

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

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SHOPPING CENTERED



LINDA BACHRACK

Nips of nature cure winter's discontent

The winter landscape offers a peaceful stillness. There's a certain magic in the beauty of a snowfall and the glimmer of ice crystals on tree branches. Though there are pleasures to be enjoyed outside in the cold, crisp air, the warmth of the indoors invites contemplation and perhaps a twinge of longing for springtime.



To cheer a gray day, bring a little nature inside with a lifelike bird that sings a lilting song. Touch and motion activated, this bluebird (\$10) can be placed on a window sill or tied to a plant branch where he will delight with his chirping. Your cat will be fascinated!

"I picked it up and just smiled," said Erica Densel of Birmingham. Her friend, Stephano Ignash, agreed. "You can have the sounds of spring in your house every day."

The Breezy Singers, which include a hummingbird and a goldfinch, are available at Natural Wonders in Twelve Oaks Mall, Novi. If you prefer the actual presence of your feathered friends, consider the MagicWindow bird feeder that attaches to your window pane. You can see them, but they can't see you.

Another interesting way to bring the outdoors in is with the award-winning video, Earth Dance (\$19.95). Stunning footage of the sea, the sky and the forests fills the screen as contemporary music provides the dramatic background.

Botanical prints
A reader called to share her discovery of a new gallery in Birmingham called Barclay's, 280 Merrill. She raved about the helpful staff and the "gorgeous botanical prints" that her husband bought her for Christmas. It was equally intriguing with this purveyor of antique art.

The Paxton botanicals of which the caller spoke are wonderful only 15th century English prints, hand-painted to depict various exotic species (\$170-\$220).

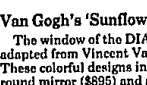
While you're browsing, don't miss the Audubon "Birds of America" prints and the delicate butterfly studies (\$125).



Let thoughts of spring burgeon at the DIA Museum Shop in the Somerset Collection. Among its wealth of treasures is this charming tale of a little girl's visit to Claude Monet's gardens at Giverny. Sink into a chair with your little one and delight in "Linnea in Monet's Garden." The book includes photographs of the famous Impressionist's paintings and Monet family snapshots (\$11.95). Your child's first art book is made even more enchanting with the addition of the Linnea rag doll (\$13.95), charmingly dressed in her gardening outfit.

For your winter's discontent — a cheerful burst of color. The Blossom Well is a carved marble bud vase with a silver enameled steel stem support (\$25). A single bloom in an elegant vase brings just a touch of spring to your bedside table.

"This is the perfect gift, especially for a winter birthday," said Abbie Dawson. "The design is so unusual, and who can resist fresh flowers in January?"



Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers'
The window of the DIA shop features mosaics adapted from Vincent Van Gogh's "Sunflowers." These colorful designs include a box (\$245), a round mirror (\$895) and a classic urn (\$595). This theme are Tiffany lamp replicas. My favorites are the Peony floor lamp (\$1,648) and the Wisteria table lamp (\$698).

Another wonderful art book that pairs photographs and recipes in a celebration of the seasons is our own Cranbrook Reflections (\$19.95). This culinary collection created by Cranbrook House and Gardens Auxiliary features beautiful scenes of Cranbrook's environs.

Jacobson's Home stores presents Garden Pleasures from now until March. Paint a winter garden with ideas that bring life into your home. See hand-painted botanicals and fruits and vegetables on pillows and table linens. Dodge the winter doldrums with light, airy garden furniture.

Next week — the ritual of tea.
Linda Bachrack is a Birmingham resident. You can give her column ideas by calling 953-2047, Ext. 1889 from your touchtone phone.

Department stores hear wedding bells

Anxious brides turn to familiar stores



Brides will be brides. Many were scared off by the stories they've read about the chain of salons now facing fraud charges. So they've pinned their wedding day hopes on more familiar retailers.

When Alvin's women's ready-to-wear stores closed around two months ago, two stores survived demise.

Alvin's of Rochester remains on Main Street in downtown Rochester. And on Pierce Street in downtown Birmingham, Alvin's Bride, is doing a brisk business.

"When customers see we're here to stay and view the huge selection of gowns we stock, we get their business," said Alvin Steinman, owner. "They want to make sure we're not associated with the Boulevard Group, though."

With the Boulevard Group of Bridal Salons in court on fraud charges, brides-to-be can no longer shop at Today's Bride, Sue Gordon, Boulevard Bridal in Birmingham, or Kitty Kelly's in Troy and Dearborn. Since



JOHN STORIMAND/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Fit to be bride: Melissa Hechlik of Rochester Hills wonders if this dress is really her, as bridal consultant Toni Anslay of Southfield adjusts the veil at Alvin's Bride in Birmingham.

their closing last summer, brides have had to order their gowns elsewhere.

Steinman said his Birmingham store, which formerly sold women's apparel, did a fair amount of business in bridal gowns from a corner on the lower level since 1985. He made the decision to convert the store to a bridal salon two months ago and the phones are ringing.

"Right now we're the biggest bridal salon in Michigan," he said. "Brides are coming from Canada, northern Michigan and even Washington State to shop here. We have three floors of bridal wear — everything a bride needs from shoes to undergarments to a floorwide selection of dresses for her wedding party."

At 'Jakes,' Hudsons

Jacobson's and Hudson's spokeswomen also report a burst in bridal

gown business since last summer.

"Our salespeople were on the phone with gown manufacturers and United Parcel Service throughout the crisis trying to help distraught brides get their gowns in time for their weddings," said Linda Morrisroe of Hudson's.

"There's no doubt that we have picked up a lot of new customers through word-of-mouth praise for our service."

Hudson's Bridal Salon is at the Northland store in Southfield.

"We have an exclusive contract with designer Vera Wang for awhile. Her gowns will be featured at the Bridal Fair Hudson's is sponsoring on Jan. 23," Morrisroe said.

The Birmingham Jacobson's store, as well as the larger bridal salon in the Dearborn store, have been very busy helping brides with gowns, said Janice Hayes.

"During the months surrounding the closing of several popular bridal salons, our staff used all our resources to help brides get their gowns," she said. "We have an excel-

lent bridal department, top-notch service and that extends to bridesmaids and mother-of-the-bride dressing as well."

At Alvin's Bride bridal gowns are priced between \$550 and \$3,000 and require three to four months for delivery, said Laura Rubin, manager and buyer.

"And that's pretty good timing," she said. "These dresses are not on racks waiting to be shipped out. They are cut and sewn on demand. New York manufacturers wait for several orders before cutting the pattern numbers. Next the dress must be sewn together. Then beads, lace, snaps, zippers — all the finishing touches need to be added."

Rubin said dresses shown in the salon are always size 10 and need to be fitted.

"We sell discontinued styles on sale in one room of our salon," she said. "If you're a size 10 you might be able to pick up a discounted gown here, too. Most bridal gowns are year-round. They're not as seasonal as ready-to-wear dresses."

U-M alumni take inventory for scholarships

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO
STAFF WRITER

Michigan grads can always find jobs.

Just ask the 75 University of Michigan alumni who took care of inventorying Saks Fifth Avenue at the Somerset Collection last week.

"Yep, it's the second year we did it, too," laughed Penny Wilcox of

Bloomfield Hills, president of the Oakland County U-M alumni association chapter.

"We contribute our five-dollar-an-hour salaries to a scholarship fund. This amounts to about \$1,600. That doesn't seem like much, but combined with other money we raise through the year, it adds up."

The participants, aged 22-70 years,

have never lost track of the importance of education, Wilcox said.

Saks' director of personnel, Magda Magudas, herself a U-M graduate, said she welcomes the alumni group's participation in the store's annual inventory.

"We're recruiting too," she said. "We welcome new members. In addition to fund-raising, we network, help each other find jobs, and enjoy pro-

grams like wine-tastings, fashion shows and dinners."

A get-together, open to all Oakland County's interested. Blue grads, is scheduled for Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Sly Fox Restaurant on Woodward.

For more information about the group, call Wilcox during the day at 833-5200.

MONDAY, JAN. 18		SATURDAY, JAN. 23	
<p>ITALIAN FESTIVAL Week-long activities include dinners, cultural presentations, entertainment. Call for schedule of events. Ritz-Carlton Dearborn, Hubbard/Southfield Service Dr. 441-2100.</p> <p>NEW WALKERS CLUB Wonderland Mall and St. Mary Hospital introduce "Wonder Walker" program 9 a.m. daily. Attendees win incentives for miles walked; keychains, fancy packs, lapel pins, theater tickets. Free blood pressure screening by staff from St. Mary every second Monday. Health professionals lecture second Wednesdays 9 a.m. Food court. Sign-up forms at information booth. Wonderland Mall, Plymouth/Middlebelt. 522-4100.</p> <p>BRIDAL FAIR Tickets on sale now through fair date, Saturday, Jan. 23, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hudson's Northland and Southfield Pavilion. Fashion shows, brunch, communications seminar, bridal registry consultations, entertainment, gifts. Tickets \$12.50 per person, refundable toward bridal purchases. Reservations required. Northland Center, Eight Mile/Greenfield 443-6322.</p> <p>WARHOL EXHIBIT "Endangered Species" portfolio includes 10 silk-screen prints produced by Andy Warhol in 1983. Co-sponsored by Detroit Zoological Society. Through Wednesday, Feb. 10. Rotundas. Exhibit proceeds in Detroit area. Zoo memberships available at show from \$25. Somerset Collection, Big Beaver/Coolidge. 643-6360.</p> <p>PREFERRED SHOPPERS Sidewalk sales customers can register for preferred shopper status through Jan. 24. Card carriers get discounts and special offers at 20 stores throughout</p>	<p>ADDED ATTRACTIONS</p> <p>1993. To qualify, shoppers must show receipts totaling \$100 at booth near fountain. Tel: Twelve Mall, Telegraph/12 Mile. 353-4111.</p> <p>GOWNS PREVIEW Marissa bridal fashions day-long trunk show. Jacobson's, Birmingham, Maple/Bates. 644-6900.</p> <p>CAR & TRUCK SHOW Ten Oakland County automotive dealers feature displays through Jan. 31. Sponsored by Automotive Trade Association. Airstream markets will sell retailed merchandise. Marion Place Mall, Elizabeth Lake/Telegraph. 682-0123.</p> <p>FASHION SHOW Models will feature clothing from The Limited and Casual Corner. Noon-2 p.m. At Dennison's and Marriott's Garden Court Restaurants. Laurel Park Place, Six Mile/Newburgh. 462-1100.</p> <p>SPORTS COLLECTIBLES Cards, coins, comics, sports stars. Through Sunday, Jan. 24. Former U-M baseball star and pro player Rick Leach will meet fans and sign autographs Saturday 1-3 p.m. on stage near Crowley's. Tiger first baseman Dave Bergman will do the same Sunday 2:30-4:30 p.m. Over 125 tables of dealers from five states and Canada. Livonia Mall, Seven Mile/Middlebelt. 476-1166.</p> <p>CLEARANCES Mailwide sales through Jan. 24. Chance to win a</p>	<p>cruise for two to Bahamas. Oakland Mall, 14 Mile/John R. 585-6000.</p> <p>MUSEUM TEA Victorian tea coincides with exhibit of 35 dolls dressed in first lady inaugural gowns. 2 p.m. Plymouth Historical Museum. Tickets \$12. Seating limited to 100. Reservations required. Tables of four and six. Exhibit through Sunday. Downtown Plymouth, S. Main/Church. 455-8940.</p> <p>MODELING CLASS Boys and girls ages 6-18 years. Learn modeling techniques, skin care, wardrobe, etiquette. Six Saturdays. Times vary. Course fee. Community room. Registration required. Somerset Collection, Big Beaver/Coolidge. 643-6360.</p> <p>PUPPET SEMINAR Kids 12 and under. 11:30 a.m. Clowns, magic, puppet-making. Meadowbrook Village Mall, Wootery/Adams. 375-9484.</p>	<p>SUNDAY, JAN. 24</p> <p>STORY HOUR Sesame Street characters tell stories and pose for pictures with preschoolers. Part of storybook Sunday program. Fairlane Town Center, Michigan/Southfield Freeway. 593-3330.</p> <p>HEALTH SCREENING Blood pressure and cholesterol testing. 8-10 a.m. Free. Jacobson's Court Area. Botaford General Hospital staff. Laurel Park Place, Six Mile/Newburgh. 462-1100.</p>
THURSDAY, JAN. 21		FRIDAY, JAN. 22	

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