



None of Eva Briggs paintings are titled because the artist prefers to let the piece of art speak for itself. All are completed using a photograph as the basic drawing and oil painting over that. And all that are

on display in Farmington Hills Community Library this month are award winners. (Staff photos by Randy Bors)

**Eva Briggs**

**Born with a brush in one hand - and a camera in the other**

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Every piece of work that is hanging in the Quiet Room of Farmington Hills Community Library has won an award of one kind or another in local, state or national shows. The artist is painter/photographer Eva Briggs.

Mixing her two talents from an early age, she has developed an unusual oil and photography technique that prodded her parents into joking that she was born with a brush in one hand and a camera in the other.

Using her own technique to create a piece of art, the one-woman show in the library is of portraits of people and pets.

A photograph, one that she has taken herself, or one supplied by a client, acts as the sketch for the painting. This is completed in oils which obliterates any traces of the photograph.

"Sometimes artistic changes are required to produce a truly original work, but I still retain all the likeness of the photo I started with," she said.

Her technique is especially suited to posthumous portraits. Sometimes she will use several photos and combine the best features in several snapshots,

color slides or even movie film to achieve a portrait of the deceased.

MRS. BRIGGS was the first woman in the world to earn the coveted degree "Master of Photography." That was in 1941 when 32 men held the title worldwide.

She began serious study of art in 1925 with Sevingny and Toles in Detroit and through the years has studied with about 25 teachers.

She opened her portrait photography studio in Detroit in 1931, then moved to a larger gallery in Pleasant Ridge where she remained until the property, in the path of the controversial I-895 freeway, was sold to the Michigan State Highway Department.

Now she teaches oil and acrylic painting in the Clawson YWCA and takes a limited number of commissions from her Royal Oak home.

She is currently president of Palette and Brush Club, and an active member of Farmington Artists Club and South Oakland Art Association.

She is a member of Exhibition Committee of Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association and a director of Professional Photographers of Michigan Judging Clinics. She has served as a

president for Professional Photographers of Detroit.

She estimates she has given "at least 100 lectures" and has been asked to judge art or photographic competitions the same number of times.

The most prestigious lectures, she says, have been the several times she was the featured speaker for Professional Photographers of America national conventions.

THROUGH HER career she has been an instructor for Winona School of Photography in Indiana, a guest lecturer at Brooks Institute of Photography in California and the New York School of Photography in the Lansing Community College.

This spring she will again be judging the Professional Photographers of Michigan annual competition in Traverse City.

When she closed her Pleasant Ridge studio, she turned over her file of negatives, samples and personal data to the Burton Historical Collection in the Detroit Public Library, at the library's request.

"The collection contained 93,000 negatives," she said. "It was larger than

all the other photographic collections they had at the time put together."

The collection contained photos of Detroit and Michigan personages pertinent to the city's and state's history, in politics, industry, stage, screen, music and society.

There were national figures in the collection, but the portion of it she singles out as being important to her was her work involving the circus and circus performers.

"One was a picture of me in a lion's cage. Another was of me with my head in the mouth of an elephant," she said.

IN ADDITION to the work she shows in Farmington Hills Community Library this month, Ms. Briggs' work can be found in the Rental Galleries, Detroit Institute of Arts; in Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association in Birmingham, and several galleries in northern Michigan.

She is available for lectures and demonstrations.

She will also take calls to advise the best way of preserving heritage photos by calling her at 280-1796.

The library show remains through Feb. 28.



**Beverly Payne**

**She does more than talk about brotherhood**

Story: SHIRLEE IDEN  
Photos: MINDY SAUNDERS

If you see something wrong, you're obliged to try to make it right.

For Beverly Payne, that thought isn't something to simply give lip service to, it's a belief to act on.

"I was brought up in a home where

no man is an island," Ms. Payne says. "I was taught that brotherhood is taking care, not just of your own home or that of your next door neighbor, but those that need you, no matter where."

In her office adjacent to the Channel 2 newsroom in Southfield, Beverly Payne speaks of how she came to travel around the world to African Somalia

late last year - and why.

"I saw this report dealing with world hunger last summer," she says. "Little children with shrunken faces; kids lined up in rows buying like lambs for a few drops of milk; a camp with 2,000 people and one doctor and one nurse."

"I wasn't aware of the refugee problem in Somalia. Those pictures reminded me of the concentration camps."

First, she watched in horror; then had occasion to report on her new knowledge of Somalia. But for someone who is obliged to try to make wrong things right, it just wasn't enough.

BEVERLY PAYNE, private citizen, followed Beverly Payne, television newscaster, into the fray.

"We got so many calls at the station and people said 'Do something.' I told myself 'I would try,' she recalls.

And try she did. She spearheaded a drive to raise funds, food and supplies and she gathered facts about Somalia.

"I called the White House and the State Department and found it is strategic to us. So I asked why we couldn't get a Department of Defense plane to take food and supplies there," she says.

"I knew there are U.S. planes landing there but the State Department was secretive. I told them I only wanted to save lives."

By then Ms. Payne was aware that 64 percent of the Somali refugees are children, 23 percent women, and the remainder old people who have somehow survived.

"And kids age 9 come into the camps weighing nine pounds," she says. "They have to segregate those who might have a chance to live and those cases that are hopeless."

"Kids that may pull through get the half cup of milk or so that might make the difference."

FROM JULY ON, Ms. Payne raised about \$50,000 worth of desperately needed materials. For two straight months, she worked each evening after her duties at the station until 2 and 3 a.m.

"I wasn't much of a mother to my own three boys, but there was so much to do. I was determined to take that stuff to Somalia myself. I wasn't going to let it get into the hands of bureaucrats or something."

And the shrunken faces still haunted. But no matter how many calls she made and how much effort was put forth, there seemed to be no way to get a plane for relief mission.

"Finally, it was Coleman Young who made it happen," she says.

"I spoke to the mayor and through him to President Carter. He and Vice President Mondale cleared a special plane and I met it in Frankfurt and went on to Somalia."

It had taken from July to Nov. 2 to get clearance for the plane.

Now Ms. Payne had eight hours to get 30,000 pounds of food to New York City.

"Some was in an office, some in New York, and some was stored in a church," she says. "We had a midnight deadline and you can't believe what went through."

BUT THE ordeal of getting the supplies on board was only the first ordeal. From Frankfurt to Somalia, Ms. Payne, a photographer and a producer traveled on a C-130 cargo plane for 16 hours.

"There are no seats on a C-130," she says. "The men could climb up on the crates and stretch out. We had a stopover in Cairo and then on to Somalia. I was never so happy to see land in my life."

"My mom always says 'a hard heart makes a soft body.'"

Once in Somalia, Ms. Payne and her companions found things were worse than they had believed.

"It is very cold at night in northwest Somalia," she says. "The refugees don't have blankets. If the children don't starve to death, they freeze."

Painfully, she realized they had brought 5,000 blankets when 75,000 were needed.

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Beverly Payne believes that any amount of effort is worth it if you save one life. She will be one of five persons honored tonight by Jewish War Veterans during Brotherhood Night festivities. (Staff photo by Mindy Saunders)

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