

# MALLS & MAINSTREETS

MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 1993

7A

## SHOPPING CENTERED



LINDA BACHRACK

## Folk art crafters delight collectors

Folk art collectors tend to be savvy shoppers. They must exhibit an uncanny knack for being the first with the hot idea, the first to discover the underappreciated and undervalued. Of course there's more to collecting than merely amassing a large number of reasonably priced items. True collectors only buy pieces that have meaning to them. They look for handcrafted quality, a sense of history and a personal connection. They fall in love first and worry about the financial value later. Often, the best pieces find them.

Kathy Bricker of Backdoor Gallery in Farmington defines folk art as something that is handcrafted and passed down from generation to generation. "It could have a functional use in addition to its art form," she says. With this in mind, she and her partner Kath Lathers opened a gallery of contemporary folk art. They exhibit non-traditional folk creations, such as expressing a unique personality. The artists use fiber, wood, earth, metals and found objects to craft these extraordinary sculptures.

### Personality plus

Lathers grew up in a small town and learned to sew at her grandmother's knee while the older woman spun memorable tales. Today, she imagines her own stories and expresses them through the dolls she makes. "I always leave room for the owner to personalize the doll," she says, explaining the simplicity of her storylines. Pictured is "Dreamsweep" — she sweeps away broken dreams to make room for new ones. Lathers' dolls are of-like beings draped in exquisite fabrics. "They are crafted from the soul," she says, "very internal pieces."



Carol Styles of Jackson creates mythological figures, mostly goddesses woven of unusual, beautiful fibers. Grace Forrest's essential beings feature plaster guaze heads and hands, and each comes with a story. "They're wisps of a spirit," says Bricker.

California artist Olga Cinnamon's dolls are designed so that every person sees something different in each one. They are richly embellished with beads, exemplifying the fact that we are all made of different colors and textures.

Bonnie Penet of Ypsilanti uses twigs, bones, shells, feathers and other found objects to create her papier mache "Black Madonnas."

### Legendary heros

The work of Wendy Elertson "inspires family legends," says Bricker. Her dolls are intricate, fantastical beings. And Marion Drougalis of Ypsilanti combines paper clay faces with painted fabrics to craft imaginative, legendary Native American figures. "A Light Heart" symbolizes the ancient adage that "to get to heaven, one's heart must be as light as a feather."

"We're really creating a new form of folk art," reasons Lathers. "It's the story aspect of our pieces that is so important to retain."

Visit this new and enchanting gallery at 37220 Eight Mile Road. Open Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Santa Fe is a mecca for folk art collectors and we can enjoy some of the best of the west at Mesa Arts Gallery, 32500 Franklin Road in Franklin. Folk artist Mark Kluck intricately carves Sioux warriors on horseback, complete with authentic tribal costumes (\$2750). The gallery also features his whimsical weathered (838) and a wonderful Noah's Ark inhabited by giraffes, bunnies, armadillos and elephants, among other creatures (\$600).

Marla Cash carves colorful Hispanic religious figures. "Harvest Lady", dressed in a festive painted skirt, carries a basket of dried flowers (\$925). The urban feelies, worked in clay, of sculpture artist Alice Seely, depict Good Weather, Fertility and a Water Carrier, all in gorgeous Southwest colors. She also creates a collection of masks.

Follow your heart to the folk art resident of your choice. Linda Bachrack is a Birmingham collectible. You can leave her column ideas at 853-2047, mailbox 1869, or fax them to her at 644-1314.

## Savings before the bell

If the malls and mainstreets seem more crowded than usual these days it's because school starts in two weeks. While some are taking advantage of the final summer clearance prices, most are grabbing up jeans, jackets and backpacks.

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO  
STAFF WRITER

Attention all you back to school shoppers! The lesson for the day is: The ABC's of smart shopping this fall. Pay attention. You may be tested soon at a shopping center near you!

A is for Attractions. To get you to shop at these places all month, stores are offering prize drawings (an Apple computer system from Talbot's Kids, a 1955 T-Bird Convertible from Dockers at Hudson's), frequent buyer discounts (Sears gives you 15 percent off anything purchased above \$100), Two-for-one sales (the second item comes \$2 to \$5 off the regular price, just about everywhere), and discount coupons (Clothingline and The Limited have shopping coupons for 15-20 percent off regular prices.)

B is for Bargains. Realizing that the indulgent 1993 season is over, retailers have not raised prices, but cut them. The tags on athletic shoes, jeans, underclothes, socks and sweats are the same as last year — if not lower in some cases. Consider that turtlenecks, a staple in everyone's fall wardrobe, have been priced at \$10, down from last year's \$12 to \$15 tags. The hottest selling gym shoes this year, according to the experts at the Kids Footlocker, are LA Lights and File Hightops. You can pick up the Lights for \$50, not quite the heart-stopping \$100 prices for boys in a year's past.

C is for Convenience. If it's not easy — it's not worth it. Parents interviewed while shopping for back to school bargains agreed that convenience counts. Some use catalogs on-line to order the basics like socks, underclothes and pajamas, and shop just for shoes and ready-to-wear.

Most people said they shop near their home at stores advertising the lowest prices for jeans, sweats and tops. Department stores are preferred for special occasion clothing and outerwear. Shoe stores get their shoe business.

"Back to school shopping isn't what it used to be," concluded Kim Ellis, marketing director at Wonderland Mall in Livonia. "Parents don't outfit their kids head-to-toe during the big shopping trip anymore. They just buy for the season. Plus they shop later and later into the summer. And they watch for sales."

Barb McLyon of Royal Oak, shopping with sons Ian, 10, and Ross, 9, at Penney's in the Oakland Mall, agrees.

"We watch for sales then load up on pants and shirts," she explained. "My boys aren't too fussy about name."

See KIDS STUFF, 12A



Jim Riden/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Did we get everything?: Sharon Rhodes of Berkley takes inventory after back-to-school shopping with some of her children and their friends at the Oakland Mall in Troy.

## St. John knits a pattern for success

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO  
STAFF WRITER

Wear a beautiful knit suit and the question is invariably asked, "Is it a St. John?"



Gray

The reputation for classic quality comes to the southern California women's clothing firm for 30 years of designing and manufacturing luxurious knitwear. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, St. John should be blushing. Its "look" has been copied many times. Marie (St. John) Gray, the company's co-founder and chief designer, flew to Troy recently to introduce the fall line at Neiman Marcus at The Somerset Center. St. John clothing is also sold at Jacobson's and Saks Fifth Avenue. "I think St. John is a haven for women who want clothing that is fashionable and forever," she said.

"St. John is investment clothing to many who buy a piece or two every season. Our customers are definitely women on the go who would rather focus on what they're doing than how their clothes look. St. John is worry-free dressing. It's totally coordinated

so you know it's right."

St. John's trademark is convertible. Many pieces come with detachable collars, cuffs and scarves that take women from the boardroom to the bistro after a quick trip to the powder room to remove a silk collar or white, French cuffs.

Gold buttons and chains and often used to accent the crayon-bright "Santitas" knit pieces created from an 80-percent wool, 20-percent rayon mix. Inspiration is drawn from St. John's appreciation of Coco Chanel's work.

"Fashion comes from the different proportioning of the lengths of jackets and skirts season to season," Gray said. "This season, longer jackets are strong teamed with various length skirts or trousers."

Gray said St. John's navy and black colors never change in hue, so pieces purchased from previous collections can be paired with new pieces for a perfect match. The knits travel well going from suitcase to special event with just a shake or two, no ironing required. Garments are priced between \$500 and \$600. More elaborate evening-wear ensembles are over \$1,000.

St. John has become an interna-

tional, multi-million dollar company with 1,825 employees — the result of a single dress Marie St. John knit by hand 30 years ago after promising her fiancé she would try to save some money. The company was incorporated the same month she married Bob Gray, who is the chief executive officer. St. John knits went public in March of this year.

"At the time I was working as a model on the 'Queen for a Day Show,'" she recalled. "And I tried to knit a copy of this very expensive knit dress that I fell in love with. A friend immediately wanted to buy it from me. I made a few more. When I began to get orders from retail stores, I purchased a knitting machine that was offered as a prize on the show."

The rest is retail history, as they say. The Grays' daughter, Kelly, is also involved at St. John as creative director.

Gray was born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, and educated in Austria before moving to the United States. She speaks English, German and Croatian. She is committed to several children's charities.

See ST. JOHN, 12A

## Tel-Twelve gets a Gap Warehouse

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO  
STAFF WRITER

"Oh my gosh! These prices are so low," said Julie Bogus of Livonia after stumbling upon The Gap Warehouse at Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield.

"I wandered in here because the sign said Super Gap. I didn't know they had children's clothes in the back of the store. I can get my 3-year-old son three outfits for the same price as one at The Gap for Kids in Twelve Oaks Mall."

That pretty much sums up the plan behind the Gap Warehouses, which opened last month in a few of the Gap's 1,344 stores across the nation. There are two Gap Warehouses in metro Detroit — at Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield and Nine Mile and Woodward in Ferndale.

According to Gap officials, the Gap Warehouses were opened to reach customers who couldn't pay regular Gap prices, but loved Gap merchandise. The Warehouse Gaps are stocked with a new line of Gap merchandise that is manufactured with a different quality of fabric and stitching. The Gap style remains the same. Gap Warehouses stock apparel for men, women, children and teens, in-

cluding socks, book bags, hats and other accessories. The clothing is made from denim, khakis and sweats in bold colors and traditional blues.

Bogus ended up buying six sweat shirts and running pants for her son, some shirts with hoods, some without, all interchangeable in the same color theme.

"These pants are \$12 compared to the Gap For Kids running pants at \$24, and these sweat shirts are \$16 compared to the \$36 I usually pay."

"I can't see a difference in quality, and I'm a long-time Gap customer. This Warehouse Gap is a great idea."

<p><b>MONDAY, AUG. 23</b></p> <p><b>FREE WRAPPING</b> If item purchased at Falmale, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Cals Hatmark. Upper level near Penney's. Proof of purchase required, so save receipt. Choice of ribbons and paper. Falmale Town Center, Michigan/Southfield, 593-3545</p> <p><b>PUPPET SHOW</b> "The Little Mermaid," 7 p.m. Monday-Friday, 11 a.m., 1 and 3 p.m. Saturday, 1 and 3 p.m. Sunday. Free to shoppers. Puppet theater located near main entrance. Meadowbrook Village Mall, Adams/Walton, 375-9457</p> <p><b>FALL CONTEST</b> Entry blanks in center court. Through Sept. 6. Grand prize: Disney World vacation for two. Second grand prize: Two roundtrip tickets to anywhere in continental U.S. Other prizes posted. Customers with receipts totaling \$150 or more receive signed mail coupon. Redeemable at management office. Lauri Park Plaza, Six Mile/Newburgh, 462-1100</p> <p><b>THURSDAY, AUG. 26</b></p> <p><b>CRYSTAL ADVICE</b> Kosta Bode representative David Gerloff helps customers with crystal selections. 8-9 p.m. Hudson's Crystal Department. Reported 1-3 p.m. Friday, Aug. 27, at Oakland Mall store. 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 28, at Twelve Oaks store.</p>	<p><b>ADDED ATTRACTIONS</b></p> <p>Lakeside Mall, M-59/Schoenherr, 562-1292</p> <p><b>INFORMAL MODELING</b> Stage &amp; Co. Restaurant will host informal modeling for the lunch crowd noon to 2 p.m. Thursdays. Fashion from The Boardwalk shops will be featured. Credits for auction to benefit Muscular Dystrophy Association. The Boardwalk, Orchard Lake/South of Maple, 655-5400.</p> <p><b>SATURDAY, AUG. 28</b></p> <p><b>CELEBRITY MDA AUCTION</b> Hundreds of sports, television, political and musical personalities have contributed autographed memorabilia for auction to benefit Muscular Dystrophy Association. Items on display throughout the mall for all-entertainment bids. Services and merchandise donated by local businesses also for auction. Auction begins at 10 a.m. Categories change every two hours. Local entertainers perform. Event expected to last through midnight. Livonia Mall, Seven Mile/Middlebelt, 476-1165</p> <p><b>FOCUS ON ABILITY</b> Daylong expo highlights living with physical or mental disability. Booths address services and related merchandise. Westland Mall, Wayne/Warren, 268-4100</p>	<p><b>SCHOOL FASHIONS</b> Local children model back-to-school clothes. 2 and 7 p.m. Center Court. Mall also hosts free blood pressure screenings sponsored by American Heart Association. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Woodland Mall, Plymouth/Middlebelt, 522-4100.</p> <p><b>SUNDAY, AUG. 29</b></p> <p><b>SYMPHONY BENEFIT</b> 6-9 p.m. Center Court. Advance tickets \$25 per person. Event features concert by Livonia Symphony Orchestra, guest performance by pianist Howard Watkins and singer Nancy Delavinsky Villeneuve, food samples provided by 25 different area restaurants, silent auction for items including a resort vacation, sports memorabilia, artwork, and one-of-a-kind symphony pin created by Mastercraft Jeweler Jack Demijan. Ex-Platon star Vinnie Johnson will greet guests. Lauri Park Plaza, Six Mile/Newburgh, 462-1100</p> <p><b>KIDS SHOW</b> "B. Cool Bookworm" reads and raps about a good education and love of reading. Performances at 1, 2, 3 and 4 p.m. Winchester Mall, Rochester/Avon, 655-1182</p> <p><b>STORY HOUR</b> Linda Land of WJBC radio reads "Angelina's Birthday Surprise Shoes" and "Big Sarah's Little Boots" 1 p.m. Center Court. Kids' meals 99 cents at participating mall restaurants. Book tokens redeemable toward merchandise discounts. Falmale Town Center, Southfield/Michigan, 593-3330</p>
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