

Auto exchange

Local dealers make moves

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Two competing Farmington Hills auto dealerships, because of recent business decisions, have something in common besides their respective spots along Grand River.

One dealership has a new owner, and another divided its ownership between two people.

Bill Cook Buick, 37911 Grand River, was bought out for an undisclosed price in mid-April by Bob Saks Motor Mall, 35300 Grand River. Bill Cook Buick has been renamed Bob Saks.

"We have acquired the Buick franchise," said Steve Caverne, new car manager with Bob Saks, which has been in Farmington Hills 37 years. "We didn't acquire the rest of the franchise."

Buick was a desirable name for Bob Saks during the acquisition process. Bob Saks sells

Oldsmobile, Buick, Suzuki, Dodge and Toyota. Oldsmobile is expected to be phased out by next year.

"Acquiring Bill Cook helps us continue sales opportunities at this level and helps us stay in the GM family," Caverne said. "We had a lucky opportunity to acquire a Buick franchise. We see great things happening with the Buick franchise."

Buick's plans to introduce a sport-utility vehicle, the Buick Rendezvous, was another selling point in the deal, he said.

Bob Saks sold 1,000 new cars and more than 1,000 used cars last year, Caverne said.

Crain's Detroit Business reported in its April 23 edition that Bill Cook plans to sell its six remaining franchises to the Troy-based Suburban Collection, which runs 10 dealerships in metro Detroit and 17 in Michigan.

Bob Saks' neighbor, Bob Saks Pontiac GMC, has also

undergone ownership changes. President Bob Sellers officially became a partial owner in December and turned over 16 percent to Sam Slaughter, vice president and general manager.

Sellers said the deal will allow him to have more spare time.

"This will give me a chance to enjoy the rest of my life," Sellers said, adding that he recently turned 65. "I'm still working but I plan to spend a little time out of town traveling."

New co-owner Sam Slaughter said, "We're excited about continuing the great reputation that the Sellers name has."

Bob Sellers opened the dealership in 1972 in Redford. In 1978, he moved it to its present site on 38000 Grand River.

Last year Bob Sellers sold 3,200 new vehicles and about 800 used ones.

HomeTown Digital, UM-Dearborn will cooperate on Internet projects

HomeTownDigital.com and the University of Michigan-Dearborn have established a business-academic partnership to explore and develop the potential of a community-based Internet startup.

HomeTownDigital.com is a wholly owned subsidiary of HomeTown Communications Network, parent company of this newspaper. It was established to be a platform for Internet-based applications brought forth by the company's community newspapers and "yellow pages" telephone directories. HomeTown published more than 70 community newspapers, including the Observer & Eccentric group, and nearly 30 telephone directories, all in Michigan and the upper Midwest.

"We are delighted to be working

with UM-Dearborn," said HomeTown Chairman Phil Powers. "The campus is exactly the kind of research-oriented, down-to-earth place we like to work with, but it's also of extraordinarily high quality. We hope both faculty and students will welcome this chance to get in on the ground floor of an exciting Internet-based startup company."

Dave Morin, vice president of technology for HomeTown and himself a UM-D graduate, pointed out that the partnership would be a vehicle for students and faculty to actively participate in the launch and growth of an Internet startup company.

He pointed to opportunities in business (operations, production, marketing, sales and planning), technology (programming,

infrastructure, database, architecture and security) and journalism (content management, editing and writing).

Morin said HomeTownDigital.com has three current cooperative employee openings: web designer, web programmer and marketing analyst. The web designer position will assist in the creation of www.hometownlife.com (<http://www.hometownlife.com>) by building pages of news content, communities, classified advertising and a marketplace. The web programmer will build database-driven pages for the site, including construction of databases and the creation of pages that can dynamically query and present data from the databases. The marketing position will work on product development and promotion.

A Special Auction



The Estate of Captain Wayne Merrill
"It's not easy to part with a lifetime of treasure, but it's time" says the daughter of Mrs. Clara Merrill, wife of Captain Wayne Merrill. This amazing collection of furniture, art and collectibles shall be offered at auction at:

Next to Midtown Cafe. Entrance off Old Woodward
in DOWNTOWN BIRMINGHAM between
Maple Rd and the B'ham Theatre.

In observance of Kentucky Derby, we will have a brief evening auction Friday evening. All items will be available for preview Fri. throughout the evening session and all day Saturday, even during the auction. We will auction by request, not by catalog.

Friday, May 4th preview at 5:30pm, auction at 7:00pm

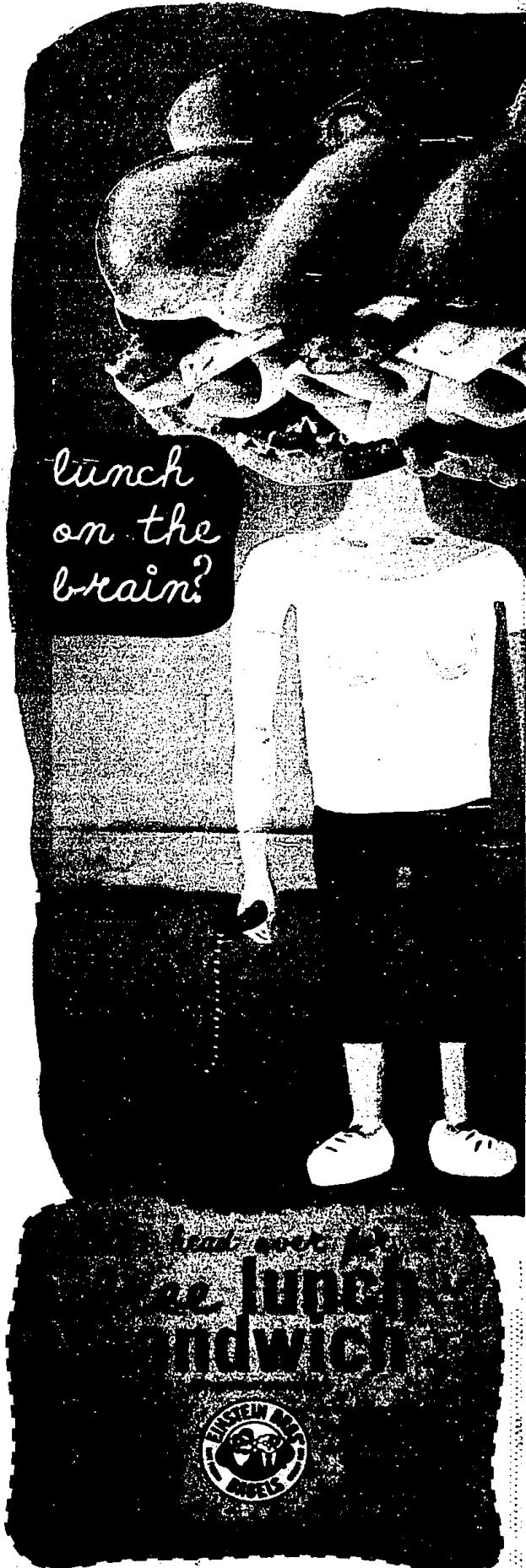
Saturday, May 5th preview 9:30am, auction 10:00am

Saturday, second session at 2:00pm

Sunday, May 6th preview 1:30pm auction to follow

Highlights: Exquisite antique pieces include old vegetable dyed carpets and rugs, lovely tapestry, French server and heavily carved cabinet. Brand new decorator chairs. Armoires. English secretary and other excellent rosewood furniture. Campaign desk. Formal Chippendale dining table and chairs. Nice solid mahogany dining table cranks out to 14 feet. Pretty Louis IV replica side tables, Dutch marquetry corner cabinet and writing desk—to die for! Silk and wool Tabries. Chairs. Fireplace mantles. Queen beds. Garden accessories. Original art. Daumier prints and Dali litho. Nice decorative oil paintings. Johnson Bros. "Mill Stream" dinnerware. Fine things and fun things. The home is already sold. Beginners welcome. For info call 404-874-2570.

Auctioneer Vince Gelske 678-565-0301. We accept Visa, MC, Am Ex, Checks, 18% Buyers Premium. Items sold as is where is, NO returns. Subject to commissions, errors, and prior sale, et-al.



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