

Artists group sets studio open house

By MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

With its big windows, and the dedication of its occupants, the old St. Frederick's school building off West Track Drive in Pontiac serves as a special greenhouse.

The building is rented by a group of area artists, who work independently in different media in various rooms, and call it the St. Frederick Art Studios. Artistic magic blooms there, growing and thriving in the nurturing atmosphere of "sunlight and relaxed fellowship."

The public will have a chance to walk among the light and magic this weekend, visiting the environment in which art is made. The studios, 130 E. West Track Drive, behind St. Vincent de Paul Church, will present an open house and sale 5-9 p.m. Friday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

All three floors of the building will be open, and refreshments will be served. Artists will be on hand to explain their work.

"I like the excitement of all the people coming through," said one of the artists, Reba Pintzuk, who took part in the first such event at the studios two years ago soon after they opened. "It was very exciting getting the comments from people. I find it very exhilarating."

"It's an opportunity to visit an artist's studio. Something magical," she said.

"It's for people that haven't

been here, to familiarize themselves," said Bloomfield Hills artist Hertha Cohen. "There is a magic about how does it [the process] start."

About 20 artists, some with national and international renown, rent rooms in the building. More than half will be in the show, presenting oil and acrylic painting, woodworking, sculpture, pottery, fiber, wearable art and paper.

Chris Wingerter of Birmingham will display a full-size torso, among her other works. Betsy Travis of Clarkston will show her wearable art in silks, wools and knits.

"I work with textures," said Reini Feyer of West Bloomfield, who will exhibit her fiber sculptures. "Everything plays a part — color, form, texture. It just evolves."

"We've got a little bit of everything," said artist Dennis Dall of Olmsted Hills.

"There's a tremendous amount of talent in this building. Everybody is really serious about their art."

Whether they are continuing an established artistic career or starting one, the artists are pleased with the building and the chance it offers.

"I just feel very fortunate that I have this opportunity," said fashion designer Pam Swift of Birmingham, whose three-dimensional wall-sculptures, rugs and floor mats have been featured in West Bloomfield stores.

Bonsai club branches out in show

By MARTY FIGLEY
STAFF WRITER

As you walk through the displays of bonsai at the Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Oakland County's 19th annual show 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday-Sunday, June 4-7, in Summit Place Mall in Pontiac, a feeling of serenity will probably come over you as you contemplate these fascinating living sculptures.

"I personally like [bonsai] because it is old, it has the look of antiquity," said club member Rosalind Evanoff of Southfield. "My husband says it's pleasing to the eye — yes it is, very much so."

"It requires a great deal of work and care on the part of whoever is doing the bonsai plant. [We're] constantly wanting to learn new things."

John Hall, another club member, has been involved with bonsai for about five years. "The combination of artistic and horticultural requirements involved in the hobby" is what he likes about it, he said.

"It's a multifaceted endeavor. They're not something that you can do once a week," Hall said. "They require nearly daily care."

Bonsai bonanza

The show at the mall on Telegraph is an excellent opportunity to see many beautiful bonsai, buy plants and talk to members of the bonsai club, the sponsor. Their famous "Tea House" will be in position and many displays will be ready for viewing. Some bonsai were developed over the last 50 years, Evanoff said.

A workshop will take place at 1 p.m. Sunday, June 7, in the second

floor Community Room. Master artist Randy Clark will demonstrate the art of shaping and growing, and special techniques used to produce these dwarf, three-dimensional forms suggesting natural trees on landscapes.

Other demonstrations by Four Seasons members will take place in the Grand Court at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 4; 2 and 7 p.m. Friday, June 5; and 2 and 7 p.m. Saturday, June 6. Admission is free. For more information, call John Hall at 887-2234.

Requirements

Choosing a plant to be trained into bonsai requires much thought and must not be rushed. That is the beginning of the patience end of the art, because patience and perseverance play an important part in this love affair with the plant.

"The roots should spread out uniformly from the thick base of the trunk, which should have thick roots to give a look of maturity. The trunk should display some bark or

signs of bark and be free of unsightly blemishes, and taper from the bottom."

Branches need to begin at about one-third the total height of the plant, with the lowest branch being the most important, the second on the opposite side, the third between the first and second branch at the back of the plant, and be visible when viewed from the front. There are variables on these broad guidelines.

Ancient art

The art of bonsai (pronounced "bone-sigh") is an ancient craft that began in the Orient, most probably in China. Court officials, monks and merchants brought it to Japan, where the art was refined.

The exact time and place has been lost in history, but since plants played an important part in Chinese medicine, legend tells us that someone, sometime, probably

decided to grow the plants in pots rather than forcing for them when they were needed or wanted.

The constant trimming of the branches would have resulted in an attractive shape and then the ornamental possibilities would have come into play.

Thousands of years ago, in ancient China, people went into the woods and countryside and found small trees that they took back to their homes and nurtured; maintaining the dwarf size by careful pruning of the roots and limbs. This is still done today.

In 1972, archaeologists found paintings of servants on the tomb wall of a prince of the Tang dynasty, who died in A.D. 706. One servant carried a miniature landscape with rocks and plants, and the other a pot in the form of a lotus flower containing a tree with green leaves and red fruit.

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