

CREATIVE LIVING

D

THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1992



MARY KLEMIC

Docents at DIA share their deep love of art

They make "heart" out of "art." Docents and other volunteer aides at museums and galleries offer a personal touch and friendly smiles among the abstracts and landscapes and sculpture.

One such place brightened and warmed by their presence is the Detroit Institute of Arts, which recently honored volunteers for 30 years of service, the length of time the docent program has existed. The 30-year volunteers included Delphine Andrews and Lindy Konikow of Bloomfield Hills, Sylvia Dunitz and Claire Raynes of Farmington Hills, Ruth Lefkowitz of Franklin, Doris Burton of Huntington Woods and Kay Mackay of Grosse Pointe.

Andrews, Konikow, Dunitz, Raynes and Lefkowitz work as docents, Burton as a staff aide and member of the speakers bureau, and Mackay at the information desk.

Special breed

"I'm thrilled to say I've been a docent for 30 years," said Dunitz, who worked at the museum before the docent program began.

"I would never feel that I gave as much as I received. Not only in what I learned but the . . . men and women that I met there. They're a very special breed."

"You give, but you really are given back. It's special."

"I feel as if I've gotten a master's in art history," said Raynes, who also works with Concerts in the Garden for the city of Southfield Cultural Arts Division, on the board of the American Artists Series and on the board of the Southfield Symphony.

"I love being in the museum — you get to see lots of collections — and the friends I've made. I have learned a great deal. I like doing public tours."

Docent duties

Docents give tours to school children, business people, college students and other groups. Each docent gives 20 tours a year.

The work is a team effort that features intensive, one-year training. A new class of docents is taken on every year.

"We look for people who really like children, people who like art," said Wendy Evans of Bloomfield Township, chairman of the docent committee. "The knowledge and the technique and the art history we can give them."

"You learn a lot. It's a wonderful opportunity."

"What we try to do is tour with an inquiry method, ask questions of the group."

Learning experience

The tours cover all aspects of the museum and different kinds of art. Dunitz tries to explain how to look at a work of art, or, as she put it, how to "see what you're looking at."

"Very often you'll hear comments about our abstract art or modern art," she said.

Sculpture by John Chamberlain, who makes works of art out of pieces of a wrecked car, brought comments and also a lesson. Chamberlain's art "always stopped traffic," said Dunitz, acknowledging the unintentional pun.

"From a wreckage he . . . brought forth something beautiful," she said.

"You try to make the point that out of a piece of wreckage (come art). It's in the eye of the beholder."

Another DIA program, Art to the Schools, involves taking reproductions of some masterpieces to the youngsters.

When there was talk about starting the docent program, Dunitz was taking an art history course at the DIA. Raynes was working part time as a secretary to the DIA's curator of antiquities.

Two people who stand out in Dunitz's experience are Victor Tahill, the first or second man to work as a docent, and Eleanor Ford, DIA benefactor. A couple of months after Dunitz met Ford briefly, Ford said hello to Dunitz and addressed her by her first name.

Art support

Would the docents recommend the program? Most definitely.

Not only are you among great paintings, sculpture and antiquities, but you meet many different people who offer a variety of interpretations of the art, Dunitz said.

Linda Margolin, who trains the docents, handles requests from around the country concerning the DIA program, Evans said. And reaction to the docents closer to home is positive as well.

"You just see the joy in the kids' eyes," Evans said.

Artists take French lesson



BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

A group of area art students walked in the footsteps of the masters in a trip to southern France last month. The fruits of the 10-day journey — art work by the students — will be shown in an exhibit June 8-22 at the Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association, 1516 S. Cranbrook Road in Birmingham.

"It's not a tour, it's a painting trip," said BBAA instructor Leslie Masters. "We split our days — half in the museums, the other half painting. Everyone did a sketch book."

The 22 participants met for two critiques. "They were finishing up the acrylic, watercolor and pastel works back at the BBAA last week."

Before leaving on the trip May 3, the class met once a week for six weeks, each week studying a different painter: Cezanne, Van Gogh, Matisse, Pleiss, Bonnard and Vasarely.

"So many painters painted in southern France," said Masters, who also teaches at Schoolcraft College.

Masters, an artist, gave daily painting instruction on location in Venice, Nice, Arles, Aix and southern landscapes. Former BBAA instructor Joyce Nagel, now of South Carolina, gave pastel demonstrations and in-

struction. Francoise Vernoux, a former student of Masters, was trip guide. Special highlights of the journey included visits to the Vasarely museum, the outside of which resembles one of his paintings, and to Cezanne's studio



C'est bon: Patty Tapper of Farmington Hills made this acrylic and watercolor crayon rendering of a flower market at Nice.

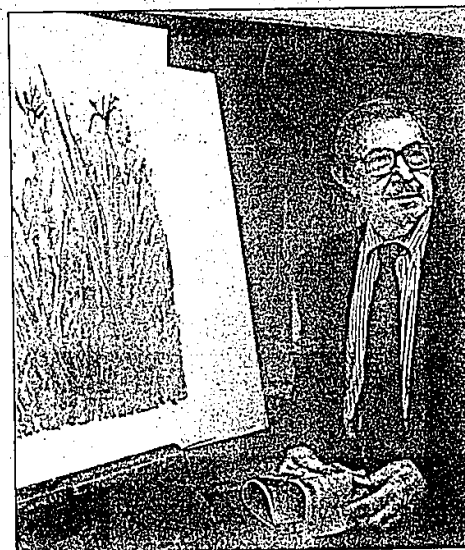
In Aix, which featured the artist's cane and backpack. "It's kept as if he just walked out the door. So we really got a flavor of Cezanne."

Masters, former BBAA assistant di-

See FRANCE, 6D



French connection: BBAA instructor Leslie Masters holds samples of student art painted on a trip to France last month. A group of area students, here finishing up their work from the journey, painted where the masters painted and will have an exhibit starting next week.



On display: Emil Weddige is shown here with one of his colorful works. Art by the famed printmaker will be exhibited at the Civic Center Gallery in Southfield for two weeks this month.

Pioneer printmaker featured in exhibit

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

For two weeks this month, the energetic and uplifting art of acclaimed printmaker Emil Weddige will be on display at the Civic Center Gallery, 26000 Evergreen in Southfield.

The award-winning artist was appointed professor of art at the University of Michigan in 1957 and became professor emeritus in 1974.

He lives and works in Ann Arbor. In 1949, at the age of 41, he established a studio in Paris, where he works part of each year.

"He's a brilliant artist," said Helen Gale of the city of Southfield Cultural Arts Division. "He depicts the world at peace with itself."

The exhibit, featuring 20 pieces, will run June 8-19. A reception honoring Weddige will take place 5-8 p.m. Wednesday, June 17, in the Municipal Building at 26000 Evergreen. Noted vocalist Glenda Kirkland of Southfield, and pianist Lettie Alston, will perform at the reception.

Weddige considers lithography as "the medium of the people," something more people may enjoy. He blends printmaking practices with the visual conventions of watercolor painting.

"He has his work hung all over the world, but he has this very human quality to be in touch with everyday peo-

ple," said collector Lois Porter of Ypsilanti, who is helping organize the exhibit. "This is such an opportunity for people to meet him."

"Flowers, environmental issues, social issues, he does it all. He does show a zest for life. It's just exciting to see what he sees."

Weddige's abstracts, fantasies and landscapes feature hard edge drawings and gentle washes of color, often with pastoral settings. "Earth's Orbit" shows images of the zodiac floating in the sky above the grounds of Eastern Michigan University, where a reclining person reads a book under the spreading boughs of a tree.

Weddige was one of the pioneers in the rebirth of color lithography in America in the 1930s.

His limited edition, stone-based lithographs are in the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, the Kresge Foundation in Troy, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Library of Congress, Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and in many other distinguished private collections and museums.

Civic Center Gallery hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Call 354-4717 for information.

Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

For information and reviews of musical performances, please turn to the Entertainment section.

ROCK LEGENDS

The Russell Klatt Gallery, 1467 S. Woodward in Birmingham, will have a premiere party Friday for the opening of its photography exhibit, "The Legends of Rock and Roll." Mr. B's Restaurant will provide complimentary food and a barbershop quartet, Kingfish and the Mystic Knights of the

Art Beat

See, will perform. Call the gallery at 647-6655 for information.

BBAA BUSINESS

Members of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association had their annual meeting May 10.

Elected to continue their terms on the Board of Directors, ending May 1995, were Suzanne Aberly, Susan Glavin, Gary Eisenberg, Lora Parlove, Peter Robinson, Stephen Whitney, Clifford Worthy and Mary Wright. William MacAdam was elected to

the board for a term ending May 1994.

The BBAA, 1516 S. Cranbrook Road in Birmingham, will have its 13th annual spring tea, honoring volunteers, 12:15-2 p.m. Friday, June 26. As an added attraction this year, the guests will join the BBAA Art Campers for a special performance by Elaine Tom Johnson.

The public may attend. RSVP by June 22 by calling 644-0866 between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

TUNING IN

Dr. Mark L. Diem, certified health educator and medical director of First Care medical centers, is the guest host of the "Guess Who's Playing the Classics?" program 9-10 p.m. Thursday, June 4, on WQRS-FM.