



Farmington Observer

Suburban Life

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(F)7A

An odd couple comes to town

By LORAIN McCLISH

Nancy Gurwin Productions returns to Botsford Inn Dinner Theatre after a two-year absence with Neil Simon's "The Odd Couple." The company was last seen in the Farmington Inn when it staged the long-running "I Do, I Do."

Edgar A. Guest III and Kent Martin, team up as Oscar Madison and Felix Unger for the hit comedy that opens Wednesday, Jan. 17 for two dinner shows a week.

Dinner is served at 7 p.m. Wednes-

days, followed by the performance at 8:30 p.m. On Sundays, dinner begins at 6 p.m., with show time at 7:30 p.m.

Guest is not new to dinner theater. With Nancy Gurwin Productions, he won praise for his portrayal of Barney Ashman in "Last of the Red Hot Lovers," then directed "I Do, I Do," and "Once Upon A Mattress" for the company.

Martin brings a wealth of experience to the role of Felix Unger, stemming from a background as producer-director of theatrical companies, as well as

Hollywood film and commercial acting.

JEAN GARRINGER, a Rochester resident, most recently seen in "Tribute to Carnivale" with Wayne Westland Civic Theatre, takes the part of Gwendolyn Pigeon.

Marlene DeFoor of Livonia takes the role of Cecily Pigeon. Her latest role was in "The Good Doctor," with Wayne Westland Civic Theatre.

The odd couple's poker-playing friends are portrayed by Bill Hoffman of Wayne, Max Wolf of Berkley, Joe

Lannen of Redford and Dennis Moore of Berkley.

Before spring arrives, Ms. Gurwin will have three productions going on at the same time in the Detroit area.

After "The Odd Couple" gets under way, the Southfield woman will star in her company's production of "I Do, I Do," set to open in the Jewish Community Center on Feb. 3.

Plans for March call for the opening of "Twigs" in Detroit.

Reservations for "The Odd Couple" are being taken now by calling Botsford Inn, 477-4800.



Kent Martin, who has appeared in off-Broadway productions and was a lead player in the Channel 56 hour-long dramatic series "CPT," takes the role of the meticulous Felix Unger in "The Odd Couple."



Edgar Guest, who turned director for his last couple of involvements in dinner theater, is back on stage as Oscar Madison when "The Odd Couple" opens in Botsford Inn Jan. 17.

Dancercise: A fun way of keeping fit

BY LORAIN McCLISH

For Arlene Birsa, keeping fit is a way of life.

The Farmington Hills woman who innovated a fun way to keep fit called Dancercise said she did it, at least in part, for her own benefit.

She returned to the Detroit area after an absence of 13 years, offered

the series of instructions through Ten Mile Community School last September, and will stick with the same format for another session this winter.

"Straight exercise for a whole hour is kind of boring," Mrs. Birsa said. "So I mix the discipline of ballet with the fun of jazz and my students don't

even realize all the strain their bodies are taking so easily.

"They used muscles they hadn't used for years."

She uses the same recipe for the preschoolers she teaches at the school.

"They get tap for rhythm, ballet for technique and tumbling for coordination," she said.

"What's nice about this for the parents is that it takes a bit of energy out of the babies for the day. What's nice about it for the little ones is that they are learning a lot over a 10-week period without having to concentrate on one thing for longer than they are able."

MRS. BIRSA began her professional career in Detroit when she was named Miss USO, then went on tour with Horace Heidt. Her dancing career included the stage, television, choreography and staging benefits.

After her children were born, she continued to keep in touch with dancing.

"It just isn't practical being a performer while raising a family so I taught classes (in several cities), worked for charities, started studios," she said.

"I guess I just want to see people getting joy out of exercise while they are learning to dance—a double benefit."

Yet another benefit for those who enroll in the Ten Mile Community School classes, she believes, is the budget prices the students pay for professional instruction.

"They are paying pennies for the same class I would give as a professional if they went to a dance studio," Mrs. Birsa said.

This season she is juggling her time between selling real estate and teaching Dancercise, so she has limited her teaching to Mondays.

ADULTS HAVE an option of morning or evening classes. Children 4-6

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Arlene Birsa, who believes that keeping fit can be fun, has created Dancercise for those who want to learn how to dance and keep trim at the same time. (Staff photo by Carl Wellman)



Aerobic magic

Jackie Sorensen, originator of aerobic dancing, shows one of her classes how vigorous dance movements and peppy music bring benefits of an improved cardiovascular and muscular fitness with a trimmer body. Jan McElroy, who will teach aerobic dancing in Mercy Center on Mondays this winter, calls the exercise "aerobic magic." Students have options of daytime or evening classes and can use Visa or Master Charge to register by phone. Registrations are being taken now by calling the area's Aerobic Dance headquarters, 675-2177.

Couple celebrates 60th anniversary

Family and friends gathered in Nardin Park United Methodist Church on Sunday, Dec. 31, to celebrate the 60th wedding anniversary of Marge and Anton Benish.

The couple were married in the bride's home, in Detroit, on Jan. 1, 1919, and resided in the Detroit area for 65 years until they moved to their retirement home in 1966, in Mullet Lake Village, Mich.

They are charter members of Nardin Park church, and retain their membership there.

Benish, now 84, is a World War I vet-

eran and a retired employee of New York Central Railroad. He is a Life Mason and past president of Ionic Lodge. Mrs. Benish, now 79, served as a member of United Voluntary Service for 25 years.

The celebration, in Farmington Hills, is hosted by their four children: Leil Graham, of Denver, Col.; Don Benish, of Clearwater Beach, Fla.; Ellen Morris, of Cincinnati, O.; and Dorothy Schwalm, of Northville.

The couple have 12 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

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