



Suzanne Weed's winter landscape is her first attempt at oils and an attractive addition to the two-woman show she and her mother have arranged at the Livonia City Hall. (Staff photos by Bob Woodring)

## Mother, daughter display art together

By SUSAN ROGERS

"Like mother, like daughter" goes the old saying. And it rings especially true in the case of professional artists Sandra and Suzanne Weed.

The two Weeds, of Westland, have some of their artwork on display at Livonia City Hall, Five Mile and Farmington Rd. The show features brightly colored florals, peaceful sea scenes, sleepy forests and wide-eyed animals.

"We paint differently, but think alike," said Sandra of herself and her 17-year-old daughter. Both fascinated by nature, Sandra considers herself an impressionist while Suzanne prefers realism in her artwork.

Sandra works best in oils. Impasto, the heavy application of paint to form a textured relief, is her specialty. Suzanne likes watercolors, oils and tiny, intricate pen and ink drawings. She said she is still experimenting with mediums to determine which she prefers.

"There's not a right or wrong way to paint," said Sandra, who teaches her craft for the Dearborn Art Studio and private classes. "You have to paint till your idea comes out on the canvas—regardless of technique."

SAUNDRA BEGAN painting when she was 12, but has been drawing most of her life. "I began winning scholastic art awards as a sophomore in high school," she said. "I won 11 of them as a senior, which was encouraging, to say the least. I took lots of art classes in school and had good teachers, which is very important."

Sandra attended Henry Ford Community College, completing her degree in art at Wayne State University and Eastern Michigan University. She taught art in elementary school for a short time, preferring older students with longer attention spans.

"I worked as a freelance commercial artist while attending college," she said, "continuing as a dress designer of bridal wear for the next

eight years. "I always made my own clothes, and people would comment—that's how I got into the clothing business. In the 50's and 60's it was often difficult to find comfortable things to wear."

She was the executive manager of the Westland Chamber of Commerce for four years and served on the board of directors of the Wayne-Westland Arts Association.

Currently teaching about 40 students privately, Sandra has devised a special program for beginners. "It's very basic—all you need is the desire to learn," she said. "Like piano, anyone can learn to paint. Of course, some will always be better than others, but anyone can learn."

SAUNDRA INSISTS she is never satisfied with her work, always planning ahead that her next painting will be her best. "The best thing to do is to find an area you like and keep developing it," she said. "For instance, I've always liked texture, and now I'm using it."

Although basically an impressionist as opposed to a realist, Sandra said she went through a period in her career where she was "very realistic. I had to prove I could do it," she said. "You have to know realism whether you paint it or not. A painter should study how things are made and what happens to them. Most people think you can just transfer what you see onto canvas or paper—this is a very common mistake for beginners."

She explained that you can learn about a subject through observation as well as studying the history. "For instance, when I was painting barns I got lots of books on barns and learned that they were built differently to fill special functions," she said. "This type of information helps in the structure of the painting as a whole."

She's now into flowers. "You're really got to be careful when painting wildflowers," she said. "Some grow in the summer, some in the spring and some in the fall. You've got to know

which grow when and not to mix them in your painting. Someone will always catch you if you don't know what you're doing."

SAUNDRA AND her daughter and husband do a lot of traveling as a family. With two artists and a photographer in the family, they find plenty to do. Sandra explained her husband will photograph something she may not have time to finish, but that the photo is for reference only. "I want my impression of the subject, not a copy of the photo. An artist has to feel for himself—otherwise you might as well blow up the photo."

In her collection, Sandra has only one picture of a person. It's a painting of herself as a child, painted from memory—a long haired child in a printed dress, asleep with her head on the arm of a big, soft chair. "I don't paint portraits," she said. "People have their own idea of what they look like. Portrait painters have to please someone—I want to please myself and hope someone else likes it too."

"A while back I decided my life was too happy—I had no message to tell the world, no cause to campaign for. I just enjoy nature and painting what God has created. There's no better artist than God—you can't improve on Him. I want people to enjoy the places I paint and see them the way I see them."

SUZANNE STARTED her art career before she went to kindergarten. "I've really grown up with art," said the long-haired Cherry Hill High School senior. "I've always drawn and enjoyed it—I've known for about four years that I was definitely going to be an artist."

Suzanne is already a professional artist, having sold her work at various art shows and fairs. She won an award of merit given by the Michigan Council of the Arts and has had her work exhibited at the Wyandotte Art Fair, the Dearborn Old World Fair and the Renaissance Art Fair in Pleasant Ridge.

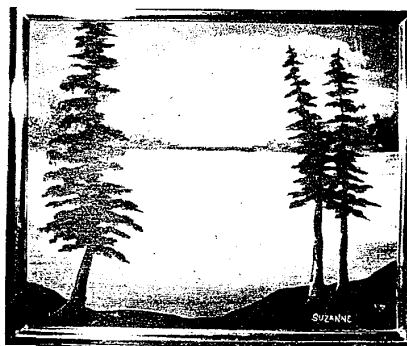
A firm believer in the theory that the best teacher is necessary for the serious artist, Sandra sends Suzanne to a private art teacher. "I don't like to teach her myself because I don't think it would be good for her," she said.



Sandra Weed shows a couple of her works in oil, which she describes as impressionistic rather than realistic.



Impasto painting, or the heavy application of paint to form thick textured relief, is a specialty for Sandra Weed. She is currently absorbed in painting floral impastos, like this one pictured here.



Oil on rough canvas is the media Suzanne Weed used to depict a peaceful lake scene.

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