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(F18)

## Farmington Artists Club

## Artists turn nostalgic as spring show draws near

By LORAIN McCLISH

Three Farmington artists turned nostalgic this week with tales of the growing pains of an art group while working towards the next three-day show sponsored by Farmington Artists Club.

"You've come a long way baby is an appropriate slogan for us," said Annetta Lind, one of seven women who gathered a handful of art lovers in a room in St. Fabian's Catholic Church to form the club in 1965.

The membership numbers 135 now who will participate in the spring exhibit and sale that opens its doors in Mercy Center Friday through Sunday, April 25-27. Helga Tatar and Shirley Sloane are chairing the event.

The purpose of the club is to bring together people who love art in order to share, learn and improve one's craft and find an outlet for their work.

"A special benefit for me has been the many lasting friendships I've made," Ms. Lind said. "That is not to say that artistic temperament has not reared its ugly head on occasion. But there has been a consistency to the group which has moved along through the efforts of many dedicated members of both the club and the community to bring us where we are today."

MS. LIND vividly recalls the club's first show when Jim Parker emptied the entire stock of Farmington Hobby Shop for members to hang a one-day Sunday show. It poured rain. Attendance was sparse and so were sales.

The records of club historian Connie Lucas lists subsequent shows that were given in club houses, barns, Demsey's Department Store and parking lots when the temperature hit 90 degrees.

Along the way, members learned not to pit their shows in competition with football games, festivals or elections, and they also learned the art of advertising.

Very early on, art-on-a-budget became a tradition for the artists' shows, a tradition that remains with a section of unframed works placed on sale offering high quality original works at moderate prices.

One story Ms. Lind recalls concerning budget-priced art had to do with a woman who spent one entire day in that section of the show.

"She did all of her gift shopping there for the entire year," Ms. Lind said. "We were thrilled about this until we found out that she would buy anything that was purple."

Members wielded a delicate but firm hand in turning away paint-by-number artists and recall a rather amusing story having to do with a theft.

"SOME OF us were hanging our work in the old Danish Inn at the time," Ms. Lind said. "A couple in their cups took a painting off the wall as a lark and left in their Cadillac while an alert bus boy called the police."

"When the police reported back to the artist, she said she wouldn't press charges if he bought the painting."

"It turned out the man was quite prominent. He wasn't with his wife, and our artist made her first sale."

Another lesson for the fledgling group to learn was how to take criticism, both as individuals and as a group.

"When the Farmington Enterprise gave us an complimentary review, we smoothed our ruffled feathers and wrote indignantly to the editor asking that if we must be reviewed, please don't send the cooking editor," Mrs. Lind said.

Farmington Artists Club member Gail Yurasek, a relative newcomer to the group, testified that the original purpose of the club remains the same, "sharing and the development of our work," she said.



Connie Lucas, a member of Farmington Artists Club for eight years, now has the job of club historian. She traces the club's beginnings with seven members to its present status as one of the most prestigious art clubs in the metropolitan area. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

"We welcome artists, beginners and professionals," And although the original intent was to remain local, active members live as far away as Lansing, "and rarely miss a meeting," Ms. Lind said.

## Show format remains as is

Because members of the Farmington Artists Club are not about to turn their backs on a winner, the format of the spring show and exhibit remains the same as in former years.

The three-day show runs from April 24-26 in the Mercy Conference Center. Exhibit hours are from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is without charge. Refreshments are served to the browsers and shoppers.

The show includes a juried gallery, an open gallery and a budget gallery of unframed works that are priced as low as \$2.

One of the unique features of the show, and an increasingly popular one, is the opportunity for visitors to cast their votes for their favorite painting hung in either the open or juried galleries.

The popular-vote winners are then the recipients of awards, certificates and the accompanying public acknowledgement of their work.

Another feature is the show's raffle of art work donated by the club members and sponsored by Farmington Art Foundation, the service arm of the club. Proceeds go to carrying out art-related programs in the community.

THE MATURING club is now returning the support of the community in a number of ways.

The Farmington Art Foundation is the service arm of the club which brings The Picture Ladies into nine elementary public schools in the area. It is an enrichment program subsidized with the help of the local PTAs and PTOs which passes on the love of art from Farmington Artists Club volunteers to the local school children.

The foundation supports, with both money and manpower, the oil painting classes that run continuously for senior adults in The Gathering Place.

The club hangs one-man shows monthly in each of the area's two libraries, and heads up the libraries art rental programs.

The spring show will display about 1,500 original paintings and drawings in every medium which can be purchased for prices beginning at \$2.



Gail Yurasek is simultaneously working towards Farmington Artists Club's spring exhibit, getting her photographs ready for a one-woman show in Farmington Community Library, and re-dressing one of her soft sculptures. Mrs. Yurasek's family of pigs caused quite a bit of comment from Christmas shoppers when they were displayed in Focal Point's window in downtown Farmington. She's redressing them for the next holiday. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)



Annetta Lind is a charter member of Farmington Artists Club and a contributor to the club's first exhibit and sale. Her painting on the left is called "Hanging Pot," and it won

a prize in 1965. The painting on the right is called "Electric Horseman" and will be seen by guests who visit the show in April. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

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