

# 25

Officials call Monroeville Mall the hub of the town and note its effect on taxes and how it retains its market despite competition



John Basile/Post-Gazette

Early morning walkers roam Monroeville Mall before it opens for business. The mall, which used to contain an indoor ice-skating rink, now a food court, and its annex house 180 businesses and provide 3,000 jobs.

## 25-YEAR-OLD MALL HOLDING ITS OWN

By Eleanor Chute  
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Monroeville has its share of places to shop, but none of them has shaped the face of the suburban retail community as much as Monroeville Mall.

Built 25 years ago on a former junkyard along Route 22, it has become a hub of activity, a catalyst for millions of dollars of development and a major reason that Monroeville has one of the largest tax bases in the county.

"The mall is the anchor for this community," said municipal Manager Mary Ann Nau, who as a teen-ager worked at Kinney's Shoes on the day the mall opened.

Next week, the mall will begin celebrating its 25th anniversary for 25 days.

The celebration starts at 10 a.m. Wednesday with the Gateway High School band marching from one end to the other.

After the parade, 1,000 balloons containing 500 prize certificates will be dropped at Kaufmann's Court. Other events are scheduled each day through Sept. 10.

The concept of an enclosed regional mall has been around since 1956, when Southdale Center in Edina, Minn., opened as the first fully enclosed, climate-controlled mall

with two levels.

When Monroeville Mall was built, it was considered one of the largest malls in the country with about 1.3 million square feet.

It opened four years after the area's first regional mall, South Hills Village, which had the same developers.

Since then, Monroeville Mall has been dwarfed by the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn., which has 4.2 million square feet. Monroeville Mall does, though, remain one of the 375 largest shopping centers in the nation, according to the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Despite the building of bigger malls nationwide and newer malls locally such as Century III Mall and Ross Park Mall, Monroeville Mall remains a leader.

David Auel, senior real-estate specialist for the real-estate firm of Grubb and Ellis, said the mall is "consistently one of the top-performing malls in the area."

Auel considers Monroeville Mall to be a pioneer, helping to prove that the concept of a two-level mall can work.

"Everything up to that point had been strip-center oriented. The idea of going two levels enclosed under a roof in the suburbs was somewhat of a novelty," he said.

"It worked for the same reasons it works today. It gives people a central place to go

and browse for gifts. Quite often, a lot of impulse purchases are made by being there. To a degree, going to the mall itself has become an event."

**Community 'synergy'**

When the mall was built, some local officials feared it would kill Miracle Mile, a strip shopping center a mile east of the mall on Route 22, said Mayor Tom Schuerger, who then was a councilman.

Miracle Mile opened 40 years ago, and was the first regional strip shopping center in this area, said Carol Bistarkey, leasing representative and regional marketing director for Miracle Mile.

Instead, after what Bistarkey called a transition period, Miracle Mile has thrived and has expanded to 339,711 square feet. So have many other businesses that have sprung up along Route 22.

"I think [Monroeville Mall] has had a positive effect overall because you have more retailers drawn to the area," said Bistarkey. "I think any type of competition that comes into the area is going to draw more people, and just makes it better overall for the whole Monroeville community."

Wes Blaha, executive director of the Monroeville Area Chamber of Commerce,

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### PEOPLE

#### Youthful contestant

Alyia Smith-Parker hopes to have some exciting news to share with her classmates at St. Edmund's Academy when the new school year begins.

The 5-year-old Wilkensburg resident is heading to Hollywood this weekend to represent Pennsylvania in the Little Miss of America Pageant at the Sheraton-Universal Hotel next week.

Alyia won the state title in the 5- and 6-year-old category, as well as that program's Most Photogenic honor during competition held Memorial Day weekend in Harrisburg. Her singing was such a hit then that she plans to perform Martina McBride's country-western song, "My Baby Loves Me Just The Way I Am" this time, too.

The daughter of Francine Smith, Alyia has been entering — and winning — beauty pageants since she was 3 months old. She has won more than 30 trophies.

Originally from Orlando, Fla., Smith launched her daughter on the beauty-pageant circuit after getting tips from model and hometown friend, Lisa Malle. Smith also got advice from her Valencian (Orlando, Fla.) Community College classmate Delta Burke, of television's "Designing Women" fame. Burke is a former Miss Florida who competed in the Miss America Pageant.



Alyia Smith-Parker of Wilkensburg will represent Pennsylvania in the Little Miss of America Pageant in Hollywood next week.

ities in the AUBA's geographical areas of Pittsburgh, Lower Monongahela, Upper Monongahela, Ohio, Kiski and Beaver.

#### Foundation trustee

Jo Feathers of Monroeville has been named to the board of directors of The West Penn Hospital Foundation for a three-year term. She also chairs West Penn's governing board of the hospitality shops and serves on the board of The Western Pennsylvania Healthcare System Inc., the hospital's parent organization.

Feathers, who taught elementary school in the Woodland Hills School District, is a graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and was on the university's alumni board for nine years.

#### Pastor appointed

The Rev. James Sheldon will join the staff of Penn Hills Baptist Church as its pastor this month, a post that has been vacant since January 1993. He will preach his first sermon there at the 11 a.m. service Sept. 4.

Sheldon, his wife, Jean, and their sons, David, 12, and John, 10, are coming to Penn Hills from North Providence, R.I., where he was pastor at Allendale Baptist Church.

He is a graduate of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Ill.

**Baptist official**  
The Allegheny Union Baptist

Association has elected Jean Bowling of Verona as president of its Congress of Christian Education. Bowling will oversee activ-

### BULLETIN BOARD

- ART**
- The Norwin Art League's 20th annual judged exhibit will hang today through Sunday in the lower-level court, Greengate Mall, Greensburg, Industrial and commercial photographer Richard Stoner judged the show.
  - "Figures of Speech — Alphabet and Golem Project," two installations by Diane Samuels, will go up Saturday in Westmoreland Museum of Art, 221 N. Main St., Greensburg, where the exhibit will continue through Oct. 23. Samuels' works center on communications, specifically letters in languages and Jewish folk tales. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays. Admission is free.
  - Conceptual and physical "Contrasts" will shine in an exhibit that will run from Tuesday through Sept. 24 in Style and Substance Art Gallery, upper level, Greengate Mall, Greensburg. Hours are 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and noon to 5 p.m. Sundays.
- CLASSES**
- Westmoreland County Community College will offer 21 telecourses, each worth three credits, this fall as an alternative to attending class on campus. Videotapes, which will be lent to registered students for a refundable \$25 deposit, may be picked up at the Youngwood campus or at the Alle-Kiski, Bushy Run, Laurel and Mon Valley education centers. Five of the telecourses will be aired on WQEX-TV, Channel 16. For details, call (800) 262-2103.
  - The Pittsburgh Bridge Association will offer bridge lessons for beginners and intermediate players beginning Sept. 12 and continuing for 10 weeks in the Pittsburgh Blind Association building, 300 S. Craig St., Oakland. The registration deadline is Sept. 4. Call 244-8984.
- CONCERTS**
- Chuck Austin and friends will jazz it up from noon to 2 p.m. tomorrow outdoors in the Presence Cafe, Broad Street and Sheridan Square, East Liberty. The music is free, courtesy of the East Liberty Public Safety Committee and the Pittsburgh Musicians Union.
  - The Frankie Carrol Orchestra will bring its big band sound to the island stage on the Lower Lake in Twin Lakes Park, Hempfield and Unity townships, from 4 to 5 p.m. Sunday. The free concert is sponsored by the Westmoreland County Commissioners, the Tri-County Federation of Musicians and the Greensburg Music Society.



#### ENTERTAINMENT

□ After a seven-year hiatus, the Trafford Festival is back, with games, rides, food, fun and music from 5 to 11 p.m. Wednesday through the last burst of fireworks on Aug. 20 at Trafford School, Brinton Avenue. The excitement moves into the auditorium for nightly stagings of "Alice in Wonderland." Chords R Us, Blair Elton Band, Hermine Button Box Club, Norwin Esquire Drum & Bugle Corps and Holden Puppets will provide entertainment. Softball will get an early start Saturday — around 10 a.m. — as Trafford Baseball Association teams compete to play the KDKA-TV's all-stars later in the day.

#### FOR CHILDREN

□ Children, ages 8 to 13, who have asthma will head to Camp Huff 'n Puff tomorrow through Monday for four days of swimming, team challenges and new friends. Sponsored by the American Lung Association of Western Pennsylvania, the camp is at Jomonville in the Laurel Mountains near Uniontown. For details, call Carol Ann Kuczma at (800) 220-1990.

#### FOR PARENTS

□ The Pittsburgh-Greensburg Marriage Encounter Community will celebrate the International Year of the Family at a picnic Aug. 21 in the Donnevale and Dogwood groves, North Park. Open to couples who have attended the group's encounter weekends, and to their families, it will begin with Mass at 1 p.m. For directions call 934-0284 or 935-3113.

□ Dislocated workers can get free job training, career counseling and job placement assistance at Forbes Road East Area Vocational Technical School, 607 Beauty Road, Monroeville. Supported by Title III funds, training programs include accounting, airline/travel, computer technology, computerized machine technology, dental, diesel technology,

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#### HEAR, YE!

Convenient, low cost mammograms will be available through Allegheny General Hospital's Mobile Mammography unit from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday at the Ritzland Plaza Thrift Drug store, Frankstown Road, Penn Hills. Early registration is recommended, and appointments can be made by calling AGH at 338-9600.

The mobile units, which are staffed by female radiology technicians, use the same advanced X-ray equipment found in hospitals, which is accredited by the American College of Radiology.

WEDDINGS



Lisa Ann Rebmann

Miller-Rebmann

Lisa Ann Miller and Heinz Bruno Rebmann were married July 23 in Carnegie United Methodist Church, Carnegie. The Rev. Beth Nelson officiated. A reception was held at Piccolo Mondo.

Parents of the couple are Mr. and Mrs. David Walter Miller of Sisterville, W Va., and Mr. and Mrs. Bruno R. Rebmann of Kaisten, Switzerland.

Honor attendants were Amanda Eads, sister of the bride, and Dieter Rebmann, brother of the bridegroom.

The couple's wedding trip was to Delaware.

Edwards-McBriar

Lisa Marie Edwards and Mark David McBriar were married May 29 in Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Lansdale, Montgomery County. The Rev. Rock Schuler officiated. A reception followed at Presidential Caterers.

Parents of the couple are LeRoy and Donna Edwards of Hatfield, Montgomery County, and JoAnne McBriar of Penn Hills and the late David McBriar.

Honor attendants were Tracy Edwards, sister of the bride, and John Demetre.

The couple will live in Westwood, Calif.

ENGAGED

Harley Elizabeth Guttman to Eli Ungar. Parents are Susan and Barney Guttman of Squirrel Hill and Rabbi and Mrs. Andre Ungar of Oradell, N.Y. The bride-to-be graduated with honors from Harvard University, and is a consultant with Gemini Consulting in New York City. Her fiancé graduated magna cum laude from Brown University, and is a principal with Penobscot Corp., also in New York City. A November wedding is planned.

Jennifer Marie Lescisin to Gregory Joseph Paoe. Parents are Mr. and Mrs. John Lescisin of Churchill and Mr. and Mrs. Larry Paoe of Forest Hills. The bride-to-be graduated from the University of Pittsburgh, and received a master's degree from Duquesne University. Her fiancé graduated from Bethany College and is working toward his master's degree. An Oct. 14, 1995, wedding is planned.

Cheryl Anne Raupach to Jeffrey Ronald Flowers. Parents are Mr. and Mrs. William W. Raupach of Fort Pierce, Fla., formerly of Baldwin, and Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Flowers of Dover, N.H., formerly of Penn Hills. The bride-to-be and her fiancé graduated from the University of Pittsburgh. She is employed by Brentano Specialty Inc., and he by TCI of Pennsylvania Inc. A May 6 wedding is planned.

Mall at 25 holding its own

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put it this way: "There's kind of a synergy when the community develops the way ours has."

It has developed in Monroeville in part because of the convergence of highways, including Route 22, Route 48, the Parkway East and the Turnpike, in the community, Blaha said.

Beyond retail stores, Blaha believes the mall has helped to spur the growth of a wide range of businesses, schools and the Forbes Regional Health Center.

Combined with the businesses, services and housing it attracts, the mall helps to make what Nau called a "well-rounded" community. "We've got everything within our borders," she said.

While Monroeville has had new apartments and homes built, the population hasn't increased significantly since the mall was built.

The 1970 census shows 29,011 people living in Monroeville while the 1990 U.S. Census shows 29,169. The biggest growth spurt was before the mall was built when population rose from 7,841 in 1950 to 22,446 in 1960.

Direct competition

While the mall helped many businesses in Monroeville, it was one of the factors that all but sank Eastland shopping center in North Versailles, which opened as a strip center in 1963 and added a roof to become a mall in the '70s.

It was bought out of bankruptcy about five years ago when the only remaining tenants in the 700,000-square-foot center were a barber and a shoemaker.

Edward I. Dale, owner and manager of what is now called the New Eastland Mall and Marketplace, said the old Eastland had tried to compete head-to-head with Monroeville Mall and lost. That's partly because it wasn't close enough to benefit from Monroeville Mall, but was close enough that its customers and some tenants headed to

YOUR PERSONAL ORGANIZER

Here are some keys to lock out glitches

Susan Valaskovic Scripps Howard News Service

I have never organized a home or an office where I haven't found a box, cup or drawer full of unidentified keys — keys to padlocks, fences, apartments, cars, offices, file cabinets, garages, credenzas, desk drawers and even piggy banks.

Often the owners have long ago forgotten what the keys fit.

The problem arises when old keys are mixed in with spares you might need in an emergency. For instance, what would you do if your 3-year-old locked himself in the garage with your key? Do you know which of the 20-some keys in the drawer is the spare? What if you were in a car acci-

dent and you had to be hospitalized? Is there an extra key to your dog's pen so that your landlord or neighbor could feed and water him?

Even if you never have an emergency, not having a spare key when you need one is a glitch. The more glitches in your life, the higher your stress level.

Take a few hours and spend a little money to:

- Sort your keys, throw out old ones and have duplicates made. Buy key rings or a key box and label spare keys. (If you are concerned about crime, you might want to label keys with numbers and store the index in another location in the house.) Identify locks that no longer have keys: your file cabinet, brief-

case or bathroom door. You will probably uncover several missing keys. Hire a locksmith, disable the lock or remove it. Emergency-proof all locks.

- Retrieve keys from those who no longer have a need for them, or have the lock changed or rekeyed. Communicate how you have set up your spare key system to others. If you live alone, you may wish to give important keys to a relative, a neighbor or a friend. Finally, keep the system current.

Susan Valaskovic, a professional organizer, writes this column weekly at the Rocky Mountain News in Denver. Send comments to: Your Personal Organizer, P.O. Box 6690, Denver, Colo. 80206.

Monroeville Mall is "the heart, and everything else spins around it."

— Wes Blaha, chamber of commerce executive director

Monroeville.

Dale said the center, which now has 37 tenants, is carving a different niche with flea markets and outlets.

Malls such as Monroeville also haven't been good for Downtown Pittsburgh businesses.

Noting some difficulties in filling retail and office space Downtown, Dan Smith, associate professor of marketing at the University of Pittsburgh, said, "The reason to a great extent is the location of the malls. If you look at where the malls are laid out, when you consider South Hills Village, Century III, Ross Park and Monroeville, they almost surround the city on every side.

"It's just like putting four magnets around the city and sucking people out of the city."

As new malls have sprung up, they haven't damaged Monroeville Mall's business. Smith thinks one reason is that Pittsburgh area residents are hesitant to go across riv-

ers, have established shopping habits and view the mix of stores at malls as similar.

Security beefed up

Aside from some problems with car thefts, Nau noted a shooting last year as a rare blemish on Monroeville Mall's safety record.

An elderly North Braddock man was shot in the leg after he was caught in the middle of a dispute between rival gang members at the mall in February.

"I think that we've effectively turned that around, too," said Nau.

The police and mall security have worked to increase the safety of the mall. In June, Monroeville police opened a community safety office in space donated by the mall.

Monroeville has 55 police officers, in part because of the mall, Nau said.

Besides the more than 29,000 people who live in Monroeville, Nau figures another 70,000 come to

Monroeville each day.

The mall estimates 125,000 people visit the mall in an average week, with the numbers rising to 200,000 or 300,000 during a week in the Christmas shopping season, said Mindy Huth, mall marketing director.

Those additional people do require more services, such as more police. They also create more traffic, a never-ending topic of discussion in the municipality.

Schuerger said traffic jams are "part of our prosperity," adding, "We're working to do what we can with the traffic."

Tax base boon

Overall, Schuerger thinks the impact of the mall has been favorable. He noted that the municipality depends on businesses for about half of its tax revenue.

The mall originally was developed and owned by principals of the predecessor of Oxford Development Co., including Edward Lewis and Donald Soffer and some of their family members.

In 1986, the Oxford holdings were divided, with the Soffer family receiving most of Monroeville Mall itself. Today, the mall holdings of the Soffer group are assessed at

about \$26 million.

The Lewis group is known as L&M Associates and includes Edward Lewis, his sister Myrna and her husband Mark. That company and its subsidiary, Oxford Development Corp., own the Expo Mart, the Radisson Hotel and the Plaza shopping center on Mall Boulevard, among other mall buildings, that are assessed at about \$16 million.

The May Centers Associates Corp. owns Kaufmann's at the mall and some of the parking lots for a total assessment of \$3.16 million.

Today, the mall and its annex have 180 businesses and more than 3,000 jobs, Huth said. Twenty of the businesses were among the original 125, including five shoe stores and two of the original three anchors, Joseph Horne's and J.C. Penney.

The mall attracted Kaufmann's after the third anchor, Gimbel's, went out of business. Another major change was the replacement of its indoor ice-skating rink with a food court in 1984.

In 25 years, Blaha said the mall has become the center of the community.

"It's the heart, and everything else spins around it," he said.

CAMPUS NEWS

Headed back to school at Carlow College on a scholarship from the Oncology Nursing Foundation-Oncology Nursing Certification Corp. is Vicki Beaufort, a staff nurse at Latrobe Area Hospital.

Beaufort, of Waterford near Ligonier, received the \$2,000 national award based on her cancer-related work. A 1971 graduate of McKeesport Hospital School of Nursing, she has worked in medical oncology at Latrobe Hospital for six years, after stints in the intensive care-coronary care unit, on the IV team and as a private duty nurse.

Finishing up a stint as mentor/instructor at the fifth annual Governor's School for Teaching at Millersville University, Lancaster County, Saturday is Donald F. Roberts of Monroeville. Roberts, a teacher at Frick International Studies Academy, Oakland, and a part-

time instructor at the University of Pittsburgh, has been talking with high-school sophomores and juniors who participated in the five-week long governor's school about careers in teaching.

BIRTHS

Jeannette Hospital

July 5 Lacey, Ryan Anthony, son of Thomas P. and Jackie Lacey of White Oak.

Magee-Womens

June 5 Battiste, Joel Brendan, son of Rob and Mimi Battiste of Penn Hills. July 26 Armstrong, Alexandra Gina, daughter of Thomas Armstrong and Traci Iarussi of Murrysville.

BULLETIN BOARD

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electrical technology, graphics technology, health occupations, heating/ventilating/air conditioning and medical office technology. Call Mose McNeese at 373-8100, extension 254.

FUND RAISING

The Thomas House Angels have challenged WTAE-TV's No Stars to play ball at 2 p.m. Saturday in Riverside Park, Oakmont. Oakmont Mayor Don Eaton will throw out the first pitch and members of the borough's boulevard committee will lead cheers. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$2 for students at the gate, with children six and younger admitted free. Proceeds will go to Thomas House, short-term housing for families of out-of-town patients and nursing home residents.

Ducks — the plastic variety — will dive into the swimming pool at the Sheraton Inn, Greensburg, next Thursday in the American Cancer Society's "Quacky Splash." They'll swim from 5:30 to 7 p.m. when winners will be plucked from the waters. To enter a quacker in the splash for prizes, call 834-9070. Ducks can be adopted for \$5 each in advance or \$7 at the party.

HEALTH

Nutrition and fitness expert Dr. Ted Broer will discuss facts, fads and fallacies in "Walking in Health" at 7 p.m. Sunday through Tuesday in Greater Works Outreach Church, 301 College Park Drive, Monroeville. The seminar, which will include an evening of healing ministry, is free. Child care will be provided. Call 327-6500.

RECREATION

Teams of six to 10 players still have time to enter the Co-Ed Beach Volleyball Tournament, which will be held Sunday at Cedar Creek Park in Rostraver as part of August Fun Fest, but each must be able to play at least two women at all times. Players must be at least 16 years old and from Westmoreland County. The fee is \$15 per team. To enter, call 830-3962.

REGISTRATIONS

The Penn Hills YMCA is accepting applications for its Y-Tot Nursery School in the East Communities Program Center, 11817 Frankstown Road. Children can attend two or three days a week, from 9 to 11:30 a.m. or from 12:30 to 3 p.m. Y-Tots, which will be 34 years old this fall, offers recreational, educational and social activities designed to prepare youngsters for kindergarten and elementary school. Call 795-2600.

Registration is under way at the Level Green Presbyterian Preschool for morning and afternoon classes. The 3-year-olds will attend Tuesdays and Thursdays and 4-year-olds Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The school is in the church at 105 Olive Drive, Level Green. Call 856-8842.

Linway Nursery School in Linway United Presbyterian Church, Route 30, North Versailles, is registering youngsters for the next school year. Sessions for 4-year-olds will meet from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 3 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; those for 3-year-olds will run from 9 to 11 a.m. and noon to 2 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Call 824-3555.

SENIORS

The Turtle Creek borough building, 125 Monroeville Ave., is open to senior citizens at noon every Friday for bingo, cards, refreshments and conversation.

The Alle-Kiski Valley Senior Citizens Center has invited Carlos Gorrio to speak to caregivers about Alzheimer's disease at 11 a.m. Friday in the center at 1035 Third Ave., New Kensington.

Friends and family of residents at Hempfield Manor Nursing Home, Woodward Drive, Greensburg, are invited to join a celebration of birthdays and baseball there Monday as part of baseball month at the nursing home. The Pirate Parrot will be around from 2 to 3 p.m. and accordionist Micky D will play from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

SPECIAL INTEREST

With Swissvale Crime Watch, residents will get two for one Thursday evening. Residents and business owners are encouraged to attend the community meeting at 7:30 in the borough building, and all are urged to sit out on their porches for Night-Out Night from 7 to 10 p.m.

STUDENTS

Students who are new to the Penn Hills School District will learn about classes and services at two orientation programs. The first, for students in grades 10 through 12, will begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday in Penn Hills Senior High School. The other, for those in grades six through nine, will start at 9 a.m. next Thursday in Lanton Middle School. District students will return to classes Aug. 29.

Advertisement for ANTHONY'S Suburban East Dining & Entertainment. Features a 'NEW' SUNDAY BUFFET from 12 NOON to 4 P.M. for \$5.95. Includes EVERY SUNDAY LUNCH BUFFET. Call 371-5560 for reservations.

Advertisement for BALTIMORE HOUSE. Features 'SPECIAL Special' SOFTSHELL CRAB DINNERS for \$8.95 (includes two softshell crabs, salad and potato). Also features an ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT SPECIAL for \$14.95 (includes HARDSHELL CRABS, CRAB LEGS, SHRIMP, POTATO, SALAD). Address: 176 Curry Hollow Rd., Pleasant Hills. Call 653-3800.

Advertisement for ANTHONY'S 'NEW' SUNDAY BUFFET. Features a 'NEW' SUNDAY BUFFET from 12 NOON to 4 P.M. for \$5.95. Includes EVERY SUNDAY LUNCH BUFFET. Call 371-5560 for reservations. Also features a contest to win a \$25.00 GIFT CERTIFICATE to Mr. Fireplace in the East Contest. See Page E-8.