

Suburban Life

Lorraine McClish editor/477-5450

Monday, April 28, 1986 O&E

(F5B)



Cartooning

Poking fun at the dean leads to a career as graphic artist

When Kevin Nichols left the Blue and White staff at Farmington High in 1980, he hardly dared to dream that his art work would appear in a national newspaper chain five years later.

Now firmly established as a graphic artist for the Citizen-Patriot in Jackson, Nichols has seen a number of his drawings picked up by Booth Media which distributes newspapers in several states.

Son of Alice Nichols, a former Artist-in-Residence and long-time art exponent in Oakland County, his cartooning was nurtured almost from birth. From earliest times, he could recall the odor of oil paints in the house and the brilliance of water colors.

"It is quite obvious," Nichols said, "that my mother had a profound effect on my later career choice. But

the real impact came from one of my dad's students at Oakland Community College.

"The Orchard Ridge Recorder cartoonist did caricatures of the dean, my dad (Don Nichols), that were creative and funny. I was intrigued with the idea of helping people to laugh freely and more often."

Much like the stereotype of the obsessed artist, Nichols filled page after page in sketch books while on family trips and during study hall at Farmington High.

His first published drawings appeared in the Blue and White following encouragement from Lee Peel, the school newspaper's adviser at the time.

THE URGE to get into print remained dormant until Nichols' second year at Oakland Community College.

"My dad urged me to help revitalize the moribund student newspaper," he said, "but I was too busy playing basketball."

After completing a degree in liberal arts, Nichols stayed another year to earn a graphic arts degree. Opportunities to get his drawing into print arose when the campus administration began printing the Orchard Ridge News following the demise of the student newspaper.

After seeing his cartoons in a widely distributed paper, he said, "I was fascinated by the way faculty and students reacted to campus issues when they were given a new interpretation in pen and ink."

That fascination led him to teaching the "Art of Cartooning" in the college's program for gifted and talented youngsters.

UPON TRANSFERRING to Eastern Michigan, Nichols submitted a portfolio to the Eastern Michigan University Echo and was appointed graphic artist. He learned the intricacies of publishing a 20,000-circulation newspaper, became graphics editor after one semester and won the journalism award for "Creative Layout and Editorial Cartooning."

His cartoon strip "Dr. Pangloss," three panels at a time, pokes fun at pompous professors, arrogant administrators and student stereotypes found in Ypsilanti.

Realizing that working on the paper was more exciting than attending classes, Nichols decided that a career change was necessary and began sending resumes to newspapers all over the country.

"I like to think that my move to Jackson resulted from an act of love, he joked. "I was hired to fill in temporarily for an artist who was pregnant."

Eventually elevated to a full-time

position, Nichols now does a wide-range of tasks at the Citizen-Patriot. His cartoon strip "Calhoun's Chronicles" runs weekly and his editorial cartoons are used to accompany several national columnists.

While concentrating on graphics at the newspaper, Nichols showed a flair for humorous writing.

On the basis of some funny lines, the feature editor asked him to write an occasional column.

NICHOLS PLANS to complete his degree at University of Michigan which is in close commuting distance of Jackson. An immediate goal is to obtain national syndication for his cartoon strip.

"This goal is a real long shot," he said, "because there are so many outstanding artists across the country. While my idols are Charles Schultz (Peanuts) and Gary Trudeau (Doonesbury), there are many new, young cartoonists who make the field very competitive."

In the meantime he's enjoying Jackson. "Remember I have a captive audience of 5,000 readers at the paper," he quips.

He will be doing some freelance graphics work, and is planning to teach his cartoon classes at Oakland Community College again this spring.



Kevin Nichols, who once drew cartoons for Farmington High's Blue and White, then The Orchard Ridge News and Eastern Michigan's

Echo, is now having his drawings picked up by Booth Media, which distributes newspapers in several states.

Nichols & Nichols

Mother and son join talents for art show

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

Alice Nichols and Kevin Nichols will be receiving guests 6-9 p.m. Monday, May 5, in the art gallery and lobby of Wallace Smith Theatre of the Performing Arts during the reception that opens their two-person show, "Nichols & Nichols."

The show is a mix of new watercolors by Alice Nichols, named Artist-in-Residence by the Farmington Area Arts Commission in 1982, and graphics by her son, Kevin Nichols, graphics editor for the Jackson Citizen-Patriot.

"I don't know if this has even been done before, at least here. I don't

think I know any mother and son artists here," Alice Nichols said.

The show will be the first for Kevin Nichols, and one of a long string of shows for his mother whose career as an artist started 30 years ago, and has amassed numerous prizes, awards and commissions.

Along the way she became a promoter of the arts within the two cities, much of it through her affiliation with Farmington Arts Club and Farmington Art Foundation, a lecturer on art and art appreciation, a teacher of art history through Oakland Community College, and most recently documenting the lives and work of the area's Artists-in-Residence for video taping at Metro-Vision.

Of this latest endeavor she says, "Nobody thought of that kind of documentation for our honored artists. This will be a historical record as well as a personal record for the community."

Meanwhile she has taken on the position of legal and financial chair for Farmington Arts Foundation with an eye toward further promotion of the arts for the community.

ALICE NICHOLS will display about 25 new watercolors in the Nichols & Nichols show never seen before, many of them 30 by 40 inches, and many of them painted from her mountaintop studio-home in Tennessee.

Of the time she spends in those rural environs she says, "There is a hardly a place you can look that isn't a subject for a still-life."

And many of those subjects have won her art awards in local, statewide or national competitions.

Kevin Nichols will display about 30 pieces in the Nichols & Nichols show, many of which are political cartoons, caricatures of the well-known, or characters he's created for a strip that runs in the Citizen Patriot.

The show will remain on the Orchard Ridge Campus through Friday, May 16.

Nichols & Nichols will then move for another opening reception 3-6 p.m. Sunday, May 18, in Alice Nichols' home studio at 32002 Maple, Farmington. The address is east of Farmington Road, between Eight and Nine Mile roads.

Show hours in the Nichols' home will be 3-8 p.m. Monday, Thursday and Saturday through May 31.



The color and texture of fish provide a new subject for Alice Nichols' watercolor brush. The 30-by-40-inch piece is called "Aqueadance" and will be seen in the two-person art show, "Nichols & Nichols."

A run for pleasure for those of all ages

In conjunction with Sinai Hospital, Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit will be sponsoring the 9th annual "Chai" Long Distance Run Sunday, May 18.

This is a non-competitive event, strictly for exercise and pleasure, and runners of all levels and ages are invited to participate in distances from one to 18 miles. Walkers are also welcome. All courses begin and end at the Jewish Community Center, 6800 W. Maple in West Bloomfield, and will take runners through scenic rolling terrain. The one-mile run begins at 8 a.m. with all other runs starting at 8:30 a.m.

Long sleeve shirts will be given to all entrants and prizes will be awarded for all distances completed. Refreshments will be served at the finish line and numerous water stations will be set up along all courses. Locker room facilities will also be available.

The entry fee for the "Chai" Long Distance Run is \$8 per runner, which must be received by May 9. A \$10 late registration fee will be charged after May 9. On the day of the run, a late registration fee of \$10 will only be accepted between 7-7:45 a.m. Official entry forms are available in the Jewish Community Center.

National Pet Week celebrated May 4-10

To celebrate the companionship between people and their pets, the Southeastern Michigan Veterinary Medical Association is sponsoring National Pet Week, May 4-10.

"Horseback riding, walking the dog, teaching a parrot to talk, or curling up with the cat all add an extra dimension to life," said Dr. David Carron, the association's president from Farmington.

"Whether you have a houseful of children who learn about responsibility by caring for their pet, or live alone and like someone waiting for you when you return home, pets enrich our lives," Carron said.

In addition to companionship, recent research has shown pets to be

valuable in therapy for physically, emotionally, and mentally impaired individuals.

Veterinarians throughout the country are planning open houses, pet fairs, educational seminars and other activities to inform people about the joys and responsibilities of pet ownership. They are asking that owners recognize their companion's need for food, shelter, exercise and proper health care.

"I think this year's National Pet Week theme just about sums it up," said Carron. "It all adds up to love."

If you have questions about your pet's health or National Pet Week activities, contact a local veterinarian.

Miss Peach Blossom contestants sought

The 1986 Romeo Peach Festival committee is accepting applications for its annual Miss Peach Blossom Pageant which will take place on Friday, June 20.

The selected queen and court will reign over Romeo's Labor Day Festivities as well as represent one of Macomb County's oldest festivals at

several area parades and activities. Applicants are to be between the ages of 18 and 24, single, a high school graduate and a resident of the state. Each contestant will be required to have a sponsor to enter into the pageant. Anyone interested may call 784-5515 daily from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. to have an application forwarded. Deadline is set for June 1.

SAVE 20% on Selected Custom Labor Services!

TAKE HOME OUR FABRIC TREASURES TODAY!

Plus — Save 20% Now on Custom Labor for Draperies and Window Treatments, Headboards, and Bedspreads!

Limited time Only — so HURRY!

Now at Calico Corners — a magnificent collection of thousands of home decorating fabrics from the top designers! Level tones, florals, solids, paisleys, and more — all in stock or available in less than two weeks!

• Helpful Professional Advice • Finest Quality Decorator Fabrics • Expert Custom Workmanship

ALL YOU ADDS YOUR OWN GOOD TASTE!

CALICO CORNERS
Decorative Fabrics

1933 S. Telegraph
Bloomfield Hills
332-9163

21431 Mack Avenue
St. Clair Shores
775-0078

HOURS: Mon. 9:30-9, Tues. thru Sat. 9:30-5:30
Now Open Sunday 1-5