

Kids at Wooddale make art come alive

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Some say art imitates life. At Wooddale Elementary in Farmington Hills, the third grade students in Retta London's class decided to imitate the work of Jackson Pollock, an American abstract expressionist, and his style of "action

painting" with their art consultant, Araxey Barsamian.

Art history — one of four components of art education, along with art criticism, art appreciation and art production — are stressed to improve art education in the schools.

At Wooddale, the children were chosen randomly and divided into six

cooperative learning groups consisting of four students in each group.

Each child in the group was assigned a color to use throughout the entire painting (acrylic paint on canvas).

The canvas was called, "Walking in the Footsteps of Jackson Pollock." Educators say that cooperative learning groups are a teaching procedure that increases student achievement, motivation, liking of school and self-concept improvement. It involves students in higher level thinking.

POLLOCK DEVELOPED his style of action painting during the 1940s when he began to work without subject matter.

Pollock believed that an artist should be part of his paintings. He spread his huge canvases on his studio floor in order to feel more a part of the painting. Then, he walked all around and over the canvas and dripped or poured paint on it. Sometimes he dripped the paint on with sticks or a brush. He also added sand or broken glass to the paint.

The Pollock style expressed his energy and motion. His paintings were rich in subdued color, had a linear and calligraphic quality, movement and structure.

He was born in Wyoming in 1912 and died in New York in 1956.



Demitria Calagias (left) presents Michael Flanagan, Farmington Public schools superintendent, with a gift from her mother, Lea, in appreciation for Flanagan's interest in Dunckel Middle School. During a visit to Wooddale Thursday, Flanagan asked how many children in Retta London's third grade class were going to attend Dunckel and Demitria answered by raising her hand.



Third graders from Retta London's Wooddale are Michael Stein (left), Adam Dinnel (center), Juliana Snodgrass and Natalie DaBoul. Third graders from Retta London's Wooddale class present Michael Flanagan, Farmington Public schools superintendent, with their version of a Jackson Pollock action painting. They

police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

CLARIFICATION

A supervisor for an outside subcontractor told Farmington Hills police one of his employees pulled a knife and threatened him while the two were outside a unit at Independence Green Apartments, 31706 Grand River, May 14, said Dale Young, a spokesman for the apartment complex.

The two who were involved in the incident were not employees of Independence Green Apartments, as a

May 17 item in this column implied, Young said.

The incident followed an argument about the employee arriving late for work, according to the police report.

ROBBERY UPDATE

Car keys and a garage-door remote control stolen from a Farmington homeowner in his garage the early morning of May 18 were recovered May 22 in the back yard of a house on Manning.

The ski mask worn by the robber was recovered in the same yard the day after the robbery.

"All that tells me is that the

robber ran by Manning and Cloverdale while fleeing," said Commander Charles Lee of the Farmington Department of Public Safety.

The robbery site is about a half mile from the robbery scene, on the 20000 block Frederick in the Slocum-Farmington Road area. The robber left with the victim's watch, wallet, keys and garage-door remote control.

The victim, a man in his 30s, was not hurt. Gary Goss, Farmington Department of Public Safety deputy director, gave this account:

At 6:30 a.m. the homeowner opened the garage door from inside

his house, then walked to his car.

He entered the car but before he could close the door, a man wearing a dark ski mask and holding a long-barreled revolver appeared.

The gunman stuck the weapon in the man's chest, ordered him to put his hands on the steering wheel and demanded his watch, wallet, keys and garage door remote control. The wallet contained \$10 and credit cards among other items.

While fleeing, the robber closed the garage door.

Farmington police continue to interview neighbors who might have been awake at the time of the robbery. They don't know why the vic-

tim was singled out.

DECK FIRE

A homeowner on the 33000 block of Walnut Lane doused a rear deck fire with a garden hose after a neighbor heard popping noise outside at 4 a.m. Thursday.

Damage was estimated at \$2,000. The cause is still being investigated, according to a Farmington Hills fire report.

RECKLESS DRIVING

A reckless driver missed children playing in the front yard during an incident on Grayfield, near Elm Grove, Thursday night.

The motorist fish-balled before sliding sideways into the ditch and

knocking over the mailboxes. He apologized to an occupant of the house where the mailboxes were in front of before leaving, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

THEFTS REPORTED

A computer system, two typewriters, three desktop telephones, an adding machine, stamps and two cases of liquor for a weekend party, all valued at \$3,210, were reported stolen from Adat Shalom Synagogue, 29901 Middlebelt, May 23-24.

Jewelry, a stereo camera and VCR valued at \$7,000 were reported stolen from a unit on Citation Triangle at Citation Club Apartments, Farmington Hills, May 22.

Active newspaperwoman helped bring out the best

Marie McGee had a "deep abiding faith in everyone" and a "gentle sense of humor." And when new reporters came to work at the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, one of the first people they were sure to meet was McGee and that upbeat spirit for life that radiated everywhere she went.

"She was a one-woman Welcome Wagon to the new people who came to work here," said longtime friend and colleague Marilyn Fitchett.

"She was a genuine Pled Piper who gathered to her an assortment of eclectic people, a friend who practiced living a good life and who was an inspiration. She saw the best in everything and everyone."

MCGEE, 62, newspaper veteran and Livonia activist, died early Thursday morning of heart failure at St. Mary Hospital.

She was assistant managing editor for special projects at the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers where she had worked since 1968. Rising through the ranks of the Livonia-based newspaper, she held several positions throughout the years including reporter, copy editor and suburban life editor before assuming her present assignment in 1986.

The year before, McGee was honored by her colleagues and named O&E Journalist of the Year.

She received several awards for her work at the O&E from the Michigan Press Association, the Suburban Newspaper Association and Penney-Missouri.

AS ASSISTANT managing editor, she supervised all special sections, the Taste food section and the Creative Living arts section for the 13-edition chain.

"Marie was very simply an inspiration to everyone at the O&E. She knew everyone, and everyone knew her. And everyone that knew Marie admired and loved her. And that's saying a lot in the competitive environment of the news room," said Steve Barnaby, O&E managing editor.

"We all shared our special private moments with Marie, usually funny ones that relieved the pressure of the everyday deadlines. I will always smile and maybe laugh a little when I think of her in the future. She was such a special friend to so many that she has left a permanent impression on us all."

BESIDES HER involvement at the



Marie McGee

PATRICK was attending Schoolcraft College.

All the McGee children graduated from Bentley High School in Livonia. She was a member of the Advisory Committee of the Women's Resource Center at Schoolcraft College.

She also was a member of Zonta of Northwest Wayne County and was installed Monday, May 21, as one of four new directors of the board.

"She had a continued interest in helping women. She was sort of a Renaissance woman herself," said Sylvia Vukmirovich, a Schoolcraft College Counselor and governor-elect of Zonta International District 15.

"WE SHARED stories about our Serbian heritage, something a lot of people didn't know about her with the last name of McGee."

She lived in Grand Rapids before coming to Livonia 24 years ago. Born in Wyandotte, McGee worked as a reporter and editor at the Wyandotte News Herald from 1947 to 1957. She left that job when her late husband, Bill, accepted a promotion in Grand Rapids. In Grand Rapids she edited the company newsletter for Spartan Stores Inc.

A graduate of Roosevelt High School in Wyandotte, she studied journalism at the University of Toledo.

SERVICES FOR McGee were Monday from Wesley-Turkowski Funeral Home and St. Genevieve Roman Catholic Church. Burial was in Michigan Memorial Gardens in Flat Rock.

The family requests memorials to the American Heart Association, Livonia Arts Commission, Schoolcraft College Women's Resource Center or Greenmead Historical Village.

Survivors include son Michael McGee and daughter-in-law Mary Fisher of Livonia; sons Patrick McGee of Livonia and Kevin McGee of Lakewood, Calif.; son Tim McGee and daughter-in-law Jackie McGee of Grand Rapids; daughter Maureen McGee of Ann Arbor; sisters Suzanne Okonaki of Southgate, Anne Urbank of Wyandotte, and brother Sam Ketchman of Sarasota, Fla.

Joe Bauman, Marie Chestney, and Susan Rozick contributed to this story. It was written by Steve Barnaby.

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