

A garage sale is great to keep a man humble

In the newspaper business, we sometimes are accused of adding "hype" to a story "to sell a few more papers."

It doesn't work that way. For one thing, most Observer & Eccentric circulation is home delivery or mail subscription.

Very little of our 150,000 circulation is newsstand sales, and the humbling fact is that hot news stories don't increase circulation.

Circulation chief Fred Wright tells me that newsstand sales go up only twice during the year — in late spring and just before school starts.

People buy the paper in order to look at the classified ads for garage sales.

And that is humbling to a newspaper. We struggle with governmental budgets, we fight Open Meetings Act battles with public agencies, we take pains to get information, and it turns out that what sells papers is ads for garage sales.

THERE ARE TWO reasons folks buy a paper at all.

One is that they are non-residents of O&E communities and can't get home delivery.

The other is that they don't want to wait for the carrier to get out of school and deliver the paper. They want it first thing in the morning.

And so they line up at 6:30 in the morning outside the main plant in Livonia to get the paper.

They spot the classified ads, pin-point the places on a map and make the rounds.

To my mind, shopping is a functional thing, but to many folks it's a form of recreation, maybe even of therapy.

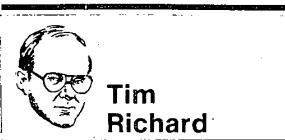
MY AUNT Rita in Redford Township loves garage sales. She sums up her newspaper reading habits in one sentence: "I don't read nothin' but the ads."

If I libeled her in a page one story, I doubt she would notice. She prefers those nine columns of tiny type in the back section.

Whenever I get bloated with self-importance about my essays on public transportation, the evils of the housing market or the fishhooks of Headlee, a visit to Aunt Rita restores me to my proper role in the spectrum of things.

Classified ads are so important that people sometimes ask newspaper employees if they can get an advance look so they can be first in line the next morning.

The answer is No. Nothing in the ads is to be



Tim Richard

revealed until the paper hits the street on Monday and Thursday morning. Otherwise, sellers would be bothered in the middle of the night, and retail advertisers would lose some competitive advantages.

A FRIEND takes a dim view of garage sales: "I don't want anyone else's discards."

Well, there is some junk at garage sales. But there are a lot of brand new things people have never used. My wife picked up four steak platters still in their cellophane wrappers for \$2. Another time she picked up a new set of sweetcorn holders, mahogany, yet, for \$1.

That was the time she took part in a cooperative garage sale and wound up buying more than we sold.

My favorite garage sale story was told by one of the ad takers in our phone room.

One fall, a man bought a new air conditioner for about 25 percent off because it was the end of the season. He stored it in the garage.

Next spring, his wife had a garage sale. The brand new, unopened air conditioner worth several hundred dollars was accidentally sold for \$25.

THE GARAGE SALE is such a big business that our classified department put together a kit with signs and advice for holding a successful sale.

They have all kinds of advice we were never taught in the marketing courses of the University of Michigan Graduate School of Business Administration.

The kit advises several families to go in together, for example. The reason is that you can offer more items and attract a bigger group of customers.

Another tip is to list an alternate date in case of rain. They never taught us that in Principles of Marketing 151.

Yes, this garage sale phenomenon keeps a guy humble.



Farmington Observer

entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100

at your leisure

SHOWTIME

What Life Is It Anyway? award-winning hit play starring Michael Moriarty through Sunday at the Birmingham Theatre. Ticket information at box office, 644-3533.

The Comedy of Errors William Shakespeare's classic tale staged as it would be done by an itinerant Italian circus troupe Friday-Sunday and June 20-22. Curtain time 8:30 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 6:30 p.m. Sundays; also 2:30 p.m. matinees Sunday and June 22. For ticket information call 377-2000.

The Little Foxes by Lillian Hellman presented by Will-O-Way Repertory Theatre at 8:30 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays through June 26 at Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre in Bloomfield Township. Directed by Eileen T. Weiss with Betty Hancock as Regina, Celia Merrill Turner as Birdie and Mrs. Turner's daughter, Tina, as Alexandra. Reservations by calling 644-4418.

LUNCH, DINNER THEATER

Under the Yum Yum Tree satire presented by Jimmy Launce Productions on Fridays-Saturdays at Somerset Diner Theatre, Somerset Mall, Troy. Cast includes Mark Halpin, Liz Denison, Jo Ann Tyler and Fred Buchalter. Buffet dinner prepared and served by Alfred's Restaurant at 7:30 p.m.; show at 8:45 p.m. Reservations at 643-8765.

CONCERTS

Pine Knob Music Theatre continues ninth season with **The O'Jays** at 7:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday and **Waylon Jennings** at 7:30 p.m. Sunday at outdoor concert theater in Clarkston. Further information at 647-7790.

Concert at La Carte chamber music concert by Renaissance Concerts Inc. presents Misha Racclevsky, violin;

I-Fu Wang, viola, and **Davvid Saltzman, cello**, Monday at **Tweeny's Cafe** in Birmingham. Three-course dinner and concert priced separately. Reservations accepted for 6:30-7:30 p.m. by calling 644-0050.

In the Park free concert series sponsored by City of Birmingham opens at 8 p.m. Thursday in Shain Park with Birmingham Community Band; concert sponsored in part by Philanthropic Club of Greater Birmingham. Battle of the Bands presented at 7 p.m. Friday at the Birmingham Ice Arena; presented in cooperation with Strings 'n' Things. In case of inclement weather Shain Park performance will be moved to indoor location. Listen to WMJC-FM 95 or call 645-0730 for recorded information.

NIGHTLIFE

Angle's big band sound of the Dick Murphy band 9 p.m. to midnight Sundays in Farmington Hills. Cover charge.

The Blue Parrot bar and grill in Franklin Shopping Plaza presents the Progressive Blues Band on Mondays-Tuesdays. "Solace," a musical celebration 9 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Wednesdays-Saturdays in Southfield.

Cafe Flor presents "Jam" with Gary Shunk, piano; Danny Jordan, bass; Larry Bell, drums; and George "Sax" Benson, saxophone, at 7:30 p.m. Sundays at Franklin Plaza in Southfield.

Comedy Castle presents comedians Tuesdays-Saturdays at Friday's in Pine Lake Mall, West Bloomfield. Comic Mike Binder, originally from Birmingham and now of Los Angeles, at 9 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday and 9 and 11:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday. Open mike amateur night Tuesdays from 9 p.m. until last comic finishes. For information and reservations call 651-3552.

Dewey's lounge presents **Natural Family**, a four-piece band with a female lead vocalist and three-man back up, with current top 40 tunes for the dancing crowd, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.



Mike Binder from "Make Me Laugh" and the Los Angeles Comedy Store will appear Wednesday-Saturday at the Comedy Castle in West Bloomfield. Here, Binder is shown in a still from his role in the upcoming CBS movie "The GIs."

Mondays-Saturdays through June 21 at the Michigan Inn in Southfield.

Eden Glen Joe Grande Trio plays for listening and dancing 7:30-11:30 p.m. Wednesdays-Thursdays and 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. Fridays-Saturdays at restaurant in Troy. Doug Jacobs and the Red Garter Band plays for Dirlendland Brunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sundays.

Ha'Penny Lounge presents Jeff LaDuke 7 p.m. to midnight Tuesdays-Thursdays and 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Fridays-Saturdays through June at Win Schuler's Restaurant in West Bloomfield.

J. Ross Browne's Whaling Station presents the Ron Coden Show at 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays-Thursdays and 9 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays in Bloomfield Hills.

Piper's Alley presents Andrea Choulas on Mondays, Charles Green on Saturdays and Detroit Blues Band on Sundays through June in Troy. Tuesdays are audition night for new groups.

Roma's of Bloomfield presents the return of Big Band Sounds and Dancing from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Saturdays in Bloomfield Township. For more information call 332-9237.

Somerset Inn pianist Terry Alan plays at restaurant L'Auberge in Troy from 6-11 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays and for brunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sundays.

Stafford's presents Dennis Vernier, one-man band, from 7-11 p.m. Wednesdays 8 p.m. to midnight Thursdays 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Fridays-Saturdays in West Bloomfield.

Wagon Wheel Saloon presents Leigh Stanley and Bob Wakeman on Monday-Tuesday and Colorado on Wednesday-Sunday in Troy.

ON FILM

A New Leaf starring Elaine May and Walter Matthau at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Avon Township Public Library. Free.

For area events in Oakland County to be considered for listing, send information to: Ethel Simmons, entertainment editor, The Observer & Eccentric, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48012.

Picasso film documents artist's life

A vivid look at the life and art of Pablo Picasso will be presented on Channel 56 in "Picasso — A Painter's Diary," at 8 p.m. Monday.

This 30-minute PBS special which features the life of Picasso, was filmed on location in France and Spain where he lived and worked.

"Picasso — A Painter's Diary" includes an extraordinary series of photographs and film sequences of the artist at work. In addition, the first person reminiscences of Picasso's daughter, Paloma, his son, Claude, and artist, Joan Miro, are highlights.

By means of an actor's voice-over, Picasso speaks for himself. Quotations

from his memoirs by Gertrude Stein and Jean Cocteau, some of his celebrated colleagues and companions, are in the film.

A production of WNET/New York, it was made with special cooperation from the French National Museums and the Museum of Modern Art in New York which is marking its 50th anniversary with an all-Picasso retrospective from now through Sept. 16.

Two works from the Detroit Institute of Art are included in this exhibition, the 1915 still life, "Bottle of Anise," and the 1909 "Portrait of Manuel Palares."

Kalamazoo hosts historic home tour

The 1986 Historic Home tour of Kalamazoo will be noon to 5 p.m. June 8.

Seven homes will be featured on this third annual tour sponsored by the Kalamazoo County Historical Society. Proceeds will be used for preservation of the area's historic heritage.

Free parking is available at the Woodward School on Woodward Avenue and at the Westwood

School on Nichols Road. Both can be reached from M-43.

Free buses will connect both parking lots with all homes in both areas of the tour.

Refreshments will be available at the Woodward School grounds, as well as a book stall selling a number of publications on Kalamazoo's past.

Five of the homes featured this year are in the

historic Stuart Area neighborhood on Kalamazoo's near west side. Two others are in the Grand Prairie area of West Kalamazoo Township. Two of the Stuart Area homes in the tour are observing their centennials this year.

Tickets are \$4 on the day of the tour. Mail orders can be made to Kalamazoo Historic Homes Tour, P.O. Box 2426 Kalamazoo 49003.