

The natural way

Healthy hobby turns into 'Better Health'

BY JILL HOCKMAN
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Ted Handelman was six years old when his father grabbed a loaf of processed white bread out of the cupboard, crushed it with his foot and said, "No more."

It was the end of white bread at the Handelman home, and the beginning of Ted's lifelong interest in health food. Today Handelman is one of five partners who own The Better Health Store in Commerce.

"It's always been a hobby," Handelman said. "I'm almost fanatical about it."

About six months ago, Handelman and his partners bought what was an existing health store at the northwest corner of 14 Mile and Haggerty. They increased the variety of organic

foods, vitamins and natural products, then changed the name to The Better Health Store.

A computer to help shoppers find the right natural remedy for their ailment was also added at the shop. The computer program also offers lifestyle changes that may help the problem.

About a month ago, The Better Health Store bought Goodbody's in Southfield, on Lahser between 10 and 11 Mile roads. By mid-October, the store's products will be available online at www.thebetterhealthstore.com.

The expansion is part of a long-term growth plan to convert neighborhood health stores

across the country into company stores.

"We feel there is a market for these types of stores on a national level," Handelman said.

The Commerce store stocks more than ten brands of vitamins - from vegetarian capsules to time release tablets. And the shop's collection of natural vitamin and herb supplements can be used for everything from boosting immunity to treating Attention Deficit Disorder and arthritis. One that treats menopause symptoms is made of herbs, vitamins, minerals and natural hormones.

"(Women) can take natural supplements and eliminate the

side effects," Handelman said. "In a lot of cases, it can help."

"Homeopathic medicine internationally is more prevalent than the type of medicine we practice in the United States," he said.

Natural protein powders are used by athletes, while a selection of weight management products promise to increase metabolism or prompt a body to use fat as energy.

And then there's the food. The shop stocks organic cereal, crackers, cookies, sodas, pasta and rice. Shelves are lined with foods like soy nut butter, cashew butter, carrot juice, dried fruits and organic dairy products. There's no fresh produce.

A variety of natural cosmetics are also sold - from deodorant made without aluminum chlo-



STAFF PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH CARVER

Natural beauty: Employee Abbey Taylor straightens a display of natural cosmetics at The Better Health Store in Commerce Township.

ride to fluoride-free toothpastes.

The store even sells all-natural pet products. Handelman said he started feeding natural dog food and Vitamin C supplements to his 6-year-old beagle after the dog developed a rash that veteri-

narians couldn't fix. The pet was cured.

"I do all my shopping here," he said. "I practice what I preach." "This is almost like a drug store. . . Our (products) are natural. Some of them are not."

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BY MIKE MALOTT
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Troy Republican Robert Gosselin wants to enact a Michigan Workers' Bill of Rights — to protect laborers from unions as well as state and local laws.

Rep. Gosselin and House Speaker Chuck Fortinone (R-Kalamazoo) Township, plan to introduce a package of bills when the state Legislature returns to session Sept. 21 to allow workers to trade overtime for compensatory time off, allow workers to opt out of that portion of union dues used for political contributions, and allowing public employees to live wherever they want.

"Yeah, right," is the reaction from unions and state Democrats.

"A union worker voting for a Republican is like a chicken voting for Col. Sanders," House Democratic Leader Mike Hanley (D-Saginaw) said. "Until Republicans stand for a strong prevailing wage law, a decent minimum wage, stronger workplace safety

measures, job training and child care, they will have very little credibility with union workers for anything they claim as a pro-worker agenda."

State law presently bans the practice of trading overtime for comp time. Gosselin said, although that is a popular request by employees. He said his proposal would be of benefit to employees who desire a high degree of flexibility in their work hours, or who work in seasonal occupations.

"If construction workers could trade their time and extra hours in the summer, they could get extra time to go to Florida with their families" in the winter, Gosselin explained. "Some companies would like to do that, it's just that state law prohibits it. The law states that one hour of overtime is worth one-and-a-half hours worth of pay."

Gosselin said his bills would specify that when time is traded, workers would get an hour-and-a-half in paid time off for each hour of overtime worked.



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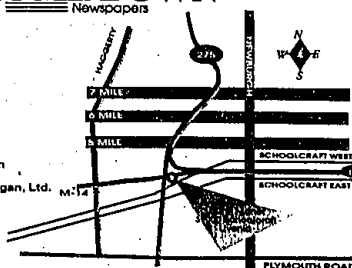
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