

Writers-in-residence program a well-kept secret

THE MICHIGAN Council for the Arts announced the winners of the 1988 Creative Artists awards recently.

Seventy-two Michigan artists — writers, filmmakers, playwrights, dancers, musicians, photographers and craft and visual artists — will share \$402,000 in grant money awarded from both state and federal coffers.

Sixteen grants to writers alone for a grand total of \$93,100 up from last year's total of \$74,000 for the same number of grants. The grants, to cover the creation of new works or works in progress, run from \$2,000 to \$7,000 each.

Livonia poet and short story writer Lorene Erickson received a \$4,000 grant to continue work on a series of interrelated stories revolving around a single character, Grace Pauline.

Erickson describes her as a "feisty, comic, middle-aged woman — too old to be a yuppie or a baby boomer, too young to be a conservative."

Erickson's field was poetry, exclusively, until she went to the Bread-loaf Writer's Workshop a few years back. She wandered into John Gardner's workshop one day, and was fascinated by the things he had to say about writing.



book break

Mona Grigg

The rule during the workshops was "no writing," Erickson said, but Gardner, as you might expect, broke the rules.

The upshot was, he liked what Erickson wrote, told the poet she should think about writing prose, and asked her to send him more.

Erickson was so excited, she drafted a short story in the car while driving back to Michigan. Two weeks later, Gardner was killed in a motorcycle accident.

Erickson, named Creative Writing Teacher of the Year in 1977 when she taught at Livonia's Churchill High School, now teaches creative writing at Washtenaw Community College and is the editor of the college literary magazine, "Northern Spire." (This year's issue, on slick, quality paper, is hot off the press and available for \$3 through the campus bookstore.)

Erickson is also on the roster of the MCA's Creative-Writers-In-Schools (CWIS) program — possibly

the best-kept secret in Michigan.

CWIS is a dandy idea — the MCA division finds writers throughout Michigan who are qualified and willing to establish short-term writing residencies in schools throughout the state.

The writers work with classroom teachers to put together programs to introduce students to contemporary writing, or to teach them to express themselves through writing, and to simply pick the brain of an already established writer.

The best part of CWIS is that it's absolutely free to the schools — the writers are paid through CWIS grants after the three-to-10-day residency. The writer is "in-residence" and available to students and staff for a minimum of six hours a day.

How do I know so much about this? Because I am also on the roster — though I've never had so much as a nibble from area schools.

From the informal surveys I've done about CWIS, it seems the only schools that need to know about it are in areas where CWIS writers have gone out and arranged their own residencies.

The CWIS office says it'll send out

rosters and grant applications if someone requests them, but can't afford to send them to each school district. Funds for residencies are limited, too, though it tries to serve as many schools as possible.

A quick look at the CWIS writer's biographies reads like a Michigan literary Who's Who — Stuart Dybek, John Ditsky, Janet Kauffman, Dan Gerber, Linda Nemec Foster — and dozens and dozens of others not as well-known but eager to work with young people to reinforce the joys of reading and writing.

The deadline for residency applications is Dec. 18. Residencies are available from March through June. Write Arts Project Support Services, Michigan Council for the Arts, 1200 Sixth Avenue, Detroit 48226, or call 256-3717.

VETERAN TIGER baseball announcer Ernie Harwell will be at Westland's Bailey Recreation Center at 11 a.m. Saturday to kick off the Westland Cultural Society's book fair.

The fair begins tomorrow at 10 a.m. and runs until 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

A good supply of both children's and adult books (hardcover and paperback, including current best-sellers) will be discounted for Christmas buying. Proceeds will go toward sponsoring children's activities throughout the year. (I'll be there, too, so come in and say hello.)

The Bailey Center is located be-

hind City Hall at 36651 Ford Road.

THREE MORE speakers for the U-M Visiting Writers Series:

William Matthews, poet and visiting professor in the U-M English department, will read from his works, "A Happy Childhood" and "Foreseeably Futures" on Tuesday, Nov. 24.

Novelist Joan Silber ("Household Words" and "In the City") reads on Tuesday, Dec. 1.

Novelist and MFA program director Nicholas Delbanco ("The Sherbrooke Trilogy," "Group Portrait") reads on Tuesday, Dec. 8.

All three programs begin at 4 p.m.

in the Rackham East Conference Room. Admission is free. Call 764-6296 for information.

AT 7:30 P.M. Wednesday, Dec. 2, "The Son of Rock 'N' Read" takes over the Old Miami Bar, 3930 Cass on the Wayne State University campus.

More than 40 poets will take part in the "sequel" to this spring's original "Rock 'N' Read," organized as a benefit for the Poetry Resource Center. Name a poet in or around Detroit and he or she is apt to be there. Admission is \$3 at the door. Call 399-6163 or 577-7713 for information.

Violinist featured



Catherine Cho, 17-year-old finalist in last year's Macca-bee's Quest for Excellence competition, will be guest soloist at the Scandinavian Symphony concert at 8 p.m. Saturday in Southfield High School auditorium. Tickets are \$7 and \$5 for seniors and students. They will be available at the door. Cho will perform Beethoven's Symphony No. 1, Paganini's Violin Concerto No. 1 and Rossini's Overture to Il Signor Bruschino.



condo queries

Robert M. Melsner

Q. Our real estate salesman, who is representing us in regard to the purchase of a home, secured the signature of the husband but not the wife on the purchase agreement but said the wife would be signing later. I mentioned something about a power of attorney and the broker said that was not necessary. Do we have a potential problem?

A. Yes, if the house is owned by both husband and wife, they both must sign the purchase agreement. As a matter of fact, it is a good idea to ensure that the wife has signed the purchase agreement, even if she does not have a direct ownership interest in the house, in order to bar her downer interest.

More important, the husband cannot sign in behalf of the wife unless he has an adequate power of attorney in writing from her. The real estate salesman should know that. You are well advised, therefore, to bring this matter to the attention of the broker in charge and to make sure that your rights are protected with respect to the purchase of the property.

Q. I am thinking about organizing a business to develop real estate and wonder what is the best form of business to establish or partnership,

corporation or sole proprietorship. Can you help me?

A. Depending on what you are planning to do with the real estate that you are going to be buying and/or renting, you may be best advised to incorporate in order to insulate you from potential liability. Be sure, however, to examine the tax ramifications of your incorporation to ascertain whether or not you can still take advantage of a Subchapter S selection or other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code that would provide you an opportunity to have any losses incurred in the business flow through you individually.

I would recommend against operating as a sole proprietor and/or partnership unless the tax consequences mandate such. Considering that operating as a partnership or proprietorship removes the veil of corporate protection from personal liability.

Robert M. Melsner is a Birmingham attorney specializing in condominium, real estate and corporate law. Questions should be directed to him at 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 407, Birmingham 48010. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.

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