces with attention to classical details; Crowley, who crafts progressive metal ware, furniture and vessels that are one-of-a-kind whimsical pieces; and Robertson, who applies themes of yesteryear in contemporary settings that are combined with marquetry.

Men, if you're about to turn 18, it's time to register with Selective Service at any U.S. Post Office.
It's quick. It's easy. And it's the law.