

# Suburban life

Lorraine McClish editor/477-5450



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(F8)

## The Genesis

### Area's newest theater opens doors for season of variety

By Lorraine McClish staff writer

"Amahl and the Night Visitors" staged by the St. Bede Players, comes to Genesis Theatre for three performances Friday through Sunday, Dec. 14-16.

A non-alcoholic New Year's Eve party will surround the premiere of Detroit Times Theatre Company's 1985 Musical Revue, and The Peanut Butter Players production of "Snoopy" begins its six weekend run Jan. 19 in Farmington Hills' newest theater.

"The shake-down cruise is completed. We're ready with a full winter and spring schedule that includes everything from poetry readings for women to hootenannies," said Jonathan Round, the full-time director of Genesis, housed in Mercy High School.

The shake-down Round referred to was a couple of rehearsals and little-advertised performances staged by the Times company in the school's former lecture auditorium.

"It was a matter of getting used to the area for the actors, the stage crew, the directors, and getting the students used to us. We're working with space that was formerly theirs, and we wanted them to feel comfortable with what we were doing, and we wanted to let them know what we were doing when by chance they stuck their head in the door," Round said.

Round, who is director of the Times company, based in Royal Oak and the Detroit area's only improvisational group, is working with scheduling and programming for the new theater with Jo Anne Lamun, director of Lathrup Youth Theater.

GENESIS THEATRE was named

### 13-year-old is troop's youngest Eagle Scout

Gregory Plezia of Our Lady of Sorrows Boy Scout Troop 110 has become the youngest member of the troop to receive the Eagle award, the highest rank in Boy Scouting.

The son of Dr. and Mrs. Richard Plezia, he is 13 and in the eighth grade at Beahan Junior High where he has maintained honors. In addition to his studies, he has contributed articles to the Beahan Bulletin, the school newspaper.

In addition to Scouting, Plezia has been a member of the YMCA swim team for six years and in the summer, the Farmington Parks and Recreation swim team. He hopes to attend Catholic Central next year and be part of its swim team.

He has played baseball in the South Farmington League for five years. He also has a Farmington Observer paper route and has been an Altar Boy for St. Clare Catholic Church for five years.

In Scouts, Plezia started with Our Lady of Sorrows Cub Scout Pack 110 in the Boy Scout Troop, he has progressed rapidly through the ranks and has earned the 21 merit badges, each a major task, to reach the Eagle level.

In addition to the merit badges, he completed his community project of designing and constructing 13 wood deck houses for the Department of Natural Resources. This involved the supervising of six other scouts in the construction amounting to 70 man hours of work in addition to his 27 hours of work.

PLEZIA was elected patrol leader of the Planning Arrow Patrol, and he enjoys the camping and outdoor activities of the troop.

The Eagle award was presented by Mike McGowan, advancement chairman of the troop. Congratulations have come from President Reagan and other

by Larry Teevens, head of Mercy's music department, who held a longtime dream of bringing a professional theater into the school for education as well as productions of the performing arts.

The name comes from a court jester Round calls "sort of an iffy saint, at least some don't consider him a saint, but a personage from folklore nonetheless."

The legend holds that as Genesis was about to perform a parody of the sacraments, to please his non-Christian emperor in the early Middle Ages, he was converted to Christianity. Emperor Diocletian was so outraged, Genesis was beheaded.

Round started his theatrical career as a folk singer in coffeehouses in the Detroit area; then studied and worked with Second City in Chicago for two years before returning here and opening Detroit Times Theatre.

"Other improvisational groups have come and gone, passed through, we're the only troupe that's had any staying power. We've been in business for four years now and Times is certain to be Detroit's what Second City is to Chicago," he said.

Lamun's background is all in children's theater. In addition to her work at Lathrup Youth Theater, she is founder of Peanut Butter Players, a troupe of professional children who perform for other children and adults in a lunch-theater setting.

ROUND AND Lamun have been given free reign to develop Genesis Theatre.

"Young and old from the entire metro area will be invited to take part in our workshops, because education will be a very intrinsic part of the

whole project," Round said. "We are responsible for overhead, maintenance, security, advertising, tickets, the works. We are working on a self-supporting basis, with profits all going back into the theater fund."

Actors and would-be actors who partake in the workshops can expect improvisational acting training. And New Year's Eve show-goers will be seeing the results of that training in the Times' 1985 Musical Revue.

The entire musical revue is based on material improvised from a previous performance that comes from audience reaction.

"We set up a situation, an everyday situation, and talk to the audience about it. Our 20 minute intermission is used backstage to improvise skits from what we've gotten out of all self-perpetuating. Anyone who has seen one of our shows can come back to the next one and see what he/she has written for us to act out," Round said.

If Round and Lamun choose to cancel these during the Christmas season, host an afterglow for a particular performance, offer lunch or dinner theater packages, they are responsible for that, too.

"WHATEVER we do, we set the standard for it, and our standard is excellence," Round said. "We will be known for that, both for performances as well as for our school for learning."

Round's work with Second City where he said he was "schooling in all the facets of teaching, schooled in learning how to work with club owners and all the politics involved in creating a comedy industry," draws him to concentrate on the humor of the human condition.

One of his biggest successes in getting the audience to laugh at itself was the Introduction Times Theatre gave to Mercy high students when the troupe first came into the school.

"We had 450 screaming-for-more teens in our audience that afternoon, because they wrote our script. We gave them a half-hour of high centering games and then five or six quick skits (written during intermission) from their reactions. It was their own show and they loved it," he said.

Ticket information for "Amahl and the Night Visitors" is available by calling Lamun at 559-3893.

Ticket information for the New Year's Eve theater party is available by calling Round at 543-6845.

*"Young and old will be invited to take part in our workshops because education will be a very intrinsic part of the whole project."*

*Jonathan Round  
director of Genesis Theatre*



## Fast for Freedom Day is proclaimed

Detroit Soviet Jewry Committee of the Jewish Community Council (DSJC), together with leaders of Detroit's major religious communities, have proclaimed Monday, Dec. 17 as a day of fasting.

The group calls upon people of good will from throughout the Detroit metropolitan area to join in a Fast For Freedom for Soviet Jews.

Joel D. Gershenson of Birmingham is chairman of the DSJC and Gerald Rogers of Southfield is associate chairman. Jeannie Weiner of Farmington Hills is the DSJC publicity chair.

Communities across the country are holding fast days, on a rotating basis, to mirror the protest hunger strikes in which many Soviet refuseniks (Jews who have applied for emigration visas and have been refused) are participating.

The joint statement has been released. "The Soviet Union is presently engaged in a brutal, calculated campaign of anti-Semitism and religious persecution designed to break the backbone of Soviet Jews. Intensified efforts to eradicate the teaching of Hebrew and Jewish culture, and the practice of the Jewish religion in the Soviet Union, are reminiscent of the Stalinist era. These efforts include the arrests of He-

brew teachers and observant Jews, and allegations that link Judaism with medieval and mystical drug rituals.

"These developments come at a time when the Soviet Union has virtually closed the doors of Jewish emigration. In spite of numerous international agreements which the USSR has signed, calling for the repatriation of people to their national homelands, the Soviets continue to prevent this basic human right."

"In protest of the recent arrests, hundreds of refuseniks (Jews who have applied for permission to emigrate and have been refused) in the Soviet Union have begun a series of alternating hunger strikes. Communities across the United States have planned hunger strikes in solidarity with the Soviet refuseniks.

"We in Detroit proclaim Monday, Dec. 17 a day of fasting. We call upon people of good will throughout the Detroit metropolitan area to join us in a Fast For Freedom For Soviet Jews."

"Furthermore, we call upon the Administration to address this matter in upcoming meetings with Soviet officials."

AN INTERFAITH candle-lighting

ceremony honored Aleksandr Kholmiansky, Yuli Edelstein and Yakov Levin.

Kholmiansky, a computer scientist, has worked as a janitor since applying to emigrate to Israel in 1978. In 1980, he was warned that his activities as a Hebrew teacher would bring him trouble. Currently being held in Tallinn prison, Kholmiansky was arrested July 25. He is scheduled for trial in Estonia on charges of alleged "mailbox tampering" and establishing a nationwide utopian system (intensive Hebrew conversation courses).

Sentenced to three years in a labor camp, Levin was arrested while at work on Aug. 12 and charged with "disseminating false information defaming the Soviet State."

He had been actively involved as a Hebrew teacher resulting in repeated KGB interrogations and searches of his home. Each time, Hebrew books and Judaica were confiscated and he was warned to stop both his Hebrew teaching and association with the family of Yehudit Nepomniashchy, his fiancée.

The government has repeatedly refused Levin's application to emigrate to Israel, because of "parental disap-

AN ENGLISH teacher, Edelstein's application for an exit visa resulted in a divorce from his first wife, loss of his home and KGB pursuit which forced him to leave his job and support himself as a freelance artists' model.

His application to repatriate to Israel was refused because of his father's alleged access to "secret materials," despite the fact that his parents are divorced and he has not had contact with his father in 20 years.

Yuli and Tatiana, married in 1983, are observant Jews involved in Jewish educational and cultural activities in Moscow.

Edelstein was arrested and his home was subsequently searched. KGB agents confiscated items left by foreign visitors, as well as a tin of tobacco and a "box of stones." Although no charges were made, Soviet authorities claimed they found opium in the stones and accused foreigners of "coming and corrupting Jewish youth with medieval and mystical drug rituals."

For further information concerning area efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry, contact the DSJC at 962-1850 or write to that office, 163 Madison Ave., Detroit 48226.



Greg Plezia government leaders for his achievement.

Another highlight of the evening was the formal presentation of the religious award, "Light of Life," to Nick Nagrant which he received for his work in his church, Sacred Heart Parish of the Byzantine Rite.

On their trails to the Eagle rank, Gary Hawald, Dave Pederson and Kirt Thurston were awarded the Scout rank and Bill Carolin and Gary Hawald achieved the rank of Tenderfoot. The Star Scout rank was awarded to Thomas Daly.

The Life Scout rank, the rank just below Eagle, was presented to six scouts of Troop 116; Mike Herrmann, Robert McGowan, Pat Stillwagon, Ken Herrmann, Nick Nagrant and Jeff Striebbell.

## Archivist earns national award

Jane P. Doerr of Bloomfield Hills recently learned of a special award which she received for her volunteer work in conjunction with the Bay View Archives.

Her 1984 American Association for State and Local History award is a certificate of commendation for organizing and maintaining the Bay View Archives.

The nomination was made by Dr. Kathryn Eckert, assistant state Historic Preservation officer, Bureau of Michigan History, Department of State, Lansing.

Doerr, who has been involved in the Bay View Archives since 1982, was appointed director of the archives in 1976. As such she "and a dedicated staff of 14" continue to document the history of a unique Michigan community.

It's not a city, nor in the strict sense, a municipality. Bay View, that beautiful community of rambling, classic turn-of-the-century vacation homes and buildings, near Potosky on the south shore of Little Traverse Bay, was founded in 1875 as a camp meeting and vacation spot for the Methodist Conference.

DOERR SAID, "Families came from Illinois, Indiana and Kansas by railroad to escape the heat and for health reasons. . . The railroad came to Potosky in 1873. Lumbering was on the decline. They wanted another source of revenue."

There were three railroads, she said. "The Grand Rapids and Indiana was the principal one."

Doerr presents the facts on the community as readily as if she had written the book, and in a way she has, at least she's completed the research.

"There were 402 cottages in Bay View in 1900. There are 437 now — some have burned and been replaced. There are 29 public buildings and two auditoriums."

During the summer there are regular concert and lecture programs and an active conservatory of music with 25 artists-in-residence. All of the programs are open to the public.

The Doerr family went to Bay View for the first time in 1949 and have owned a cottage there since 1953. "Owned" is a convenient word, but not totally accurate. The cottages are leased from the Bay View Association which has a governing board of nine trustees.

One of Doerr's current projects is a historic building survey.

She said, "We have been listed in the National Register since 1972, but it's not a complete survey. There are 466 buildings."

She said that the survey of the buildings, with photographs, is 80-percent complete with all of the work being done by volunteers, sponsored by the Bay View Archives, which operates on funds provided by friends.

DOERR is recording secretary of the Michigan Oral History Council and is a member of the executive board of the Michigan Archival Association.

"Bay View," she said, "is a Chautauque-like organization, the only one I know of that has had the same type of government since it was founded. So archives are very important for that reason."

The award will be officially presented to Doerr next summer at Bay View, she thinks, by Dr. Martha Bigelow, state Historic Preservation officer.

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## Clergy offered program to aid their parishes

A new program designed to help families develop and improve their money management skills is being offered at no charge to members of the clergy and their parishes throughout Michigan.

Through the "Parish Financial Education Programs" offer members of the clergy another important service they can provide to their parishioners, and at no charge," said Daniel S. Voydanoff, vice president and director of civic and urban affairs for NBD.

such topics as estate planning, wills and trust money management for young families; and financial planning for later years.

"The Parish Financial Education Programs" offer members of the clergy another important service they can provide to their parishioners, and at no charge," said Daniel S. Voydanoff, vice president and director of civic and urban affairs for NBD.

An informational brochure and application is available by calling Credit Counseling Centers at 569-3715.