



Cathie Breidenbach

This production is slightly flawed

Michigan premiere production of "Joe Egg" by Peter Nichols continues Fridays-Saturdays through June 21 at Will-O-Way Theatre in Birmingham. For ticket information, call the box office at 644-4418.

"Joe Egg" taps the secret fear of every parent who ever worried whether a child would be normal. Will-O-Way's imperfect production of the play still faithfully presents the wrenching honesty and the brutally funny humor about the dead-end love parents feel for a helplessly handicapped child.

This challenging, innovative play won two Tony Awards in 1985.

"Joe Egg" is the spastic daughter of Bri and Sheila, and the play never evades the anguish of what it's like for them to care for a child who is a "vegetable." The author, Peter Nichols, deliberately chooses to bring Joe on stage to insure that members of the audience confront their own gut reactions to this subhuman person.

Leyla Franklin, who believably plays Joe, is often on stage moaning and twitching in her wheelchair. Only once does she escape the sentence of her disease in a poignant scene showing "how it might have been if she'd been normal."

Humor escapes the emotional pain as Bri and Sheila role-play and do impersonations in comic routines they've developed to explain to others how Joe happened and how they live with her. They ask the inevitable "Why did it happen?" The author offers no clear-cut answers because there usually aren't any. Still, guilt compounds Bri and Sheila's pain.

A PLAY that refuses to mince either words or feelings isn't likely to evoke a lot of euphoria. The subject comes up when friends Freddie and Pam stop by.

Kendall Buhl as Freddie and Sally Dubats as Pam do excellent jobs portraying the inadvertent cruelty of those not intimate with tragedy. Will-O-Way Theatre and director Cella Merrill Turner, deserve praise for tackling this worthy play, which asks its lead players to do wrenching drama and to shift within seconds to absurd comedy.

Andy Campos who plays Bri, the father, does a respectable acting job but lacks the virtuosity necessary for the demanding role. His Francine Hachem, who plays a creditable Sheila, are a bit too old to play a "young couple," and attempts to Anglicize American accents is sometimes distracting.

Shirley Brewer as Bri's mother is superb as the self-centered, good-hearted woman with a thick enough skin to live with tragedy and survive. To add to the bargain, her English accent happens to be the real thing.

Cathie Breidenbach of West Bloomfield has always loved theater. A former high-school English teacher, she works in public relations, advertising and as a freelance writer.

Molly McGuire's scores high

Your traveling taster visits area eateries and rates them on a 100-point scale. Up to 30 points are awarded for ambience, which includes general atmosphere and service; 25 points for food; and 15 points for price/value rating. A total count of 50 points or less indicates a restaurant is not recommended; 60-74 points signify from passing to good; 75-89 points designate very good with some extraordinary features; and 90-100 points show that a very special dining experience awaits you.

MOLLY MCGUIRE'S, 34290 Ford Road, Westland (728-7490), is a clean, pleasant restaurant with lots of wooden beams and a cottage-like feeling. The mood is casual and so is the attire. This is a relaxed, warm spot with enthusiastic employees who are obviously trained to serve you and help you enjoy your meal.

In general, the Saturday night crowd is relatively young, including a few families with children. There is a lounge with live entertainment.

Additionally, numerous notices recommend a Sunday brunch which, if our meal was typical, should be well worth trying. Reservations are not accepted, except for large groups, but we did not have to wait for a table. Dinner took about an hour and a half. General Atmosphere — 15 points maximum. Points awarded — 13.

Our waitress was very pleasant and helpful, with excellent suggestions and comments about the menu choices. The pace of the meal was just right, but we had to request water refills each time we needed them. When our appetizer came to the table not hot, the waitress was very gracious about making it further and did not make us feel at all uncomfortable about making the request. Service — 15 points maximum. Points awarded — 13.

We tried Molly's Perfect "10" (\$3.75), a wonderful mixture of spiced chicken, cheese, onion, tomato, guacamole and other ingredients with a melted cheese top, served with chips, sour cream and salsa. The salsa was tangy but not so overpowering that we couldn't taste the rest of the dish. The chicken was plentiful, but the guacamole was not evenly distributed through the dish.

Only crackers are served before the meal — which was disappointing — but an excellent croissant is served on the plate with the entrée. Our drinks (\$2.50) were a bit on the weak side. Drinks, Appetizers, and Bread — 10 points maximum. Points awarded — 7.

AN EXCEPTIONALLY large house salad is included with most entrees. It was fresh and crisp — although not cold — with several kinds of lettuce, carrots, onions, radishes, cucumber, croutons and two — in place the much more usual one — tomatoes. The ranch dressing was very well flavored. Salad — 5 points maximum. Points awarded — 4.

The menu has a wider-than-usual range of offerings, including burgers, omelettes, pasta, seafood, steak, chicken, chili and even quiches. There are daily specials as well, and we sampled the orange roughly (\$4.50). It was light and flaky but had a little "fishy" taste.

The chicken dijon (\$7.85), suggested by our waitress, was a winner. The dish is boneless chicken topped with ham, dijon mustard and a white wine sauce, served over spinach. The combination was really excellent, with each taste complementing the other.

There was certainly no stinting on the portions, either, with loads of ham and chicken. Also included is a choice of potato or pasta, and our waitress recommended the fettuccini Alfredo. This was also a special



a counting for taste

D. Gustibus

surprise, with a creamy, cheese sauce that was not overly heavy. Entree: Vegetables and Garnishes — 30 points maximum. Points awarded — 26.

Score a home run in this category.

Desserts are all homemade, except the cheesecake, and we enjoyed the best-tasting carrot cake we have ever had (\$2.25). It was almost like a vegetable fruit cake, as rich and delicious as it could possibly be (and this is the opinion of an eater who does not often like carrot cake). The mocha mud pie (\$2.55) was also excellent, with plenty of chocolate sauce and a rich, thick crust. But, in doubt, try the carrot cake! Dessert and Coffee — 10 points maximum. Points awarded — 10.

A meal for two was about \$35, with tip, for large portions of very good food. There is clearly a lot of care and attention given to the food here, and the prices are very reasonable. Price/Value — 15 points maximum. Points awarded — 14.

A Counting for Taste — 100 points maximum. Total points awarded: 87. Molly McGuire's is a real treat. It is ideal for a date or a family — and a top-notch meal.

D. Gustibus welcomes your reactions, comments and suggestions of favorite restaurants in the Observer & Eccentric communities. Write to D. Gustibus, in care of Observer & Eccentric, Entertainment Department, P.O. Box 3503, Birmingham 48012.

upcoming things to do

• OPENS EARLIER

The Hilberry Summer Theatre Festival has pushed the opening of its children's play a week earlier than originally announced to accommodate the earlier schedule of Detroit-area summer programs for children. "I Didn't Know That," a musical revue about strange facts and world records opens Monday, June 30, and continues through July 19. Performances are weekdays at 10:30 a.m., except Monday, July 14, when the matinee begins at 1 p.m. There is one Saturday matinee July 19, at 11 a.m. There is no performance July 4. For a complete schedule of the summer a.m.

theater festival call 577-2972 or 5770-3010 between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays.

• ROMANTIC COMEDY

"Same Time, Next Year," a romantic comedy, will be presented by Jimmy Lauro Productions in dinner theater format at the Club at the Hyatt Regency Dearborn. Performances are at 9 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, beginning June 6 and continuing through Sept. 6. Dinner at Gilio's and show is \$29.50 per person; dinner at Kafay's and show is \$21. Show only is \$9.50. For reservations call 593-1234, ext. 2323.

ADVERTISING WINNERS CIRCLE



The Michigan Lottery annually provides players with millions of cash prizes, but it is these prizes of a million dollars or more that most intrigue people.

We surveyed nearly 100 Michigan Lottery millionaires to see what it's like to win such a large prize. The results were interesting.

Q: Do the big winners usually go on spending sprees?

A: Few winners, if any, reported going on spending sprees. In fact, most sought professional financial counseling to make plans for their newfound wealth.

Q: What type of plans did most make?

A: Most said the best part about winning was the financial security it provided. The majority got involved in investment programs. Others established trust funds for children or began savings programs.

Q: What did most of the millionaires do with their first annual payment?

A: Purchasing a new car was the most frequent response. Paying bills, sharing the prize with family members and making charitable donations followed.

Q: Is it true that most of the winners quit their jobs?

A: No. Most planned to continue working, though a significant portion planned early retirement. Some were retired at the time of their win. The smallest portion retired after winning.

Q: Do lottery millionaires usually relocate after winning?

A: Nearly a third reported buying a new home in the same community or a nearby city. Most others remained in the same dwelling. Only three percent moved out of state.

Q: How did winners feel about their contact with news media?

A: About two-thirds of the respondents reported their experience to be enjoyable.

Q: If that is so, then why don't we see or hear more about local winners?

A: The Lottery releases at least the name, home city and prize amount for winners of \$5,000 or more in the instant, Lotto and Super Lotto games. It is up to individual media whether they use this information. If you want to read or hear more about winners in your area, let your local media know.

Q: Is there an average lottery millionaire?

A: No. They are young, old, men and women. They're single, married, retired and employed in almost every job field. In other words, they are just like YOU.

Because my question led to this column, Paul Redmond of Albion will receive 50 "Michigan Payday" instant game tickets.

If you have a Lottery question you'd like answered, send it to: "Winners Circle," Michigan Lottery, P.O. Box 30077, Lansing, MI 48909.

ON THE TOWN

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