

Buy buy: At right, Debbie Charhine (left) tries on an ear cuff assisted by Ladda Bihler, while daughter Leila and friend Luke Beckton watch. Far right, Pam Atkins finds a basket.



Crafting a festival



Peddling along: Cindy Abbott of Northville, with a newly-bought bird house resting on her shoulder, helps her sister Denise Gress of Farmington choose a flower arrangement. They were looking at arrangements provided by crafter Keith Rife, who has displayed his work at the Farmington Founders Festival for 12 years.

Artisan wares corner attention of festival goers

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Potholders: Where would Western Civilization be without them?

No doubt we'd be collectively dropping skillet, scorching our nubs and forever staining our kitchen floors if not for this handcrafted necessity. What monetary value could be approximated something so crucial to our everyday existence? How about \$2.50.

That's what potholders — the staple of any craft quorum — were going for at the Farmington Founders Festival July 11-14.

The useful, yet seldom celebrated handcrafted item was one but many found in display booths off Grand River Avenue.

Mild summer temperatures, a contrast to last year's blistering heat, had people looking for something a bit special, not ordinarily found at the outlet mall.

Tie-dyed T-shirts, spiral wind ornaments, decorative wooden birdhouses, stain glass lamp covers, and ceramic dogs seated in wicker baskets dazzled adults.

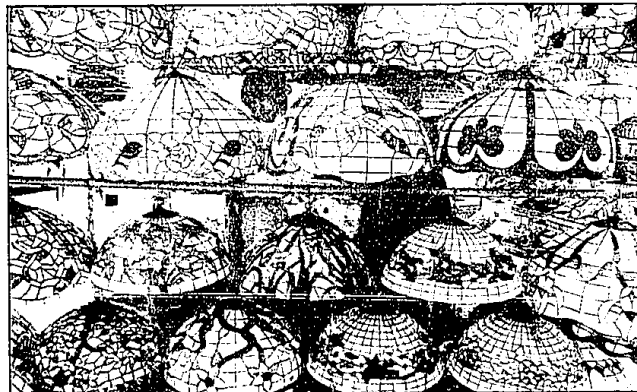
Knickknacks furry spiders suspended from a stick, and bows with foam arrows had kids mesmerized.

"Mom can I have ... Mom," said one girl, pleading unsuccessfully for her mother's attention.

Mom was too busy trying on earrings at a jewelry display.

"There's a lot of interesting stuff," said Debbie, Charhine of Westland, who works at a Farmington eye doctor's office. "A friend of mine told me about this. I thought to myself, 'Yippee, another sidewalk sale. You can see that at any mall.'"

"This is nothing like that at all. I'm enjoying it a lot."



Lots of shade(s): Neighbors Melissa Vargas and Nancy Schummer of Farmington Hills peruse the lamp tops without their kids.

The shopping thrills bought with a \$10 bill

The \$10 bill lodged in our pant's pocket was burning like coal in Dante's furnace.

What to buy. What to buy. Our charge was to procure as many items as we could for \$10 at the Farmington Founders Festival's crafts area.

A pair of ceramic dancing pigs looked promising, but the \$68 price tag was a bit portly.

A furry green and yellow spider attached to a stick with a fishing line was a mere buck. The shopping spree commenced.

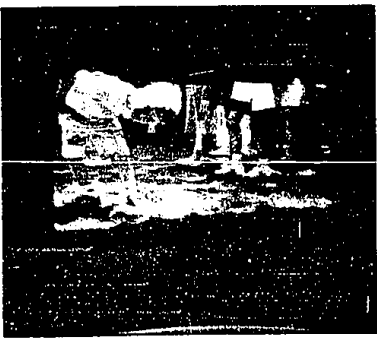
Our \$10 treasure hunt:
 ■ Wooden putter with plastic golf ball and tee. We didn't quite understand why you'd need a tee with a putter, but the office carpet green looks inviting. Price: \$4

■ Hand-knit green dish washcloth. We figured it would be the envy of any dishwasher. Price: \$2.12 (with sales tax).

■ Painted ceramic cow pin. A good way to add needed moo to our mooah. Price: \$1.50


■ Painted ceramic mouse. It might be the cat's meow, but darn if we can get it to work with our computer. Price: \$1.

—Larry O'Connor



Tent peek: Above, Gordon Wright, 6, of Farmington Hills looks inside a medieval tent "castle for kids." At right, a furry spider on a stick was popular with children and shoppers with only a few dollars to spend.





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