

SUBURBAN LIFE

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1992

THE SCENE



GRETCHEN HITCH

'Crandemonium' benefactor party a heady gathering

Gretchen Hitch's column *The Scene* alternates each week with Denise Lucas' column *Social Eyes*. Material for *The Scene* may be mailed to Gretchen Hitch at 646 Kimberly, Birmingham 48009, or you can call her at 646-5277.

The benefactor Guy Fawkes committee party was Sept. 24 at Barney's New York at the Somerset Collection in Troy. At the event, Cranbrook Art Academy president Roy Slade said with a laugh, "I've always wondered if Guy Fawkes is celebrated in England because he was prevented from burning Parliament, or because he tried to burn the House of Parliament."

The 16th annual Guy Fawkes Ball called "Crandemonium," with Helen Guitard as chairwoman, is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 7, at the art academy museum in Bloomfield Hills. Recalling past balls, Slade told Guitard, "They don't burn me in effigy anymore, but the Guy Fawkes Ball with its fancy dress, dining and dancing and creative decorations is still the fun event of the year." In the late '70s, academy students would make an effigy of Slade, as the revelers in England make an effigy of Fawkes.

"Crandemonium" was the name of the first whimsical social event in the CAA museum in the 1930s. As Guitard explained, "We are honoring the memory of George and Ellen Booth and Elsie and Pipsan Saarinen." The word "Crandemonium" has the fingerprints of whimsical Harry Booth, one of George and Ellen Booth's sons.

The young-crowd-arrive-later event on the CAA's lower level is appropriately called "Pandemonium." (As anyone who attends the ball knows, it's the perfect word to describe lower-level activities after the younger crowd gets into the trademark Hummers.)

Headresses will be worn by guests at the main event, which prompted some committee members to wear them at the Barney's benefactor party. Chairwoman Guitard wore the Orpheus fountain on her head. CAAM Women's Committee president Phebe Goldstein decided to wear an elaborate headress from northern Thailand, with streams of ribbons, which was admired by Sheryl Kammer.

Page Yeager, past chairwoman of the Red Guy Fawkes, wore a Bertin vase atop her head. Jop Street wore Mickey Mouse ears and topped it off with a miniature Saarinen chair. Debbie Erb put the Cranbrook peacock on her head. Judy Bruggemann of Rochester walked round with Arthur Nevill Kirk's hat mirror atop her head.

What the Somerset Collection customers thought was happening as they peered in Barney's windows is hard to conjecture.

Barney's manager Pamela Pyke beamed at the Cranbrook crowd clearly enjoying the unusual headresses.

More folks on the Crandemonium committee who were present include Carol Worsley, Julie Sherman, Susan Hush, Suzanne Letica Hogan, Susan and David Lanciulli, Sis Fisher, Mary Lou and Dick Jones, Sheryl Kammer and her dad Jim Chapman, Bob and Jean Schuler, Tom and Lois Booth, Bill and Molly Tehoy and the Elliott Trumbulls. From Troy came Martha Hosp and Marc and Joanna Boeckl. Bill and Mary Jane Bostick of Bingham Farms also were on hand.

Mist on the meadow

The Metamora Hunt, which includes some members from the greater Birmingham area, held its first hunt and "the blessing of the hounds" Saturday morning.

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GRETCHEN HITCH

Thal headress: Guy Fawkes "Crandemonium" chairwoman Helen Guitard (left) with the Milles Orpheus fountain on her head; Phebe Goldstein, chairwoman of the Women's Committee for CAAM, in north Thailand headress; and Judy Bruggemann of Rochester Hills, in another Cranbrook artifact.



JIM BIDER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Designing man: Gene Moore, 82, with circus figure he created, relaxes inside Tiffany's window at the Somerset Collection in Troy.

Window-shopping Tiffany's designer explores fantasies

By ETHEL SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

Designing windows for Tiffany's is a jewel of a job. Just ask Gene Moore, who has been creating fantasy windows at the premiere New York jewelry store since 1955. At 82, he is still showing up for work every day at 7 a.m. Last week he visited Tiffany's newest location, the Somerset Collection in Troy, where a 14,000-square-foot store will open to the public Saturday.

Moore was there to design and install the store's seven windows, to be revealed for the first time today at a "Breakfast at Tiffany's" for dignitaries. He declined to reveal the windows' themes in advance, saying, "I'd rather they be surprises."

Filled with fantasy

In an upstairs office, of the two-level Troy store, he revealed some of the thoughts behind his traffic-stopping window designs. Moore's windows always have "a lot of fantasy."

Although the windows are created to show off Tiffany's jewelry, he doesn't start with the jewelry. "They always have jewelry, but I don't think about jewelry and play around." Instead, he develops a design concept, then finds the jewelry to go with it.

"I select the jewelry the day before the window goes in. It works. Tiffany's stock is large enough so I can do that, thank god!" he said.

For the Observer & Eccentric photographer, Moore posed in one of the Troy store's still-empty windows, holding a couple of the circus figures he has created. The window is lined in the blue color that has become so closely identified with the prestigious jeweler.

Patricia Russo, director of publicity for Tiffany & Co. in New York, was on hand for the interview-and-photo session. She said that at an elementary school in New York State, when a student was asked to identify the color (or robin's egg blue), the schoolchild's response was, "Tiffany blue."

"We've had the color for 100 years," Russo said. "The store is 155 years old. We can only trace the color back 100 years, to the 1890s, when it was used with catalogs. We have the oldest direct-mail catalog in the country — 1848. It was a fashionable color of Victorian times. Ever since, it's been identified with Tiffany's."

Planning ahead

For New York's 100,000-square-foot store, at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street, Moore has already planned all the windows for next year. "I follow a

schedule," he said. He usually attends openings of other Tiffany stores but could not be in Troy today because, "I have important windows for New York going in the same day."

Asked if he has any favorites among the many windows he has designed for Tiffany's, Moore replied, "I haven't done my favorite yet." As to the public's favorite windows: "The public has gone overboard over a set of windows that I don't go overboard for at all," he said, describing windows featuring fountains, during a water shortage in New York. A sign said, "This is not precious water, and the fountains were filled with gin."

"It even made the newspapers in Russia. I had to replace the gin by a case a day. Every day, I got in early, and people would see me replace the gin," he said with a shrug.

Moore lives in New York City, not far from Tiffany's. "I could walk to work," he talks about his career in a beautifully illustrated book, "My Time at Tiffany's" co-authored with Jay Hyams and published on his 35th anniversary in 1990.

He designed jewelry

From 1966 to 1977, he was head of Tiffany's design department for jewelry. The book includes photos of jewelry he created. For the last 22

years, he has been wearing a ring of his own design. "My owl. I never get up in the morning without my owl," he said. Both the ring and a bracelet watch he wears were designs sold for years at Tiffany's.

"To me, men's jewelry should be sculptural, rather than just a signet ring," he said.

Moore no longer designs jewelry but he still creates circus miniatures, of silver and enamel, that Tiffany's sells. He doesn't own a set of the 30-plus pieces. "There are people who buy the whole collection. I wish I could afford them." The pieces sell for \$650 up. The baby elephant costs more than \$1,000.

"I just love the circus," he said with enthusiasm. "There's a certain freedom about it. It's pure fantasy. Certain parts of it are very daredevil. It takes care of everything."

He did special windows for the movie "Breakfast at Tiffany's."

"They asked me to do windows they could photograph from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out," Moore said. By coincidence, he already knew the film's star Audrey Hepburn, whom he had met when she first came to New York and had asked to pose for a store mannequin he designed of her.

Well spouses help partners

By TIM CARVELL
STAFF WRITER

...for better or worse, in sickness and in health, 'till death us do part". Wynn Stubenvoll understands that vow well.

When her husband Kurt was afflicted with Parkinson's disease 13 years ago, she decided to take care of him at home. Now, she is opening a Rochester area chapter of the Well Spouse Foundation, a nationwide support group for spouses who make the same decision.

The primary purpose of the foundation, according to Stubenvoll, is to help spouses overcome the feeling of loneliness that accompanies the responsibility of supporting their mate.

"It's mainly an opportunity for the caregiver to ventilate anxieties that other people — their family and friends — can't deal with," she said.

Already, Stubenvoll has found a care group on which she hopes to build in Rochester. Although the group encompasses those who are dealing with all types of illness, Stubenvoll said they share a good deal of common ground.

"We all have a common thread of fear and anger," she said.

Those feelings have their roots in the shock that accompanies illness, according to George Hopper, who conducts the foundation's Birmingham chapter.

"When a spouse gets sick, your dreams are shattered," said Hopper, whose wife became quadriplegic due to multiple sclerosis one year after their wedding.

In coping with a loss, Stubenvoll said, the well spouse must cope with emotional phases particular to caregivers.

"It's almost like the stages of grieving," she said.

Those stages are detailed in "Mainstay," Maggie Strong's 1988 chronicle of her husband's illness. The book, which was responsible for the creation of the Well Spouse Foundation, inspired both Hopper and Stubenvoll.

"The book really represented me," Hopper said. "I was amazed at what Maggie wrote. Her feelings were the same as what I experienced."

One hazard of being a well spouse is becoming overwhelmed by the responsibilities of being the caretaker. When that happens, Hopper said, "we lose our own identity because of what we're doing for our spouses."

The danger of being overwhelmed by caretaker duties, he added, is fed by the failure of friends and family to recognize well spouses.

"The caretaker is often invisible. People don't ask how you are, they ask how your spouse is doing."

Part of the group's purpose is, therefore, finding ways to help well spouses "nurture themselves," in Hopper's words.

"We all feel that we get something out of being a caregiver, but we also discover that there's more to life."

On a more practical note, the foundation is also working to improve insurance coverage for long-

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JIM BIDER

Helping out: Wynn and Kurt Stubenvoll go for a walk near their home in Rochester Hills.