

# CREATIVE LIVING

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1992



MARY KLEMIC

## Photojournalist gives a picture perfect talk

It was a star-studded luncheon, with Kevin Costner and Mel Gibson and Elizabeth Taylor and Candice Bergen among the famous faces who made an appearance. Well, they were in photos instead of in person. But the pictures were taken by celebrity photojournalist Linda Solomon, so it was almost as if the real people were there.

Solomon was the keynote speaker recently for the Our Town luncheon, part of the annual Our Town Art Exhibition and Sale in The Community House in Birmingham. Solomon, the national spokeswoman for the Photography Information Council, has exhibited in and taught art from past Our Town shows.

In her talk, "Focusing on the Famous," Solomon shared advice and stories with the audience. Her slide presentation showed famous people she has photographed and interviewed, including those listed above.

"I probably had the opportunity to meet everybody I dreamed of meeting," said Solomon, a Birmingham resident.

Solomon shoots only in natural light, rarely using a flash. She looks for a feature or mannerism of her subject to "capture" that subject.

For example, Solomon's photo of Muhammad Ali showed his fist up close to the camera, in an almost 3-D effect. Johnny Carson was snapped adjusting his tie, Walter Mondale was photographed laughing.

"I feel a photo of someone should really reveal the heart of that person."

Solomon makes sure the backgrounds emphasize the subject. Designer Halston dressed in black and white, so she shot him in black and white and in silhouette.

"Sometimes color can be distracting. . . . Black and white emphasized (Yul Brynner's) features in a very dramatic way."

Solomon likes to photograph people in their own homes or own offices.

"I think people are most comfortable in their own setting."

She will arrive about one hour ahead of time so she can find the right setting, then complete shooting in 10-15 minutes.

Solomon included a TV in the background of her photo of Norman Lear and his family. "I felt that this photo should tell a story and by having a TV out of focus it tells a story."

Solomon photographed Ford Motor Co. executive Donald Petersen in front of the assembly line at the Wayne Assembly Plant. She had to hurry because the line was stopped for only a few minutes. When she asked if a car that had already gone by on the line could be brought back so it would appear in the shot (she liked the color better), Petersen said, "The line only goes in one direction, Linda."

Solomon often asks celebrities to wave to her when she takes their pictures. When she asked Gloria Steinem to wave, "I saw a complete change in her expression," Steinem said that when she was a girl, her father would ask her to wave when he took her picture, and she hadn't heard that request since she was 10 years old.

In the resulting photo, shown to the crowd, Steinem looks as if she is giggling.

"You can see by her expression she loved it," Elizabeth Taylor is the most beautiful woman she has photographed, Solomon said. When she asked Taylor what would surprise people the most about her, the actress replied, "My vulnerability."

It's important to be on eye level with children when you photograph them, Solomon said. "You have to get into their world."

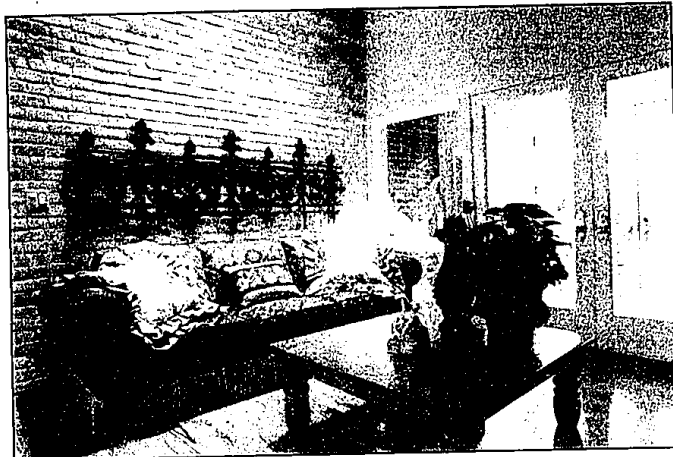
Solomon works with Boys and Girls Clubs nationwide and local schools. She personally distributes 35mm cameras to budding photographers and encourages them to shoot "things that make you happy."

Among those in Solomon's audience were her mother, Mona Rappaport, and former Michigan first lady Janet Blanchard.

### Gifted exhibit

Original watercolors by radio personality Alan Almond are now showing exclusively at the Russell Klatt Gallery, 1467 S. Woodward in Birmingham.

The gallery is also housing a variety of gift items in time for the holidays. The pieces include glowing raku designs by Ed Risak, delightful wire figures by Jack Amidei and elegant pottery by Patricia McCann.



WILLIAM HANSEN

Iron addition: An iron railing is the only decoration on one wall in a sitting room in Sara Cullen's Birmingham house, which has won third prize in a Better Homes and Gardens decorating contest.

## Mix of old, new work comfortably in house

Older furnishings and new space combine for a fresh look in a Birmingham house. The decor won third prize in a contest and will be featured in a national magazine next spring.

BY MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

The old and the new work together comfortably in a Birmingham house.

Sara Cullen and her family live in the house, which was built in 1941. In the course of a year, Cullen created new space and used old furnishings for a fresh look.

"I tried to think of where the room could lay out better," said Cullen, who works as a window dresser.

See HOUSE, 6D



Making space: An island under a chandelier serves as a table in the kitchen.

Welcome room: Furnishings and high ceilings in the house offer an elegant yet warm atmosphere.



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.

### GOOD VIBRATIONS

An exhibit by artist Manfred Heine-Beaux continues at The Mole Hole, 128 S. Woodward in Birmingham. He will also participate in the store's holiday art show Saturday, Nov. 14. Call 644-8233.

His art has been described as a visual experience and harmonized fireworks. The artist's acrylics and aquatint etchings are vibrant and bring a good feeling to the viewer.

## Art Beat

### BROADCAST NEWS

Douglas Schubert, president of Jules R. Schubert Jewelers in Troy, will be the guest host on "Guess Who's Playing the Classics?" 9-10 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 12, on WQRS 105-FM.

### JEWELRY HONOR

Southfield's Sharon G has been named one of the nation's top jewelry designers by Modern Jeweler magazine. Sharon G took first place in

## Exhibits picture rhythms

BY MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

Two different exhibits around Oakland County this month featuring photos present different tunes.

One display, through Nov. 30 at the Halsted Gallery, 560 N. Woodward in Birmingham, offers the lullaby of Broadway and other rhythms of New York City in photographs, prints and drawings. It includes works by such artists as Ralph Steiner, Alfred Stieglitz, Eliot Elisofon, Palmer Schoppe and Adolph Fassbender, most of them from the 1920s and 1930s.

The other show, to Nov. 13 at the Lawrence Street Gallery, 29 W. Lawrence in Pontiac, shares softer melodies, many of smaller towns in works by Mary Pencheff, staff photographer at St. Vincent Medical Center in Toledo.

Architecture is a big part of the Halsted works, whether they represent an overture or a main theme to the daily operas of the city. Even structures that are empty or not yet completed convey a sense of the energy and motion that will come to them, as in Lewis Hine's 1932 closeups of construction on the Empire State Building, or Clarence Abbott's 1930 photographs of Pennsylvania Station.

Among the similar views are a 1910 etching of the Grand Central Station concourse, and Max Thalmann's 1923 pastel and crayon drawing of the Brooklyn Bridge. Stieglitz's 1910 photo of Lower Manhattan shows a new building going up behind older structures. Bertha Landers takes a different look with her 1938 lithograph "Cloth vs. Steel," representing the worker and the material.

The musical themes continue with the photos "Bewildered" (1938) by F.W. Ritter, showing designs made by shadows of tracks on the ground, "Fifth Avenue Traffic" (1940) by Andreas Feininger, "Store Window" (1937) and "Laundry" (1930) by Elisofon, and "Always Camel" (1922) by Steiner, with a billboard advertising a cigarette looming over small, bustling shops.

Other works show the people of the city, the musicians that play the melodies. You see children playing cards on steps, asphalt workers, people crowding to buy old clothes, a man mopping a floor. In two different lithographs from 1940, Saul Rabino presents a jobless person on a bench and an elegant group at the theater.

Pencheff's tunes are more gentle evocations. She uses infrared film, which gives the shots a dreamlike quality.

The visual songs presented by her lens invites the viewer to hear rather than keep time. "The Pedestrian" shows a young man walking by a theater, his gesture almost imitating the pose of figures in the poster outside. "Elephant Walk" features two posing pachyderms, their trunks curved in air.

Other scenes have been deserted for different lengths of time: a schoolyard, a closed ice cream stand, a gas pump framed by two posts outside a diner, a cornfield.

Some photos almost trick the viewer. A cow appears to be headless and wrapped in barbed wire. "Atomic Playground" shows rides, shaped like animals, in tall grass. The child in "Low Tide" might not be seen at first glance.

Halsted Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, to 8:30 p.m. the first Thursday of each month. Call 644-8284. Lawrence Street Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, to 9 p.m. Friday. Call 334-6716.

the magazine's design competition and was honored with the 1992 Buyer's Choice Award. Sharon G was featured in the magazine's October issue and the winning design was pictured on the front cover.

The winning ring, one of the pieces in the Sharon G line, is available at Robert Alexander Jewelers in Farmington Hills.

Top designers from around the country competed for the prestigious award, which was judged by a panel of buyers from the nation's leading retailers. The judging was based on "custom look" jewelry design at affordable prices, along with the creativity and beauty of each piece.

Sharon G is the combined husband/wife partnership of Sharon and Norman Gornbein of Southfield. Together they have 30 years of experience in the jewelry business.