

Suburban Life

Lorraine McClellan editor/477-5450



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Artist-in-Residence

Watercolorist is winner of the prestigious award for 1988

By Lorraine McClellan
staff writer

GWEN TOMKOW has been named Artist-in-Residence by the Farmington Area Arts Commission for 1988.

It is the highest honor the commission can bestow, given in recognition of talents and accomplishments in the arts.

The Farmington Hills artist whose forte is watercolor said she is riding on the crest "of a very good year," with an unusual number of plaudits that have come to her in recognition of her talents and accomplishments this spring.

She has been juried into the prestigious Michigan Watercolor Society's show and the Detroit Society of Women Painters exhibition. Her painting called "On Gold Pond" was purchased by the Arts Commission of Livonia. She won the Helen DeRoy competition at Orchard Ridge Campus, Oakland Community College, and her work called "Cathedral

Dunes" will appear on the cover of Michigan Legal News Magazine this spring.

The Detroit native called herself typical of "the kid who always liked to paint, tried out commercial art in high school, then turned practical by attending Detroit Business Institute, and then hung it up altogether when she started raising the children."

She turned atypical, though, after a brain tumor caused temporary blindness.

"HOW MUCH time do we have here? How much time do any of us have to accomplish what we want, to do what we want to do? It was only after the scare, after the surgery, that I knew there was going to be no more fooling around with painting. I knew what I wanted to do. I was determined to do it and I worked darned hard at it," she said.

During the years Tomkow was raising her four children the paints were always nearby. But she was always painting with "one eye on the clock," she said.

"I think of it now as stolen time — time I had to steal for myself — because no doubt about it, mothers put themselves aside. There is always somebody or something that comes first.

"I think young mothers today are smarter than we were," she mused. "At least I hope they are. I hope they are not tiptoeing around like I did. I tiptoed back into an oil class once, but with the same hang ups so nothing ever came of it.

"And believe it, even then I would have rather painted than eaten."

Tomkow took her first watercolor class from Edde Joppich about 10 years ago, about the time Joppich won the title of Artist-in-Residence and shortly after Tomkow's surgery.

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Gwen Tomkow talks from her home studio about the rocky road that led her to win the prestigious title of Artist-in-Residence.

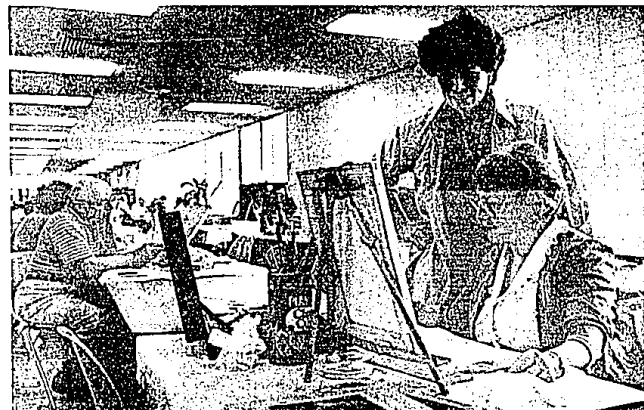
Staff photos
by
Randy Borst

Reception is May 14

Farmington Area Arts Commission carries on its tradition of hosting a reception for the recipients of the Artist-in-Residence award and the Service to the Arts award for residents of Farmington and Farmington Hills to meet the honorees.

The reception for Gwen Tomkow, Artist-in-Residence for 1988, and Marge Matovina, winner of this year's Service to the Arts award, will take place from 4-6 p.m. Sunday, May 15 in Farmington Community Center, 24785 Farmington Road.

There is no charge.



Marge Matovina (standing) won the Farmington Arts Commission's Service to the Arts Award, given for her work with the area's senior citizens. Her student is Laura Weiss, one of many who come for the free-every-Wednesday oil painting classes led by members of Farmington Artists Club.

Seniors are the winners of her service to the arts

By Lorraine McClellan
staff writer

MARGE MATOVINA is going to be the fastest walker in the CROP Walk Sunday afternoon.

The walk against hunger begins at 2 p.m. in downtown Farmington. Matovina is determined to complete the full six miles and be ready to receive her Service to the Arts award at 4 p.m. in the Farmington Community Center.

"I have to walk in the CROP Walk. I've spent a month getting pledges. But I'll be in the center with bells on," Matovina said.

Matovina is accepting the highest award the Farmington Area Arts Commission can offer to a resident who has worked to further the arts and arts activities here.

MATOVINA'S SERVICE has been

given over the past three years in heading up the free art classes offered to seniors by the Farmington Arts Foundation, in cooperation with the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services.

The classes have been offered for as long as the Senior Adult Center has been in this community. But Matovina is the only chairman of that program who has pushed to get the oil paintings produced in those classes into displays and exhibits in both public and private buildings throughout the two cities.

Guests are asked to cast a ballot for their favorite work in the Farmington Artists Club shows. In the 13 years Matovina has been a member of the club, she has won a lion's share of the "Popular Vote" awards.

MATOVINA HOLDS away over the Wednesday afternoon oil paint-

ing classes in the Mercy Center. The popularity of those sessions are evidenced when her students come in as early as 11:30 a.m. to start setting up their easels. The classes run from 1-3 p.m.

"For some of the seniors, painting is a renewed hobby. For some it's something that they always thought they'd like to try but never got around to doing. For some it's an entirely new, never-tried-before idea. For some it's a social event," Matovina said.

"There's no registration — classes can vary from 15 to 30. There's no competition. Everybody goes at their own pace and everybody does their own thing."

BECAUSE ALL of her students are doing their own thing, Matovina

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