

Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300



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briefly speaking

LCL INVITATIONAL

Budget problems last year forced the Livonia Cultural League to forego its annual purchase award invitational art show, but the event will definitely be held this year.

Under the chairmanship of Lucille McNamara, the show will be on exhibit in the Livonia City Hall from Monday, April 27 through Friday, May 15. Open to the public, the exhibit will feature the works of 75 Michigan artists. Traditionally, the LCL purchases the work of the first place winner. The art work then becomes part of a public collection permanently on display in the city's Fifth Floor Gallery and in offices in the City Hall.

Awards will be presented at a champagne reception preceding the opening of the art show.

WSU CHOIR

The Wayne University Choral Union and Orchestra, under the direction of Dennis J. Tini, will present a spring concert at 8:30 p.m. Sunday, April 26, in St. Genevieve Catholic Church, 29015 Jamison, Livonia. General admission is \$5 with a \$3 rate for children and seniors.

The choral union and orchestra will perform the following selections: Schubert's "Magnificat" and Vincent Persichetti's "Gloria" from "Mass for Mixed Voices." Singers from St. Genevieve and St. Raymond Church, Detroit, will join the WSU group for Verdi's "Te Deum."

The Women's Chorus will perform selections by Porpora, Walter Watson, Palestrina, Verdi and Dawson.

AN EVENING WITH CHARLOTTE FORD

Author-lecturer-fashion expert Charlotte Ford will be presented in "An Evening with Charlotte Ford" on Monday, May 18, in the Birmingham Theater. Proceeds from a special afterglow will benefit the American Lung Association. For ticket information, call Michigan Women Magazine, one of the sponsors, at 851-5755 or the Birmingham box office.

VAAL CLASSES

Registration is under way for spring art classes sponsored by the Visual Art Association of Livonia. The classes are conducted in Jefferson Center, 9501 Henry Ruff, Livonia.

Included in the schedule are night classes in watercolor and photography.

A new class being offered is "Everything You Wanted to Know About Modern Art But Were Afraid to Ask," will be offered from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. Fridays, beginning April 24. The five-week series will conclude in a tour of local galleries.

Workshops include "Wet in Wet Watercolors" by Michigan artist Edie Joppich from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 25. Price is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. She also will conduct a workshop, "Landscape on Location," from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Friday, June 5.

"Watercolor by Design" will be the focus of a third workshop to be conducted by VAAL instructor Marge Chellstorp from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, May 15. The price is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members.

For more information, call Shirley Cesar, 421-3207, or Marge Mask, 464-6772.

Coming up

The Schoolcraft Choir, with Ruth Burczyk as guest pianist, will be one of the highlights of the final concert of the season of the Oakway Symphony.

The event will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 28 in Clarenceville's Schmidt Auditorium on Middle Belt Road, south of Eight Mile.

To be performed are Beethoven's "Fantasy for Chorus," with the orchestra under the director of Oakway director Francesco DiBlasi. Mozart's "Regina Coeli" will be conducted by the choir's music director, Dave Jorlett. Works of Bellini, Gounod and Wagner's Tannhauser Overture will also be performed.

Tickets for the concert are \$8.50 and \$6 and are available at Hammell's Music Store and Madonna College in Livonia and Executive Office Supply in downtown Farmington. For information, call 353-9128.



C. D. STOFFER/staff photographer

Canton Township resident Connie Lucas won second place in the Farmington Artists Club's annual spring exhibition, which opens next weekend, for her watercolor entitled "Red Pepper Green."

Art fest

OVER 200 works — juried and unjuried — will highlight the annual spring exhibit of fine art by the Farmington Artists Club Friday through Sunday, April 24-26, in Mercy Center, Farmington Hills.

A reception honoring the artists will kick off the exhibit at 7 p.m. Thursday.

A prestigious juried gallery will feature 100 works and an unjuried gallery will show an additional 100 works. In addition to that, a budget-priced unframed section will also have approximately 100 works for sale.

Complimentary refreshments will be served. There is no admission charge.

The show's juror was William Girard, professor at the Center for Creative Studies for the past 19 years. Show hours are: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. both Friday and Saturday; noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday.



A "Mack" attack won a first-place award for Northville resident Tom Hale, who works in acrylic with a "watercolor" technique.

Designer is de-barking up right tree

By Arlene Funke
special writer

KATHLEEN CROMBIE loves to put on her hiking boots and forage for fresh barks and fallen tree limbs to fashion into unusual baskets.

Crombie, 35, is a well-known, award-winning basketry designer and artist who runs the Tint and Splint Basketry in Garden City. She especially enjoys gathering her own natural materials.

"I don't go out and chop down trees," said Crombie, a Dearborn resident. "I use expendable tree barks, prunings. It has to be fresh and (harvested) two or three days after cutting."

Crombie's bright, airy shop in the Sheridan Square Shopping Center, on Ford Road west of Middlebelt, smells fresh and woody. Brightly-hued strips of reed hang on the wall, waiting to take new life as a basket.

CROMBIE HAS BUILT her reputation by studying art and by teaching classes, both locally and out of state. She has won numerous awards, and she writes how-to articles for Westland-based Basketmake Quarterly and other basketry magazines. She sells basketry supplies through her national, mail-order business.

"I find it exciting," Crombie said. "I will never learn it all, but I want to. It's an opportunity to share what I enjoy the best. To me, coming to work is like playing."

Currently, Crombie is preparing for her upcoming workshop on tree

bark basketry, to be held April 25-26 in her shop. In August, she will teach a week-long class at the Appalachian Center for the Crafts in Smithville, Tenn.

Throughout the year, Crombie sponsors two- or three-day weekend workshops in her store featuring other well-known basketry specialists. For example, Bryant Holsenbeck, of Durham, N.C., recently taught a seminar on experimental techniques.

"The one thing about basketry that you need to know is that there are so many forms of it," said Holsenbeck. She brought samples of her experimental work, including a purse, woven to look like a bird's nest and festooned with "found objects" such as buttons and beads; necklaces and earrings; and a hat that resembles an upside-down basket.

CROMBIE ENJOYS creating one-of-a-kind pieces. For example, she will use wood such as aspen from Colorado, or Kochoo rattan from Indonesia. She will remove the bark and all the pieces, weaving it with such materials as cedar bark or jute. A pink-and-green basket, of hand-dyed reed and date sticks, recently won the juror's choice award at an exhibition of the Michigan League of Handweavers.

"I call it Neapolitan because it looks like Neapolitan ice cream," Crombie said.

Crombie disages with people who would call basketry a fad. From her perspective, basketry is an ancient tradition that is both artistic and functional, having appeal to both beginners and advanced artists.

"Anybody can make a basket," she said. "Not everybody wants the same thing out of basketry. We are educators as well (as artists)."

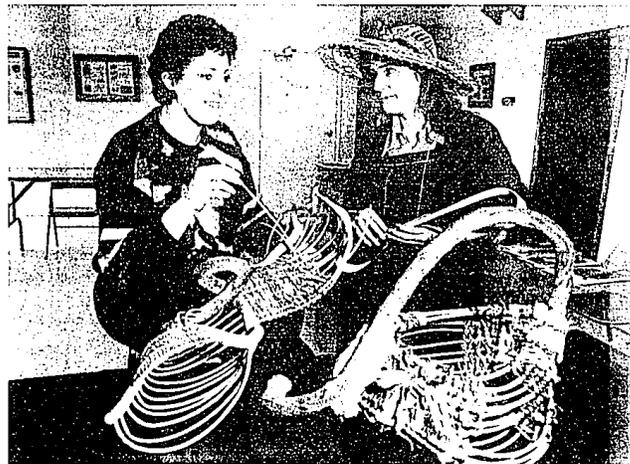
Crombie studied with Theresa Ohio, a Plymouth basket-maker. She also took courses to earn a master gardener certification from Michigan State University.

"I was planning to go into horticulture. This just evolved because of my background. I have always been a patron of the arts. It's amazing how it comes together."

While those plans were taking shape, Crombie worked as a sales representative for a tobacco company, taught basketry classes in her home and cared for two sons, Derek, now 12, and Chad, 10.

Crombie's business partner is her husband Robyn, an assistant football coach at Lincoln Park High School. They started the business almost three years ago, and recently moved from a shop a few blocks east on Ford Road.

THE NAME, TINT and Splint, comes partially from Crombie's penchant for using intense color on her baskets. Splint is another name for the flat reed which is a prominent material in basket-making.



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Basketmakers Kathleen Crombie (left) and Bryant Holsenbeck weave their own kind of magic.