

Writing's nitty-gritty has a new outlet

By Mona Grigg
special writer

WHEN I WAS a kid growing up, my father, who was not much of a reader himself, stopped somewhere every payday and bought me a book. I still have several of them, including one of my favorites at the time, "Anna Sheridan and the Sign of the Spine".

I also had "Betty Grable and the House of the Iron Shutters," "Ginger Rogers and the Riddle of the Scarlet Cloak," and "Deanna Durbin and the Feather of Flame."

I read each one before the evening sun went down and then had to wait a whole week for another. And I loved those books. It was thrilling to be the one with the inside dope on what those stars did during their off hours. But that was before the "magic" books arrived.

The magic books were called, collectively, "The Book of Knowledge." They were published by the impressive-sounding Grollier Society. I im-

agined at the time that if I didn't take good care of those books, gruff and wizened old men would break out of his deep leather chair in the reading room at the Society, snuff out his pipe, sigh, and head for my house, where, against all my begging and pleading, he would demand to have them back.

I KNEW THAT it was a privilege not given to many ordinary 9-year-olds, and I owed one to the Grollier Society for giving me the world in 20 imitation leather, illustrated, often easy-to-read volumes.

For they were not your ordinary encyclopedias. No, these books were filled with stories and poems and features like "How does it work?"

Through the books of knowledge I became privy to what everyday life was like for the two princesses at Windsor Castle.

I learned what happened to wings of wax when they got too close to the sun.

I discovered that the words "Ionic and Doric and Corinthian" were perfect words for skipping rope.

AND I LEARNED that when Michelangelo was around 9 or 10, my very age, he ground his own colors and doodled on boulders high above

book break

his little town — and was sometimes chastized for his dreaminess, as I often was.

And I learned later that it was not those musty men at the Society of Grollier but my own parents who had given me this extraordinary gift, and at great cost to them — \$5 a month for a whole year, layoff or no layoff.

And it's been me and books ever since. We're close. And glory be I have discovered that this entire town is swarming with book people. We get together and revel in our discoveries and when a writer speaks, we listen. We make instant and sometimes lasting friendships based on our admiration for certain authors, or even certain genres.

We're wary around people who don't read the same things we do. We try to be kind, but honestly, have they got bubbles for brains?

We see ourselves in people like my friend, Gracia.

MY FRIEND GRACIA found herself in a waiting room once with ab-

solutely nothing to read. There weren't even signs on the walls. She read logos on tennis shoes and messages on T-shirts, and after that she panicked. She embarrassed herself by reading labels and cleaning instructions inside the coats of complete strangers — sometimes while they were still wearing them.

My friend Gracia wouldn't think of living in a place that didn't have a tub with just the right backseat for reading. She devises ingenious ways to keep the pages out of the water when she drifts off. She couldn't abide cohabiting with anyone who wouldn't understand why she has to be in there so long, and why she has to keep running the hot water.

She would rather spend her extra cash on books or magazines than on anything else. Which explains why Gracia and I never stand out in a crowd — unless it happens to be a crowd of fairly well-dressed people.

SHE BEGAN building a library and found she'd created a monster.

She could only add books. She could never replace them. She could not throw them out or sell them or even give them away. Sometimes she thinks she can.

She even goes so far as to fill boxes with books she thinks she doesn't want. She bought some of them by the boxful on the last day of the used book sale because she didn't want them to be orphans, but she knows she'll never read them. So the boxes sit in front of the shelves until she can no longer stand it. But, she tells herself, now they are on lesser shelves.

And Gracia has already told me what she wants to see here in this space every other week.

She wants to know why, all of a sudden, all the good writers are coming from Michigan. (William Kienzle, who ought to know, says he thinks it's something in the water.)

SHE WANTS ALL the nitty-gritty on who's writing what and why, and when their books will be out, and whether they write with quill pens or crayons or lap typewriters like the kind Will Rogers used to use.

She wants to know what's in the bookstores, and why certain of them think they're so special — and, if they've got writers coming in to sign

books, when that will be and do they give discounts and do they serve free food?

She wants to know all about the big used book sales. How and when they collect the books? Where do they store them? Where does the money go? And will they let her in a little ahead of time so she can get the good stuff?

She wants me to sit down with some of our writers and just shut up for once and let them do the talking.

She wants me to read some of the books first and let her know if she should even bother.

If there's something going on around there that has to do with reading and writing, she wants to know about it.

And you know Gracia. She gets what she wants. But you could make my life a lot easier if you would take a minute to fill me in on what exactly is going on.

Readers can reach Grigg by writing to her in care of this newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.

Coming up

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 21 — Richard Wilbur reads poetry at Rackham Auditorium as part of U-M's Visiting Writer Series. Free.

SUNDAY, Feb. 1 — Joseph Heller reads fiction at the Power Center in Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$9.50, \$7.50 and \$5.50. Call ticket office, 783-8587.

Congratulations

to the winners of the Third Annual Detroit Auto Show Short Story Contest. First, second and third prizes in the adult competition go to Barbara S. Cassani of Livonia (also last year's winner), Ruth Strasser of Constantine and Stephen Dunning of Ann Arbor.

The three winners in the high school division were Dawn Belaski of Divine Child High School, Dearborn Heights; Carrie Cabadas, also Divine Child; and Solomon Moore, Huron High School, Ann Arbor.

The auto show runs through Sunday and if you pick up a program, you'll find the two first-place stories printed inside. Cassani's story is titled "My Mother's Shoes." Belaski's story is "A Caterpillar's Flight."

briefly speaking

ART EXHIBIT

Adult art students of Art Store and More in Plymouth will be featured in an exhibit 1-5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 18, in the store at 285 N. Main Street. The exhibit coincides with the final day of the Plymouth Ice Festival. The public is invited. Refreshments will be served.

MUSICALES SERIES

The Plymouth Symphony Society Musicales will feature chamber music for winds and piano at a concert at 4 p.m. Sunday in the First United Methodist Church of Plymouth. Musicians performing will include

Pauline Martin and Detroit Symphony musicians: flutist Shaul Ben-Meir, oboist Treva Womble, clarinetist Douglas Cornelison, bassoonist Robert Williams and horn player Corbin Wagner.

Womble and Williams are married and live in Canton. In addition to their work with the DSO, Williams teaches at the University of Michigan and they give private lessons. Wagner is a Livonia resident.

A reception and refreshments will follow the concert. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3.50 for seniors and students. Tickets will be available at the door.

SEARCH FOR DESIGNERS

As part of a "Discover Michigan" project to coincide with its Michigan sesquicentennial celebration, the Hillsdale Inn in Plymouth is conducting a search for unknown designers. The designers will be have the opportunity to show off their work in special shows at the inn at 41061 Plymouth Road during the year. Initiating the series was Ypsilanti

designer Sallie Welmer who showed her "Glamour Rags" Monday and Wednesday at the inn.

For an appointment to submit their line for consideration, unknown designers may call the Hillsdale between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at 453-2002.

PEOPLE DANCING

People Dancing/Whitely Setrakian and Dancers will be in concert Jan. 15-18 at the Performance Network, 408 W. Washington Ann Arbor.

People Dancing is a professional modern dance company known locally and around Michigan for its often humorous, often off-beat dances which are accessible to all dancers. Guest artist will be Lol Kall who will perform a solo choreographed by Setrakian. This solo will receive its New York City premiere later this year.

Showtimes are Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 4 p.m. Tickets at \$4.50 several admission and \$5.50 for students and seniors will be available at the door.

For reservations or more information, call 663-0681.

CABARET CONCERT

The Dearborn Orchestral Society will present the Dearborn Symphony Orchestra in a special cabaret concert at 8:30 p.m. Friday in the Dome Room of the Dearborn Civic Center, Michigan at Greenfield roads.

Guest conductor Lee Hajar has chosen a patriotic theme, "Made in America," which will feature the New Reformation Dixieland Jazz Band and Dave Opperman. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$3 for students. Tickets will be available at the door. For additional information, call 561-5782.

MOTHERWELL EXHIBIT

Robert Motherwell's Recent Prints opens with a preview reception at the Alice Simsar Gallery from 6-8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10. The gallery is at 301 N. Main, Ann Arbor. Burns in Aberdeen, Wash., in 1915, Motherwell is the youngest of the heroic generation of abstract expres-

sionist artists who revolutionized painting in the 1940s and caused a shift in the focus of world art from Paris to New York.

Also on exhibit will be recent paintings of Don Wynn. The artist will be present at the reception. Both exhibits will continue through Feb. 11. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

BASKETRY SEMINAR

Char TerBeest will conduct a workshop on willow basketry at Flint and Spirit Basketry, 30100 Ford Road in Sheridan Square. TerBeest is author of Wisconsin Willow-Adventures of a Basketmaker. A basketmaker for 10 years, she exhibits nationally in numerous shows, fairs, galleries and exhibitions. Her work has been pictured in such national publications as Better Homes and Gardens, Country Home and Fibers.

For more information on enrolling, call 522-7780.

clarification

Artwork consultant for the CBS/Fox Video Operations in Livonia was Preston Burke Galleries Inc.



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BEAUTIFUL OLDER HOME in downtown Farmington. Built in 1900, mint condition, completely redone inside and out in neutral tones. New kitchen, roof, furnace, siding. Pella windows and much more. \$93,500. 477-1111.



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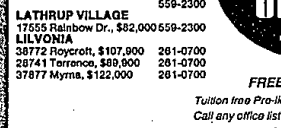
LAKE PRIVILEGES ON TWIN BUN LAKE. Specious 4 bedroom colonial on lovely wooded lot. Large family room with beautiful fireplace. 1st floor laundry room. Must see to appreciate. \$129,900. 477-1111.



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DETROIT
20343 Beaverland, \$49,900 559-2300
FARMINGTON
23630 Beacon Dr., \$72,800 681-5700
33107 Thomas, \$39,900 477-1111
FARMINGTON HILLS
24702 DePhillips, \$115,900 477-1111
32175 Hull, \$76,900 477-1111
HOWELL
1823 Hartland Wds. Dr., \$110,000 559-2300



LATHRUP VILLAGE
17555 Rainbow Dr., \$82,000 559-2300
LIVONIA
38772 Dwyerott, \$107,900 261-0700
28741 Terrace, \$89,900 261-0700
37877 Myrna, \$122,000 261-0700



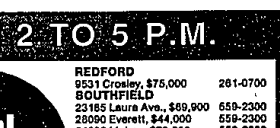
WOODCREST CONDO. Condo living at its best. 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, formal dining, pool and clubhouse facilities. Excellent location. \$85,500. 851-1900. (MID)



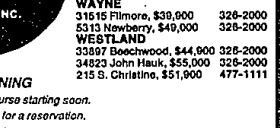
FABULOUS CONDOMINIUM. Detached condo with 4 large bedrooms, 1 room master bedroom, formal dining, great room with fireplace, den, former builders model. \$207,000. 851-1900. (RAA)



PRESTIGIOUS COLONIAL - Luxurious 3 bedroom home with independence Hill Sub. Crown molding, large ceramic foyer library, family room and outstanding landscaping. \$229,000. 851-1900. (RUT)



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23165 Laura Ave., \$69,900 659-2300
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21898 Mahon, \$78,500 559-2300
23765 Rockingham, \$73,900 559-2300
20901 Dunn Scotus, \$74,900 559-2300
21184 Berg, \$38,500 477-1111
22810 Ten Mile, \$74,900 477-1111
WAYNE
31515 Filmore, \$39,900 326-2000
5313 Newberry, \$49,000 326-2000
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34823 John Hawk, \$55,000 326-2000
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IMMACULATE COLONIAL. 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, family room with natural fireplace, beautiful kitchen, finished basement. Set on half acre. 2 car attached garage with door opener. \$79,500. 659-2300.



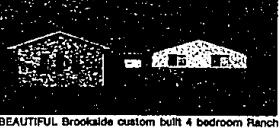
PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP. Custom built 3 bedroom brick ranch, 1 1/2 baths, 2 car attached garage with door opener. Quality throughout. Fireplace. Must see. \$89,000. 559-2300.



GEODESIC DOME - Space age design from master suite/loft to winding staircase, 3rd bedroom/lavatory room, wrap-around deck, dark room, satellite dish. A must see! \$103,000. 681-5700.



SHARP CONTEMPORARY HOME. Delightful 3 bedroom, two-story, with finished lower level. Neutral colors, newer carpeting and window treatments throughout, huge family room, professional landscaping. \$58,900. CALL 644-4700.



BEAUTIFUL Brookside custom built 4 bedroom Ranch in serene country setting. Finish the walk-out basement. Rustic/neutral decor. Two brick fireplaces. Nice eat-in kitchen with all appliances. Five acre parcel. \$128,000. 346-6430.



4 BEDROOM farm house with enclosed side porch and large open front porch. Beautiful kitchen, finished basement. Set on half acre. 2 car attached garage with door opener. \$79,500. 659-2300.