

9:30 am

Lansing Fisher Body Historical Team

3-29-06

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Interviewer = Marilyn Coulter
 Interviewee = Ort Arvanites
 Seniority - (B.D.) 9-12-1935 ~~(1935)~~ ^{unit} sen - 1956
 Married - Yes Sept 1959
 Military 1957-1959 (Army) 2 yrs
 Education = 11th grade

★ Name of Business = Wampy Bar and Grill
 Come here in Lansing in 1952. His parents were farmers. His father passed in 1941 and in 1951 someone sponsored him to come to U.S. in 1952. Came to America at age 17 and dreamed of America to live. July 10th 1952 he arrived in New York then to Detroit. He did not know any english to speak when he came to U.S.

★ The first 6 months here in the US were the most difficult, and Ort would have went back to Greece if he could but he was glad that he didn't and this was the best move that he ever made. Then he came to Lansing for a couple of years, then to Mt Pleasant for a year and in 1956, then came to Lansing and in 1957 went to the navy for 2 years. Also in 1956 he was hired to Fisher Body and taken to the body shop, the job he was going to be given was a dangerous

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job and he then left and came to work at Hourys Place. Then in 1964 got actually bought the place and in 1965 everything was finalized.

Back then the Fisher Building was known as the Dumont Building and in 1921 Mr Dumont and Houry Badreus became friends and Mr Dumont asked Houry Badreus to build a place for his employees to eat so in 1921 Hourys Place was built. For 35¢ you could eat, coffee 5¢ Pop 5¢ etc. Mr Dumont would come in and coals ~~or~~ whatever he wanted at Hourys and always would tip \$1.00 which was a lot of money then.

Once in 1929 to 1934 the Dumont Motor Co closed the building, and General Motors bought the factory also with the Fisher Brothers and Houry re opened Hourys Place to feed the workers from Fisher.

Hourys became the actual point of headquarters for local 607, in the 1940's. Hourys soap line sewed about 500-600 people a day. Hourys ~~was~~ was also used by the strikers during some small strikes as a place to use the restroom and also eat there too.

Back in 1922 Hourys was called Star Cafe named after the best selling Dumont car named the Star Car

(7) also a cafe was built next to (3)
the star cafe was the Verlinden Restaurant.
Later years when the star cafe got its
beer license and then they separated.
In 1961 there was a U.S. Steel strike and
Verlinden Cafe had to close.

* Sexton High School has always been
a patron of Homys over the years till
today. Art has had a wonderful life
over the years also, a beautiful life.
In the 1960's Homys had no liquor
license. So you needed 5 years in the
restaurant business. In 1961 a liquor license
was issued and then the business grew.
In 1964 Homys spoke to Art about buying
the restaurant & bar. Art said yes and
in 1965 he took over Homys until the
present day today. A wonderful business.
* Art met his wife in the ~~same~~ church,
they were both Greek Orthodox and
in 1959 they were married. Art also
said and again that the members of
Local 602 who were very special to
him and his entire family.

* His children are part of the business and
his daughters are married to Local 602
men. and he again thanked General Motors.
* There is a small lot behind Homys
place that children played ball and

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they broke windows in cars and also
Houps place but it was all in fun.
In the 1980's Art tried to purchase the
Verlinden Cafe but couldn't purchase right
away but eventually bought it and
expanded Houps into this and it still
is this way today as a large Houps.

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Also in the lot behind Houps for about
the last 10 years there is a garden put
in for the friends of the neighborhood.
They then all shared in the work in
the garden and share the harvest.

When the Fisher Building was going full
force Houps had approx 29 employees to
just accommodate the employees of Local 602.
Order food, checks cashed, strike pay etc.

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Most of the income came on the money
days which were Thursday and Fridays.
Some of these days there were 500-600
~~checks~~ checks cashed.

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Best menu item = Jumbo Double-Double.
2 1/4 pd hamburgers with everything, also
sub sandwiches Houps, Art's Greek,
also Houps wings. A Sarah sub was
a woman who grew up in the neighborhood
and worked for Art for a long time.
Almost every sub sandwich is named
after an employee who worked here
or was a really great employee.

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Worship also is used for retirement parties, birthdays, marriages etc.

Art also has always said that anytime local 602 has a function that Workshops will support the local for uses at events.

* Funniest Experience = Art cannot think of one single event that was funniest.

* Happiest Moment = The day he married his wife and then his children come along, owning Workshops and the local 602 people.

* Employees. Gus was working at Fisher at the time he was working at Workshops from 1965 to 1983. ~~They~~ Art and Gus started buying property in and around Michigan Avenue. So eventually Gus's Bar was formed on the south side of the plant, Workshops was on the west side of the Fisher Building.

* Capital of Quality - Art felt that these people were team oriented and respected quality all the time.

* Some of the supervisors lived in and around Workshops and in the back yard from Workshops, some of them would come in to Workshops almost every day for pop, cigars etc. Some people who come, Mayor Brown, Magic Johnson and his brothers, 2 ~~of~~ of them actually work at Fisher Body Plant.

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Back earlier Mr. Dumont when he was in town he lived just a couple of blocks behind Goups Place.

A Sometimes Art would also do things for the Verinder elementary school. Art always believed that you should support your neighborhood and people who are in need.

* Plant Closing - Art had heard back in the 1980's that eventually the Fisher Body plant would close. Everyone thought this too. Art thought that the plant was never going to be torn down. Once this happened Art spoke to his family about how the Fisher employees have enriched their lives and they should be thankful. So Art has decided that to keep Goups open to serve the neighborhood and hopefully put something on that spot.

* Closing comments - Art was thankful to us and to the 602 employees for making their lives so rich and full of joy. Thanking everyone for granting him this time to give his interview and record his history and his lifestyle and being able to share his life with his friends at Fisher Body and UAW Local 602.