

# Getting framed preserves art

By CORINNE ABATT

What goes on inside a framed work of art may determine the longevity of the art as well as its future value.

Cardboard is not just cardboard and glue not simply glue.

Both often contain acid that can have a disastrous effect on the art itself.

Mark M. Weglarski, award-winning painter, economics professor at Macomb County Community College and founder of the Troy Art Gallery, has had what he terms "some unusual experiences" when he takes artworks apart to reframe.

"I have found prints that have been taped, glued to the cardboard, even a Picasso out to fit the frame."

TO A PURIST framer like Weglarski, these are horrors akin to finding moths in a Siberian sable coat.

He has encountered gross errors committed by artists who frame their works themselves as well as professional framers.

For fine works of art which a collector or investor wants framed in the best possible way, Weglarski recommends conservation framing—more expensive, but worth the money in terms of preservation.

According to Weglarski, prints or other art should never, absolutely never, be glued to a backing, nor should they be taped down.

In his conservation framing, Weglarski uses all acid-free materials. He makes his own hinges to attach the art to a backing. These are torn strips of Japanese mulberry paper. He makes the paste himself from rice starch, distilled water and fungicide and insecticide chemicals. He doesn't urge others to try to make the mixture because the chemicals used are poisonous.

Although strong, the paste is water-soluble and is easily removed if reframing is necessary or requested.

For his conservation framing, Weglarski uses 100 percent rag neutral pH mounting boards and mats. He attaches the mat to the mounting board

on one side with linen tape, so it looks like a magazine cover. Mat and board should be exactly the same size.

OTHER MOUNTING BOARDS have a center which contains acid and when the mat edge is cut, the exposed center portion will be next to the art. Ordinary cardboard also contains acid as do clear and paperlike tapes.

Even if a print is taped against cardboard, Weglarski said the acid from that backing will get to the print.

GLASS is another important concern. Essentially there are three kinds, the standard clear, non-glare and plastic. A plastic is recommended for large framing because it is lighter than glass and non-breakable.

While glare or non-glare glass is up to the buyer, Weglarski doesn't recommend non-glare for conservation framing.

"To look right, non-glare glass has to be right on the image."

He explained the glass should be away from the image because in some instances the media used may stick to the glass, leaving a ghost on it. This is particularly true of pastels.

A mat will keep the image away from the glass and allow the paper to breathe as well, an important consideration.

"Pastels and pen and ink drawings should be double matted to keep them as far as possible from the glass," he said.

If a mat isn't used, often the case with a watercolor or large print, there is a type of frame available which is designed to keep the glass separate from the image.

The ultimate framing as far as Weglarski is concerned for a fine artwork would be all acid free materials, the best frame that maintains separation and a special plastic which screens out ultraviolet rays.

Although a purist, Weglarski doesn't insist on every piece of inexpensive art being framed with conservation materials—the economics of that aren't logical.

COLOR MATS trouble him somewhat because he believes all art looks better against white or off-white mats. He will use the limited range of color mats in acid free materials or he will use a color mat in addition to a white one so the color doesn't come in contact with the image.

His preference on the frame itself is to keep it simple—ornate frames detract from the art. In very damp climates, metal may be preferable to wood, because it won't warp or attract insects.

He stressed the importance of proper hardware—appropriate wire for hanging, bumpers at the bottom to prevent wall marks and let air flow between wall and back of frame and anchor screws rather than nails for putting into the wall.

Yet, even well-framed and hung, there is still the possibility of damage.

"Never spray a cleaner directly on the glass; it can drip down and seep inside," Weglarski said. He recommended spraying a cleaner on a cloth or paper towel. There is a special cleaner on the market for cleaning the plastics used in place of glass. He cautioned using other sprays or detergents on these surfaces which can yellow and fog up if not cleaned with special materials.

In his experience as a framer, Weglarski has seen everything from very inexpensive prints to those worth many thousands of dollars glued to an acid-producing backing. He is constantly removing tape used to hold a print or watercolor in place. He has seen the damage firsthand and because he is an artist, he is concerned for people who have fine art and are unaware of the damage which may be taking place.

"I don't want to be an alarmist," he said, "and I hope that everybody won't start taking their frames apart to see if they are safe."

"But those who buy fine art or have things they hope to pass on to their children should have their things checked few years—some framers say three, others seven years."

All fine art should be kept out of direct sunlight and away from fireplaces and heat outlets. Unframed prints should be stored in mats, preferably acid-free ones.

When checking if discoloring is noticeable, it's often too late to reverse the damage.

# Local religious events planned

## BETH SHALOM

Congregation Beth Shalom, 16601 Lincoln in Oak Park will have rabbi Shalom services at 6 p.m. Friday and sabbath services at 9 a.m. Saturday. Rabbi David A. Nelson will deliver the sermon and Cantor Samuel Greenbaum will chant the liturgy.

## NORTH CHURCH

Discovering the Bible Class will be at 9 a.m. Sunday at the worship service and church school will be at 10:30 a.m.

## BNAI MOSHE

Services at Congregation Bnai Moshe, 14790 Ten Mile in Oak Park will be at 7 p.m. Friday and at 8:45 a.m. Saturday. Rabbi Stanley M. Rosenbaum will deliver the sermon and Cantor Louis Klein will chant the liturgy.

## ST. BEDE

Sunday mass will be said at 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Anyone interested in Worldwide Marriage Encounter, a 44-hour weekend for married persons may call John and Joann Holman at 525-1672. The parish picnic will be on Sunday, Aug. 20 rain or shine at Camp Dearborn.

## EMANUEL

Temple Emanuel-El, 14450 Ten Mile in Oak Park will have its first summer sabbath eve service at 8 p.m. Friday in the west garden if the weather permits. The service will be conducted by Laurie and Lyle Parr. For more information call 967-4020.

## CALVARY LUTHERAN

The worship service at Calvary Lutheran Church, 28001 Evergreen in Southfield will be at 9:30 a.m. Sunday. The message will be given by the Rev. Samuel Hays. The reception of new members will be included in the service. A nursery is provided. The church council will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.

## KOL AMI

Regular shabbat services at Temple Kol Ami, 5085 Walnut Lake Road in West Bloomfield will be held Friday. An Oneg Shabbat will follow the service. For more information call 661-4000.

## HOLY RESURRECTION

Divine liturgy will be at 8:45 a.m. Sunday with responses rendered by the a capella choir under the direction of Jane de Vyver. Church school will be at 8:45 a.m. For more information, call the pastor, Archpriest Nicholas Fedet at 557-2598.

## ST. MICHAEL

Sunday mass will be said at 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. The annual St. Michael's Golf Day will be on July 8 at the Dun Rovin Golf Course.

## NWUU

The gathering service at Northwest Unitarian Universalist Church, 23229 Northwestern Highway in Southfield, will be at 10 a.m. Sunday. Summer hours for the office are from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

# EXHIBITIONS

Somerset Mall—A one-woman show of sculpture by Birmingham artist Margaret Valpey will be on display at the mall through July 8. Mrs. Valpey is versatile in her approach to her work which runs from minor to serious works and has a particular flair for the unexpected. She is showing 30 pieces of her work in both metal and other materials. The artist will be present at the show most of the time to talk about her work. Open during regular mall hours, Monday, Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., other days, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Sundays and holidays.

Troy Art Gallery—Summer exhibition of gallery artists features a selection of Japanese woodblock prints as well as works by American, European and Michigan artists and introducing silk screen prints of New York by Susan Meisel. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sunday during August, 755 W. Big Beaver, in the Top of Troy concourse, just west of I-75.

The Artist's Guild—A retrospective of paintings and sculpture samplings shown in the past year will be on display at the gallery, 5267 Franklin Road, Franklin Village, through Sept. 15. Summer hours are: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Allen Rubiner Gallery—Posters by over 100 different American and European artists will be on display through July 15. Summer hours are Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

2821 S. Washington, Royal Oak.

Gallery 22—Recent acquisitions including a display of newly arrived paintings, graphics, ceramics, weavings and sculpture includes some familiar names. Among them are Friedlander, Appel, Colquhoun, Baliff, Boulanger, Doussan, Alvar, Carcan, Fireman and Maxwell. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 22 E. Long Lake at Woodward.

Lee Hoffman Gallery—Deborah Butterfield, professor of art at Montana State University, brings her horses into the living room. Of plaster, paper and earth molded around steel and wire skeletons, these range between life size and considerably smaller. Her work suggests Oriental horse sculpture. Shows runs through July 22. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., 538 N. Woodward.

Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association—The 32d annual exhibit by members of Palette and Brush Club runs through July 15. Reception Saturday, 2-5 p.m. Regular gallery hours are Monday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 1315 S. Cranbrook at Fourteen Mile.

Halsted Gallery—Exhibition and sale of photographs by Gibson B. Kennedy. His works portray indigenous American architecture, landscape and ruins. The show will run through July 15. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., 560 N. Woodward.

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