

## Creative Living

Bob Sklar editor/953-2113



Monday, July 15, 1991

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## King Richard III fans aim to lift his image

By Ralph R. Echlinow  
staff writer

**K**ING RICHARD III's perceived villainy has endured centuries, thanks to Henry VII, William Shakespeare and a cast of thousands.

Like the erudite scholars and amateur sleuths that many of them are, Richard III Society members work diligently to prove their hero was no more a human ogre than Winston Churchill, but rather a victim of a heinous Tudor effort to malign his character.

In brief, Richard was framed! Or so say the Ricardians, as they call themselves.

The English king's detractors, including no less a respected figure than St. Thomas More, claim the last Plantagenet king was a hunchback with a withered arm who ate live frogs and had two young nephews smothered with pillows to neatly negate any claim to the throne they might have.

Canton Township resident Mary Miller, who grew up in the Texas panhandle, gained interest in English history in her salad days, earned a history degree from Texas Christian University and joined the Ricardian ranks 20 years ago.

She formed the local Richard III Society chapter a year ago after her husband, a General Motors employee, was transferred here.

WITH JUST 20 members, the local chapter will never be accused of special prominence. However, the devoted Ricardians gather four times a year to discuss their namesake and refute those who would damn Richard.

"His people were completely out of power for 100 years and the Tudors wrote the history," Miller said.

"It was more than 130 years (after Richard died) before any historian wrote a sympathetic history."

SHE SHOULD know, Miller, a Plymouth library clerk, owns more than 100 books on Richard III.

"You sometimes think you're the only one who has read these books," she said.

While Miller admits Shakespeare

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— Barbara Bluford, member  
Richard III Society

is the society's "bemeis" for writing "Richard III" (a decidedly uncomplimentary vision), she has seen the play four times.

"If you read the play a lot, you begin to see a lot of it is tongue-in-cheek," she said. "Sometimes, it's played for comedy almost."

Troy resident Barbara Bluford, a University of Michigan graduate with a degree in history, joined Richard's society six months ago.

Interested in English history from farther back than she cares to admit, Bluford "quickly went through every book on English history, the medieval period, in the Troy Public Library (and still) consider myself to be a neophyte."

THE NATIONAL society maintains a Richard III library in California for its 750 members, so Bluford gets her history fix from that direction.

Like many society members, Bluford's interest is broader than Richard alone, encompassing the entire English medieval era.

"It's not just Richard III," she said. "Although he's a very enigmatic character, I don't consider myself to be on a mission from God to defend Richard's reputation. I think we are all just basically armchair scholars."

Bluford said her husband of 20 years, Alan, is "mildly amused" with her hobby/obsession and that some day she'll take him with her on the society's annual trip to England.

An attorney for nine years,

Bluford wasn't sure about giving her employer publicity in a Richard III context.

"I don't know if the firm wants to be mentioned," she said.

PLYMOUTH RESIDENT Sara Fiegenschuh, whose ancestry is German, majored in biology at Gettysburg College (often studying on the Gettysburg battlefield), yet had been interested in English history since the dew was fresh on the lawn of her life.

In 1981, she wrote to Sharon Penman, author of "The Sunne in Splendour" (a fictional Richard III biography) and Penman put her in touch with the society, which she promptly joined.

"(Richard) was very young (32 years old) when he was killed, so it was kind of romantic," she said. "(Ricardians) just don't want to believe anybody could be that ruthless."

Fiegenschuh said the society's goal is to burnish the tarnished image of Richard, perhaps in the same way historians have come to approve more of Dwight Eisenhower's presidency since 1960.

BRIAN MURPHY, an Oakland University English professor and Shakespeare expert, has tremendous respect for the Ricardians, saying they have a "very good case" for Richard's innocence.

"They tend to be real literary historians," Steven Claypoole, Oakland Community College history professor, agreed in part.

In Richard's favor, Claypoole called him a "loyal brother, capable king, courageous warrior" and agreed "there's no hard evidence that he was hunchbacked" or that he killed his nephews.

But Claypoole, a remarkable scholar with reams of history seemingly at his fingertips, called the society "a bit whimsical. It's the whim of the people who want to defend Richard."

People interested in joining the Ricardians can call Mary Miller at 459-8948. Dues are \$5 a year for the local chapter and \$25 a year for national society membership.



Canton Township resident Mary Miller, who chairs the local Richard III Society chapter, sits before a portrait of the maligned king in

her study. Her three children, she said, "call it my Richard III Room."

BILL BRESLER/Veneta photographer

## exhibitions

This column runs weekly in Creative Living. Send news items about Oakland County events to The Observer, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009. Send items about Wayne County events to The Observer, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Attention: Creative Living editor.

#### ● SCARAB CLUB

Wednesday, July 17 — "The Spirit of America," paintings by David McCall Johnston, are on display through July 22. Reception to meet the artist 5-8 p.m. Thursday. Johnston was recently commissioned to do a painting to celebrate the golden anniversary of Mount Rushmore. All of the limited-edition prints will benefit the Mount Rushmore preservation fund. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, until 8 p.m. Thursdays and 2-8 p.m. Sundays, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit.

#### ● THE ARTISTS' GALLERY

Thursday, July 18 — "Artistic License" features watercolor by Deborah Friedman and abstracts by Prudence Bernstein. Continues through Sept. 4. Opening reception 11:30-8 p.m. Thursdays. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, until 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Applegate Square, Northwestern Highway, between 12 and 13 Mile, Southfield.

#### ● WORDS INTO PLOWSHARES

Friday, July 19 — "Operation Storm Plowshares," original cartoons by Bill Day, and "Oil Wars 1990-91: Death Before Empty," large multimedia installation by Eric Mexico, continue through Oct. 5. Reception 5-8 p.m. Friday. Hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, 33 E. Adams on Grand Circus Park, Detroit.

#### ● ROCHESTER HILLS MUSEUM

"Horses and Rings and Marvellous Things," an exhibit of carousel horses and fairground art, continues through Aug. 11. On display are 18 hand-carved carousel horses, sideshow banners and miniature circus acts. The museum, Van Hoosen Farm, is open 1-4 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday, Van Hoosen Road, one mile east of Rochester Road, south of Tienken and six miles north of M-59. Admission charge.

#### ● CRIPPS PATRONA GALLERY

Infra-red, hand-colored black and white photographs by Damon, a partner in a photography studio in Hollywood, are on display through July. Hours are noon to 9 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 209 South Main, Rochester.

#### ● ATRIUM GALLERY

Featured watercolorist Agnes Hodge shows florals. Raku work by John Martin, Jeff Hale. New paper work by Edith Rose. Porcelain and glass perfume bottles, soft sculpture handwoven by Lynn Spite-Nagel. New clay pieces by Sue Kolb, featured in Detroit Monthly Magazine-August. Through Aug. 15, 113 N. Center, Northville. Hours 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday-Saturday, and by appointment.

#### ● MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Public sculptures by internationally recognized artist Richard Hunt are on display through Sept. 30. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, 301 Frederick Douglass, Detroit.

#### ● BIRMINGHAM BLOOMFIELD ART ASSOCIATION

Exhibition of works by the members of the Sculptors Guild of Michigan continues through Aug. 2. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Closed Saturday and Sunday. 165 S. Cranbrook just north of 14 Mile, Birmingham.

#### ● LEMBERG GALLERY

A continually changing exhibition runs through August. Included are works by Christo, Dine, Halley, Leslie, Lauder, Schnabel and Sullivan along with gallery regulars. Summer hours are 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, until 5 p.m. Saturday, 538 N. Woodward, Birmingham.

#### ● LONDON ARTS GALLERY

"Dogs Across America," by Peter Mayer, will be at the gallery through July before continuing on its national "ruff" tour across Route 66. A portion of the proceeds will go to the Michigan Humane Society. Regular hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 321 Fisher Building, Detroit.

#### ● MESA GALLERY

Multi-colored quilts with primitive imagery by Arlinka Blar and new native American pottery from Acacia Pueblo are on display through July. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 32800 Franklin Road, Franklin.

#### ● DETROIT GALLERY OF CONTEMPORARY CRAFTS

"Summer Treasures" includes birdhouses, fish decoys, painted furniture, windbells and chimes and glass jewelry by nationally known craft art-

ists, 104 Fisher Building, Detroit.

#### ● ROUTE 10 GALLERY

"Art of Papermaking" features works by Marcia Makowski, Cindy Fields, Ande Roemer, Pat Jackunas, Michelle Kalt and Doree Schwartz. Hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday, until 9 p.m. Thursday, 32430 Northwestern, Farmington Hills.

#### ● WOODS GALLERY

Photography by Mark Diem, Carol Johnson, Co Volkers and Tracy Murrell is on display through Aug. 19. A children's photographic craft session (for grades 2 and up) will be held 6:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 25. A reception to meet the photographers will be held 7:30-8:30 p.m. same evening. The gallery is in the lower level of the Huntington Woods Public Library, 26415 Scotia, Huntington Woods. Closed Saturday and Sunday.

#### ● DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

"Collaboration in Print — Stewart & Stewart Prints 1880-1990" is an exhibit in the Red Carpet area through Aug. 18. Then this show of 56 prints by 20 artists (six from Michigan) from the only professional workshop in this state goes on tour to Michigan, Ohio and Missouri. The screen process, cliché-verre, high relief intaglio and lithography are represented. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday, 3300 Woodward, Detroit.

#### ● PARK WEST GALLERY

"Erte — The Estate Collection" features paintings, sculptures, serigraphs and jewelry from the estate of Romaine de Tiroff (Erte, 1892-1990). Erte was a highly productive artist until he died. He produced some of his greatest works in his last decade. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, until 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Sunday, 29469 Northwestern, Southfield.

#### ● CRANBROOK ACADEMY OF ART MUSEUM

Student Summer Show, 70 works by recent graduates, continues through Sept. 15. "The Vesel Aesthetic: Ceramics by Majla Grotel" continues through Oct. 27 and "New and Notable Acquisitions" runs through Oct. 27 as well. Summer hours are 1-5 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday, 500 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills.

#### ● HILL GALLERY

Sculpture by Sandra Osip is on display through July 20, 163 Townsend, Birmingham.

## Be rational in how you use your time

Everyone has the same amount of time: 24 hours per day. Some spend that time wisely and some don't. The question is: "What is wisely?"

Everyone decides the value of things from their own perspective, from their own paradigm. Unfortunately, these decisions are sometimes rationalized instead of being rational.

I excerpted the following from "Something to Think About" (author unknown) in our church bulletin. It illustrates the different ways people look at the same thing:

"FUNNY — a 10 dollar bill looks so big when you take it to church, but so small when you take it to the store. FUNNY — an hour seems long when you consider giving to the work of the church, but short when spent for fishing, playing golf, watching TV, etc. FUNNY — it's difficult to find time to read a chapter in the Bible, but we can manage several hundred pages in a current novel. FUNNY — it's such a task to fit a few church events into our busy schedules, but a social invitation can often be worked into them at the last minute."

In the fifth grade, I learned an axiom that repeatedly pops back into my mind: "Every person makes the best decision they can, based on what they have to work with at that time" (their attitudes, personal experience, pressures, current environment, etc. — their paradigm). Whether it's how to deal with a situation or how to spend money, each person makes the "right" decision at that moment.

Sadly, when a person doesn't know a better way to handle a situation, too often these days the result is murder. That's not to say it's right, acceptable or excusable from society's point of view, but using a gun is the "best" way a murderer knows to handle the situation at that moment!

AND SO it is with the way we spend our time. Although we'd be loathe to admit it, most of us choose what to do ac-



organizing

Dorothy Lehmkuhl

cording to whether we want to do it or not — which means it's the "right" decision for us.

This includes everything from out-of-town business trips to exercising, from what we eat to which papers on our desk to handle next. Although these decisions are the best we know how to make them, too often they are not correct from an overall perspective and will not lead us toward achieving our goals.

The next time you decide how to spend your time, ask yourself if you are rationalizing or if you're being rational. Will you make a knee-jerk excuse based on doing what you'd rather do, or will you base your decision on what's best for you and those around you, and spend your time wisely?

Dorothy Lehmkuhl is a time management consultant based in Birmingham. Her column runs regularly.

## Models to be photographed

Alan Lowy of Farmington Hills will host his 21st annual photographers/models picnic 11 a.m. to dusk, Sunday, July 21, rain or shine, at Kaleva Park, 5355 Greer, West Bloomfield.

He invites photographers to photograph more than 30 models: women and men, wearing evening wear to buns against ancient and custom cars, motorcycles, boats and props.

Picnic admission is \$25 per person. Prospective models should call Lowy, 471-7299.