

Area Doctor Buys Palace

By JAN WILLIAMS

Detroit's ailing Michigan Palace is now being treated by Dr. Leo Speer of Plymouth, and if his diagnosis is correct, a comeback may be nothing short of spectacular.

Dr. Speer has maintained a chiropractic clinic in his home in Plymouth for the past 20 years. He and his wife Patricia have a daughter, Cathryn, and three sons, Louis, Albert and David. Speer has been active in the Democratic Party in Plymouth.

nightclub scene. Since 1960 he has taken over ownership of three bankrupt nightclubs which he nursed back to success before selling them. They are The Military Inn at Telegraph and Warren, West Side Six at Telegraph and Six Mile and the Furry Farm on Michigan Avenue in Wayne.

Speer feels dealing with the Palace will be the same as with the other nightclubs, only on a larger scale. The Palace, located at Bagley and Grand River, was advertised as the country's largest and finest supper club by its last owner Sam Hadous, former owner of Lojy's in Plymouth.

Maybe it was, but it lacked one aspect vital to success — people. Later attempts at reviving the Palace failed for the same reason. The big question is 'why and Dr. Speer believes he has the answer.

Speer purchased the building, which was constructed in 1926 at a cost of \$6 million, from Bagley Associates. Operating costs are estimated at \$100,000 per year. Taxes run \$120,000 per year.

Speer says previous attempts at operating the Palace failed because of three things: (1) they catered to an older crowd, (2) they operated on a food basis, and (3) they didn't utilize all the space.

"I think young people will be more inclined to go downtown, more often, than older people. And I'm going to be catering to the young crowd."

While he plans to attract young people with rock concerts two nights a week, he'll also provide a balance with offerings of country and western, blues and jazz one night a week.

The other four nights, he plans to rent the building for such things as conventions, banquets, wedding receptions, business meetings, telethons, beauty pageants, etc.

"During the concerts, drinks will be available, but we won't be serving food. If food is required when we rent the hall, we'll have a caterer come in. But there won't be any food preparation here."

Speer says he will be flexible and every possibility of use for the building will be explored and utilized.

"I plan to use the concerts to pay the bills. The other uses will be fringe benefits."

He's not worried about his competition — Cobo Hall, Masonic Temple, Ford Auditorium, and Olympia Stadium.

"We can seat as many as 1,000 people, yet we don't have any bad seats in the house. There's an intimacy here you don't find in other concert halls. You can be seated anywhere in the auditorium and be close enough to see a tear roll down the entertainer's face."

Speer says concert tickets will run about the same as competitors — \$3 to \$8 per seat.

A definite program Speer faces, however, is parking. Although there are four private parking lots surrounding

the Palace, he fears crowds will cause parking rates to increase and eventually discourage business.

He is presently working with the Central Business District Association for relief of the parking situation.

"City-owned lots where parking rates don't fluctuate would solve our problem."

Although Speer plans to leave the building essentially the same, he is in the process of modernizing the stage and adding some art work.

"This is such a unique, elegant building, I really couldn't do anything to improve it. It would be a shame if anything happened to it. This is a last effort. If I don't make it, it'll probably be destroyed."

The opening is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 22 with the New York Dolls, an Alcy Cooper type rock group, appearing.

Speer says the Palace is part of a corporation of which he is the president. He expects to sell interests in it eventually, but his main goal now is to get it going.



DR. LEO SPEER, of Plymouth, points to one of the statues in the lobby of the Michigan Palace. As the new owner of the Palace, he's preparing for its opening Saturday, Sept. 22.

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Jazz Auditions Set

Auditions for Scholera College's Jazz Ensemble has been set for Thursday, Sept. 27 from 7 to 9:30 p.m. in Room 310 of the Forum building.

The ensemble will be directed by Richard T. Saunders, director of fine arts, who invites area musicians of all ages to try out for the group.

"Our format will be jazz-rock oriented, with this fall devoted to instruction and rehearsal, and next February through March booked for concerts," Saunders said.

Musicians accepted in the ensemble will enroll in the community services class CS-302. It will meet from 10 to 10:30 p.m. Thursday.

Tuition for residents of the college district is \$11 and non-residents will pay \$22. The college is located at 18600 Haggerty Rd., Livonia.

Area Student Tours Abroad

Carol Goren, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Goren of Alta Vista, Southfield, was among members of Michigan State University's traveling theater contingent who recently completed a tour of various cities in the United States, West Germany and Italy.

Students displayed their musical talents in two different productions, Robert Klason, assistant professor of theater at MSU, headed the crew. The tour was sponsored by the USO, the American Theater Association and the Department of Defense.

Miss Goren, a 1972 graduate of Southfield High School, is an MSU freshman majoring in psychology.

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