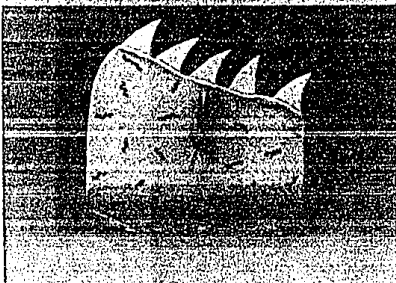


street seen

Charlene Mitchell



Street Scene reporter Charlene Mitchell is always looking for the unusual. She welcomes comments and suggestions from readers and entrepreneurs. Write her in care of this newspaper, 36231 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or call 591-2300, Ext. 315.



Timely art

Artist Stephen Palmer proves that telling time doesn't have to be boring. His highly graphic designs in unusual proportions are absolutely delightful. Made of glass and battery operated. \$60. Homestead Gallery, 139 S. Pontiac Trail, Walled Lake.

See and be seen

These dark glasses are for the super hip guy or gal who not only wants to see but be seen as well. You won't go unnoticed in this hot, round shape with antique tortoise trim and black matte lens. \$104 for prescription lenses. Steven Franklin Optics on the Boardwalk, West Bloomfield.



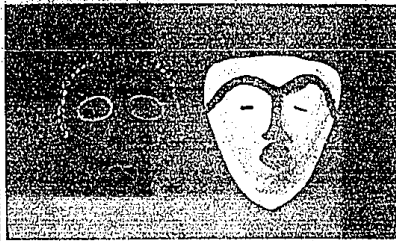
Pressed look

An Oriental theme defines these matte finish ceramic vases with pressed designs. Pastel colors and copper along with mother of pearl beads create such a soft, artistic look. Bamboo handles complete the theme. No two alike. \$90 each. Chantel on the Boardwalk, West Bloomfield.



Clever carry-all

This roomy tote is a real knockout with its V-shape and black fabric handle. Bag comes in woven raffia in either gold or silver lame. Great for vacations and holds loads of the stuff we love to cram into our purses. Nice for shopping too. \$92. Sundance on the Boardwalk, West Bloomfield.



Look-alikes

No, they weren't really made in Africa, and they don't lay claim to any ceremonial secrets. But these terracotta and stone masks do look like the real thing. In fact, local artist Patricia West Incorporated beads, shells, straw and fabric to make them look like they could have come from Africa. Prices range from \$40 to \$170. Homestead Gallery, Walled Lake.

STREET SENSE

Set the rules or keep your friend

Dear Barbara,

My friend comes from overseas six times a year, for a week at a time, and stays in my condo with me. He's American, but lives out of the country because of business. He comes so frequently because he has a 12-year-old daughter who lives with her mother, my friend's ex-wife.

There are only two bedrooms in my condo. I sleep in one and now faces the problem of this letter. My friend and his daughter have always, for six years, shared the second room. They even sleep in the same bed.

Recently, when we were altogether, my friend's daughter was rubbing his back to help him fall asleep. This disturbed me. I recommended to my friend that his daughter could use my room, a sleeping bag or the couch. My friend refused and said his daughter would sleep with him until she is 16 or until she got married.

I took it upon myself to call the mother. She was surprised and alarmed. However, she has a terminal illness and is totally dependent on her ex-husband for financial sup-

port. The mother asked her daughter what she wanted to do and was told that she (the daughter) prefers the sleeping bag.

Her dad, my best friend, said absolutely not. What do I do now?

Concerned friend

Dear Concerned Friend,

My feeling is that your instincts are correct. Mental health workers know from their work that such intimacy between parent and child can be emotionally hurtful to the child.

The condominium is yours and the rules by which guests have to live in it, are established by you. If your principle of not allowing this sleeping together to occur in your home is important to you, then you should be able to stand the loss of your friend. If your friendship is more important, then you will have to give up your principle.

Barbara

Dear Barbara,

I take care of my grandchild while her parents work. She is with me Monday through Friday and goes home on weekends. Her parents — my son and his wife — come for dinner every night. They both work full-time.



Barbara Schiff

My daughter-in-law is pregnant and will deliver in four months. The granddaughter I babysit is 1 1/2 years old. I have become very attached to her.

I don't want to babysit two children, but I don't want to give up babysitting the granddaughter who I am with everyday now. What should I say to my son about the second child? Is it bad to separate the two kids?

One other circumstance that I have not mentioned is that my granddaughter has leukemia.

Perplexed grandmother

STREET CRACKS

Felix comes naturally to Conway

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

He never saw the play. He never watched the TV show. But to comedian Tim Conway, doing "The Odd Couple" comes as natural as swinging a nine-iron does for Jack Nicklaus.

"It's fun to do," said Conway, who is appearing Tom Poston in the Neil Simon play Tuesday through Sunday at the Fox Theatre. "No matter how many times you've seen it, it's like an old friend that wanders into the theater."

Which in a way describes Tim Conway, the comedian.

His face is a familiar one. Whether it was on television with "McHale's Navy" or "The Carol Burnett Show" or in Disney Films, such as "Apple Dumpling Gang" and "Gus and the Shaggy D.A.," his zaniness has drawn many laughs through the years.

And in times of the four-letter word oratories of Sam Kinslow, the slapstick comedy of the likes of the Tim Conway has been sort of lost in the shadow. Isn't that right Mister Tubbah?

Nonetheless, Conway still keeps a chuckle agenda. In addition to his current work as Felix in the "Odd Couple," he's busy putting together more in the never-ending series of "Dorf" videos. Dorf's latest adventure will involve tackling auto racing.

SUCH ZANY spoofs, though, don't fly in Broadway plays. Conway has made the smooth transition, despite only having seen "The Odd Couple" movie, featuring Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon.



Comedian Tim Conway is a familiar face, having appeared on TV in "McHale's Navy" and "The Carol Burnett Show" and in such films as "Apple Dumpling Gang" and "Gus and the Shaggy D.A."

"You can do a lot of things with Conway said. 'The lines are solid. What you do with (the part) makes the difference.'

His partner is quite familiar with "The Odd Couple," having performed both roles as Oscar and Felix in road shows. His partnership with Poston dates back to 1981 on "Steve Allen Show."

Both have similar comedic styles, which Conway said gives their performance added punch. "Both of us are nutty, but subdued enough to do

a play without being maniacs up there on stage," he said.

Conway comes from the Cleveland area, which brought us such jokesters as Jonathan Winters and Bob Hope. Unlike those two, Conway landed on the comedy stage by accident.

After graduating from Bowling Green State University, a friend urged him to try his skill as a writer. He met up with Ernie Anderson, who is an announcer with ABC-TV. The two worked on a talk show together

"Make Me Laugh" and Showtime's "Comedy Club Network."

He's performed with the likes of Robin Williams, Ray Charles, Joel Grey and The Pointer Sisters. So, perhaps, who is better at gauging a crowd than Samuels?

"You can," he said. "You don't judge so much on the intellect as to find out how rowdy they're going to be."

"If they're drinking beer out of their boots, you know you're going to face a bolsterous group."

Scouting the audience isn't the hard part, but writing material to make them laugh can be.

Unlike the old days when comedians would buy jokes from guys in trench coats in alleys, most jokesters today have to come up with their own material. Samuels has become quite adept at it through the years.

Nonetheless, Samuels agrees comedy is something that is not learned. And this is from a comedy coach.

"The theory is pretty much bull—," he said. "For every rule there is someone breaking it and becoming a success at it as well. But there are some basics."

Those who come under the tutelage of Samuels learn the finer comedic techniques such as how to stand at the microphone, how to come across self-assured.

Samuels said he's impressed with the upcoming crop of comedians, especially the ones who are writing and performing clever material. Those comedians have the staying power, he believes.

Jim Samuels will perform on Wednesday through Saturday, April 26-29, at Joey's Comedy Club, 36071 Plymouth, Livonia. For information, call 261-0353.



Jim Samuels, the dean of San Francisco comedians, has had his humor described in such terms as sophisticated, cerebral and thoughtful.

Or like recently when he saw a road sign that said, "Fine for littering." So he emptied out his car.

"Fads change; styles change," Samuels said. "If you have a solid base of intellectualism, I think it's better in the long run."

SAMUELS IS testament to that

Dear Perplexed Grandmother,

Your letter addresses an ever-increasing problem in American society — families in which both parents work outside the home. This reality puts grandparents in a position where their help is needed even though they have reached an age entitling them to less responsibility.

You have told me a great deal in your letter. What you haven't told me is whether or not you have spoken to your son and daughter-in-law about the babysitting arrangements after the new baby is born.

Can they afford to hire help for the new baby? If so, the separation of the siblings will not be a problem for at least a year? If this is the case, no immediate problem exists and the situation can be reassessed in a year or even two.

If your children have difficulty separating the grandchildren, then you will have to decide if you want to care for two grandchildren or none.

If you have a question for Barbara Schiff, a trained counselor and experienced therapist, send it to Street Sense, 36231 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

on a Cleveland TV station.

"The show was so bad we couldn't get any guests," Conway said. "I directed the show and was a guest on it."

Steve Allen thought Conway's guest spots were funny enough to ask him to join his show. Producer Ed Montalme caught Conway's act and cast him in the role of Ensign Parker on the hit TV show "McHale's Navy." Conway was nominated for an Emmy in 1963 for his work on the show.

Some of his most humorous spots came as a regular on the "The Carol Burnett Show." He served as the perfect foil for Harvey Korman's stiff, upper-lip style of laughter. Even the straight-faced comedian would melt when he came eye to eye with Conway.

"It still happens today," said Conway, who added Korman and he might still get together for a project. "The moment I look at him, he goes to pieces . . . which I think is very unprofessional on his part."

Anyone who watched the skits by Conway and Korman has a favorite one. The characters he created were definitely his own. Yet while hilarious, they were never offensive.

Conway is proud of that. Though comedy is big business today, in his opinion, it hasn't gotten better, especially with the emergence of shock comedy.

"That's the new big thing . . . where you use a four-letter word to get a laugh which isn't really funny," he said. "In the old school, first you couldn't do it and, secondly, you had to be funny because we were live (on TV). One show would eat up all your material. You had to be funny or you didn't stick around."

Chaplin's goes west

Buoyed by the success of its recently opened club on Detroit's west side, the owners of Chaplin's Comedy Club opened a third club at the Plymouth Hilton last week.

Housed in Charades nightclub, Chaplin's Plymouth seats about 200 and will feature the same quality acts seen at Chaplin's original outlet in Fraser and Chaplin's West in Detroit (which opened in January). Willie Farrell was the first headliner at the new club.

"We're going to expand into the Northville, Plymouth and Novi areas," said Bob Hargis, owner of Chaplin's. "The area is growing and prospering and will continue to."

Hilton general manager Tom Galano agreed. "It's a good opportunity for the community and the hotel, an added extra for our guests," Galano said.

Future plans for this joint venture include the adding of dinner/show packages and weekend getaways. Hargis also mentioned the possibility of utilizing the Hilton's banquet facilities to bring in major headlining acts with concert-style seating. The capacity with such a seating arrangement could go as high as 2,000, Galano said.

Hargis noted that the new club can draw from the large population of the I-75 corridor and could attract comedy patrons from as far as Ann Arbor.

"I think it's something that's been needed in this area," Hargis said. For information or show reservations, call Chaplin's Plymouth at 454-4660.

— Bob Sadler