



Irish tea: It's teatime at The Celtic Shamrock.

## Old and new share space in Farmington

### SHOPPING CENTERED



Good things come in small packages, the saying goes, and that's a hot tip for downtown Farmington. It's smaller than the other downtowns we've featured so far, but I like the fact that it's compact.

You can see just about everything in three hours or so, without feeling rushed. And it's virtually impossible to get lost there, because everything is laid out along Grand River and Farmington Road. I also like the way the city has combined the old with the new. You can stroll through the shops in the older buildings that line Grand River — including those in the venerable old Village Mall building, which once housed Farmington State Bank, on the southeast corner of Grand River and Farmington Road.

And when you're done, you can walk to the big strip mall that's located behind and partially hidden by these older buildings. The strip mall is located on the east side of Farmington, south of Grand River, and it includes a Bon Ton Shoppe (one of my favorite Hallowmark gift stores).

Here are just some of the many other things I like about downtown Farmington:

- **The Celtic Shamrock** Irish import shop, located at 33335 Grand River Ave. on the first floor of the Village Mall, by the building's front entrance. I'm part Irish and my husband is 100 percent Irish, so I'm drawn to this shop like a step-dancer to a "Riverdance" show. Some of the things you'll find here include: Irish jewelry, china, crystal, T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters, hats, books, bake mixes, mouse pads with witty Irish sayings, and artwork. I bought a picture that says, "There is reason to believe that some people can marry an Irish person and still go on to lead a normal and productive life." My husband said he was offended. He'll get over it. Hours are 12-8 p.m. Monday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, closed Sunday. For more information, call toll-free (888) 672-7238, or visit the shop's Web site at [www.celticshamrock.com](http://www.celticshamrock.com).

- **Village Hidden Treasures**, located in the basement of the Village Mall, beneath Village Clippers salon. (There's no elevator. You can access the gift shop via stairs inside the mall's front entrance and by stairs that are located in the Village Clippers salon.) This shop is larger than you might first suspect and I like it for its selection of collectible and out-of-the-ordinary gift items. Collectible dolls it carries include: Barbies (and accessories), Ty plush animals (including Beanie Babies and accessories), Cene glamour dolls by Ashton Drake, Betty Boop, Muffy Vanderbear, Boyds Bears, Gund plush animals, Classic Pooh, Gotz Play Dolls and more. Other things it carries include: baby items, jewelry, ceramics, candles, glassware, custom garden stones, Limited Edition Angels and more. For more information, call (248) 477-3388.

- **Farmington Bakery**, located at 33250 Grand River, on the north side of Grand River, east of Farmington. It's the perfect place to stop for a treat when walking around downtown Farmington. If you're really nice, you'll bring home some cookies, muffins, bread or cake for your family, too. Phone (248) 442-2360.

Next week: Franklin Village.



In the dough: Becky Burns and Jeff Pavlik show off fresh loaves from the ovens at their new enterprise: the Farmington Bakery.

## Sidewalk Stroll

# Farmington fills a niche for families

BY MEGAN SWOYER  
SPECIAL WRITER

Becky Burns and her husband, Jeff Pavlik, can't wait to move to the Farmington area. "I love this town, the small downtown atmosphere," says Burns, who with her husband recently purchased the Farmington Bakery and plans to move closer to the bakery soon. "At the bakery, we see the same people every day. You get to know them," she says. Adds Stephanie Rose, an employee at Cowley's Old Village Inn in Farmington, "this is a community where everything is here."

Strolling along the busy main streets of Farmington on a summer's evening, it's easy to see that this town could change its name to "Familytown." The community of 10,000 rolls out the welcome mat to moms, dads, kids and fun seekers of all ages. Honored twice at the Keep Michigan Beautiful Annual Awards Conference, the tidy downtown oozes with charming Victorian architecture and small-town character and is pretty much isolated from the surrounding Pier 1's and Dress Barns of the world.

Like its pretty flower pots that line the main thoroughfares in the heart of the city, Farmington's perennial flow of activity offers a bouquet of shopping and dining options. Kitschy craft shops thrive across from an old-time movie house (no 6,000-seat, state-of-the-art theaters here), while a below-street-level coffee shop shakes it up with hot java and cool concoctions, and a bookstore specializing in new and used books provides just the right sanctuary for a quick browse before or after your ice cream cone.

This honest-to-goodness downtown provides a wonderful backdrop to a calendar full of city events, including everything from evening concerts and annual fishing derbies (the upper branch of the Rouge River meanders through the area) to a bustling weekend farmer's market.

### Environ

Downtown Farmington is situated in the heart of south Oakland County and is surrounded by Farmington Hills to the north, Livonia to the south, Southfield to the east and Novi to the west. To get there from its east, take 696 west to Orchard Lake Road. Go south to Grand River Avenue. Make a right-hand turn and you will soon be in the heart of downtown Farmington, which is located where Grand River Avenue and Farmington Road intersect.

Besides the shopping district, Farmington boasts several parks (Shawassee, Drake and Masonic, to name a few) and peaceful havens that invite weary

shoppers to take five. If you're in town on a Wednesday or Sunday afternoon, be sure to stop at the Farmington Historical Museum (33305 Grand River Ave., open Wednesdays and the first Sunday of the month from 1-5 p.m.) for a history lesson on Farmington's beginnings in the 1820s. Museum chairman Dick Carvell will tell you everything from how Farmington got its name (early settlers brought the name with them from upstate New York) to which Michigan governor lived there and do.sted his home to the city (hint: he was governor .rom 1905-1911).

### On the Corner

At the intersection of Grand River Avenue and Farmington Road lies a huge old building that is now called the Village Mall and is filled with numerous small shops. At Deb's Crafts (33335 Grand River Ave.), you'll find country collectibles, a few antique teddy bears, Beanie Babies, candles, gourmet food and more. Like stained glass? You can find all the makings of this colorful art at This 'N' That (23612 Grand River Ave.). Kitchen Creations (33305 Grand River Ave.) specializes in cake and candy supplies.

The prettiest lace collection fills Victorian Lace (33335 Grand River Ave.), along with angel-themed collectibles. Sports lovers flock to the Sports Image (33317 Grand River Ave.), especially Red Wings fans. You'll find everything from Red Wing logoed T-shirts and golf shirts to dog leashes and

collars graced with the catchy ice-men logo. The Yellow Darban (33217 Grand River Ave.) draws those who love bell bottoms, incense and everything about the '60s.

Cross-stitch of just about everything imaginable fills the front window at The Rocking Horse (33305 Grand River) while at the Art Alcove (33305 Grand River Ave.), art lovers can find paintings for their home.

Into Irish stuff? Dick your head into The Celtic Shamrock (33335 Grand River Ave.), which specializes in Irish imports. Across the street is the Civic Theatre (33332 Grand River), a classic old theater that shows films for \$2 and \$2.50. At Books Abound (33336 Grand River), you'll find new and used books.

Unusual dresses and other wardrobe necessities draw shoppers to Clothes Encounters (33306 Grand River Ave.). Those into beads and arm bands should spend a few minutes at Bead Bohemia (33334 Grand River Ave.). Shoe choices abound at the Village Shoe Inn (33204 Grand River Ave.). Children enjoy the art of creating plaster figurines at Fun with Plaster (33405 Grand River Ave.).

### Go East, Shoppers

On the east side of downtown Farmington is the 55,000-square-foot Village Commons mall. Be sure to stop here if you like Thai or Italian food. At Marco's (32758 Grand River Ave.), white linen tablecloths, an outdoor dining area and piles of pasta choices greet guests. Chicken, steak, sole and scampi dishes also prevail (not open on Sundays). The wonderful world of Thailand comes alive through its spicy flavors at the Thai Kitchen (32734 Grand River).

Warren's Village Store (32742 Grand River Ave.) provides everything from Yankee jar candles to a great supply of sundresses, furniture, wreaths, baby lotions and other decorative items. Home decor items also take center stage at Baker Street (32720 Grand River Ave.), where shoppers can order draperies, bed spreads, carpet and rugs. Furniture and design services also are available.

Across the street from the Village Commons is Saturday's most popular gathering spot. From 9 a.m.-2 p.m., folks from all over the area flock to the popular Farmer's Market. Spot the white gazebo and you'll know you're in the right place.

Also part of the mall mix is the city's original downtown mall called the Downtown Center on Farmington Road. A highlight is the family-owned Bon Ton Shoppe (33320 Farmington Road), a treasure trove of decorative items.



Queen for a day: Glorious gowns at Suzanne's Bridal.

News of special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009; or fax (248) 644-1314. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

### MONDAY, JULY 20

**ANALYZING GILLY**  
The Mother/Daughter Book Club at Borders Book Shop discusses *The Great Gilly Hopkins* at 7 p.m. The group provides a wonderful opportunity for mothers and daughters to share ideas together and with others.

**Borders Book Shop, 31150 Southfield Road, Birmingham. (248) 644-1515.**

**ART OF COURAGE**  
The Sonnetset Collection hosts an exclusive exhibit titled "Survivors In Search of a Voice: The Art of

## ADDED ATTRACTIONS

**Courage**, a tribute to breast cancer patients. The show features a mix of media, from photography to painting and textiles, that reveals the real face of breast cancer. Continues through July 26.

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 22

**CHUCKLES AND GIGGLES**  
Livonia Mall hosts "Rosco the Clown" as part of its Kids Summer Activities program. 1 p.m. at the stage near Crowley's. Free of charge, no registration required.

**Livonia Mall, Seven Mile and Middlebelt roads. (248) 476-1160.**

### THURSDAY, JULY 23

**TRUNK SHOW**  
View the 1998 fall collection by Carolina Herrera at Neiman Marcus. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Couture Salon. Continues July 24.

**Neiman Marcus, Somerset Collection, Troy. (248) 643-3300.**

### SUNDAY, JULY 26

**GET FIT**  
Local fitness dynamo Bari Beckett presents her four-part video series that shows you how to live your dreams, achieve your goals and get fit, all at the same time. Each tape highlights such topics as nutrition, cardiovascular training, stretching and diet supplementation. 3 p.m.

**Borders Books & Music, 30995 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills.**