

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1992

CREATIVE LIVING

D

DOWN TO EARTH



MARTY FIGLEY

Bird book more than featherweight champ

Bird Egg Feather Nest," Maryjo Koch (Stewart, Tabori and Chang, only \$24.95!), will capture the reader with its true-to-life watercolors and handwritten text.

The fascinating mysteries of birds from all parts of the world are relayed in a delightful format, as only an accomplished artist can do. The two-page spread showing various eggs leads the reader to learn the way they are camouflaged by their coloring.

Then, "The feather evolved over centuries from the frayed ends of ancient reptilian scales." This section is fascinating as is all the rest of this not-to-be-missed book for all ages. Koch's first book is a winner!

Biblical reference

"A Fountain of Gardens: Plants and Herbs of the Bible," Wilma Paterson, (\$35), is being released by Overlook Press.

Most of the beautiful illustrations haven't been reproduced in the 20th century and add a "specialness" to this book.

We learn about the lore and legends of the plants and what Culpepper and Girard had to say about them. Quotes from the Bible are explained; old and modern recipes are given. An exceptional book on the subject.

Special days

Two lovely calendars come from Starwood Publishing. "A Guide to Butterflies" (\$10.95) helps with identification, gives facts and lore, and describes the places they will most likely be seen.

Each month of an engagement calendar for 1993, "America in Bloom" (\$13.95), is accompanied by an outstanding photo of flowers. It is designed with the spine separating the fill-in areas and the photos so that they can be enjoyed as appointments are kept.

Garden glory

"Creating Small Gardens," Roy Strong (Villard, \$24.95), presents 24 designs and explains how to create them.

Strong advises not to be a slave to the plant choices, but to glean inspiration to make a garden specially yours. Plans are given and results shown, for formal and informal gardens.

"Specialty Gardens," Theodore James Jr. and Harry A. Haralambou, photographer, (Stewart, Tabori and Chang, \$45) takes us on a beautiful journey to gardens devoted to one particular theme: alpine and wall, bulb, dwarf-conifer, rose, topiary, collectors, herb and many more.

More than 90 gardens around the world are illustrated with special photos (closeups are stunning) and descriptive text. All will fascinate, some will surprise and delight with their innovative styles.

Martha Stewart's "Gardening" (Crown, \$50) relates the journey she has taken to create her large garden in Connecticut. Innovative ideas abound with what to do month by month to create the perfect garden. Photographs are artfully presented, as are the many recipes and gift ideas for using the bounty.

An updated Orto book, "All About Herbs" (\$3.95), will introduce the novice to these plants and will be a welcome addition to the library of the seasoned herbalist. Information about growing, cooking and crafts and more is sure to inspire.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave a message by dialing 953-2947 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859.

Art resolutions made

First Night/Birmingham, the third annual festival of the arts that welcomes the new year, has a variety of exhibits and events planned for New Year's Eve around the community.

First Night is presented by the Cultural Council of Birmingham/Bloomfield. For more information, call 540-6689.

This year, First Night commissioned a resolution sculpture with which audiences could interact as they make their resolutions for the new year. The sculpture, "Mother Earth Applauds the Arts," by Robert Dempster of Birmingham, will be displayed New Year's Eve at Shain Park, south of Maple at Bates and Merrill.

The First Night/Birmingham Art Gallery will be in The Commons at Seaholm High School.

First Night admission buttons cost \$7 each. They may be bought before New Year's Eve at Birmingham area Michigan National Bank and Fidelity Bank branches, and Kroger stores in Birmingham, Bloomfield, Farmington Hills and Madison Heights, as well as at sites in Birmingham.

Artist bones up on humor



Life is more than "The Pitts" for Lathrup Village resident Tom Roy. Works by the artist, creator of that nationally syndicated cartoon, are now on display at the Belian Art Center in Troy, and are featured in a new book.

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER

When Tom Roy, creator of the nationally syndicated cartoon "The Pitts," seen weekdays in the Detroit Free Press, puts pencil or brush to work, whimsical dogs and people spring to life, similar to ones found in everyday life.

Although Roy works in many media, humor serves as the main ingredient in all his art. Paintings, pencil drawings, full color prints, hand-painted sweat shirts and graphics by Roy continue on exhibition through Dec. 31 at the Belian Art Center, 5980 Rochester Road at Square Lake Road in Troy.

"These are really thinly disguised people we know," Roy said at the opening of the exhibit.

Blue horses against a blue sky stir imaginations in the acrylic triptych focusing on cartoonlike chess pieces in "The Players." Heroes and a black dragon with yellow flames roaring from its mouth pop out at the viewer in animation cells. No serious subjects here, only lions, rabbits, bears and whimsical gingerbread neighborhoods.

"We had shown him at a group show. We like his work. It's fun," said Zabel Bellan, gallery co-owner with her husband, Dr. Garabed Belian.

Catcher in wry

Dogs definitely stand as Roy's strong suit, however, in his recently published book available at the gallery, "A Scot Gallery Eccentric: Wry Tales of a Little-Known Realm." Four limited-edition (500) prints from the book of humor: Smooth Reggie, Mule, Soft Jack and Otis the Dependent showcase Roy's dry, on-target wit in this 23-piece show.

"I've been drawing cartoons a long time. In the late '70s, I began drawing them in sketch books. It freed up my mind. It wasn't something I had to do," Roy said.

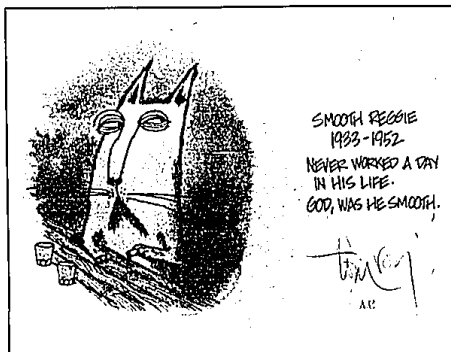
Gainfully employed as an electronic graphic artist/animator in the video division of Producers Color Services in Southfield, Roy draws and paints only for pleasure.

"If I have a big message, I tighten up. In the last year and a half, I've probably filled five or six sketch

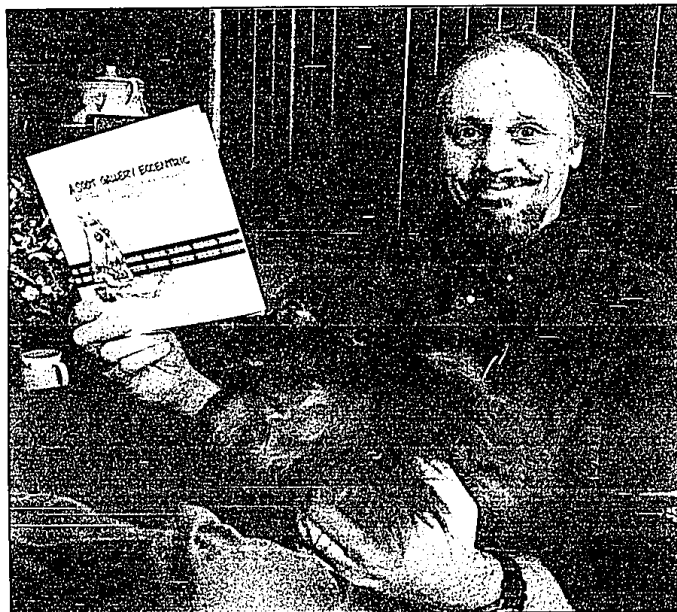
books."

Initially, 80 sketches were chosen, then narrowed to less than half that number, to make A Scot Gallery Eccentric, "printed in shades of brown to give them a little bit of warmth."

See ARTIST, 4D



Character sketch: One of artist Tom Roy's characters is Smooth Reggie, who "never worked a day in his life. God, was he smooth."



STAFF PHOTOS BY JERRY ZOLANSKY

Dog gone: Tom Roy of Lathrup Village, who has two dogs at home, gives human characteristics to canines in his new book, "A Scot Gallery Eccentric." His works are now exhibited at the Belian Art Center in Troy.

Accountants take steps for dance troupe

BY LOUISE OKRUTSKY
STAFF WRITER

Mixing art and finance, once thought to be as effective as combining oil and water, may well be the key to the future success of the Metropolitan Ballet Theatre.

Plans for MBT were unveiled last month by its founders, Bradley Stroud, 34, and Joseph Valentic, 25, two accountants who live in Birmingham. So far, the new venture has been run out of the offices of their Detroit-based firm, Specialized Accounting Systems.

If negotiations with Music Hall prove successful, the company should premiere there next October. They

hope to eventually strike an agreement with Michigan Opera Theatre to perform in the Detroit Opera House when it's completed.

Both men and their families are ballet enthusiasts. Stroud's 10-year-old daughter, Carolyn, dances three roles in this year's "The Nutcracker" at the Fox. Valentic's wife, Julie, is a former dancer.

Both men are heartened by the response to the idea of a world-class professional dance company.

"Every professional ballet that has come to Detroit has met with tremendous welcome," Valentic said.

Their research led them to focus on other areas with economic and politi-

cal problems similar to Detroit's. That led them to the Boston Ballet and its director, Bruce Marks. Marks turned out to be the mentor the two Birmingham men needed. He is part of the MBT advisory board, which is searching for an artistic director.

"From the research in Boston, the thing we identified as a catalyst for success is that there's an equal dedication to artistic mission and the education mission," Valentic said. "It's one of the things that put Boston head and shoulders above the rest."

They hope months of preparation begin to pay off in mid-January when, armed with a budget for 1993-94, they try to persuade corporations to spon-

sor the fledgling troupe. The last few months have been dedicated to winding up for the sales pitch by asking companies what they'd want the MBT to do, both financially and within the community.

Breaking away from the traditional structure of a ballet company, which expects an artistic director to be both an artist and a businessman, Stroud and Valentic want to establish a three-person management team for MBT.

An executive director, Stroud will make business decisions. Valentic, director of operations, deals with per-

See DANCE, 4D

Artboat features various happenings in the suburban area 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.

YULETIDE TREASURE

If you want an early start for next Christmas, stop in Carousel Gallery, 91 W. Long Lake Road in Bloomfield Hills. The gallery is filled with handmade gifts, dolls, Santas and many other decorating accents, including intricate, hand-cut paper Christmas ornaments. Owner Sue Corlett Schultz gathered her holiday inventory from artists ranging from Michigan to Paris. Call 433-0850.

IN THE BOOK

Art work by Birmingham resident Gail Eisner

Art Beat

is in the new book, "Making a Living As An Artist." She also received the 1992 Sara Winston Award at the National Association of Women Artists Exhibition in New York City.

Eisner works in oil that has been painted on treated paper intricately folded to create a bas relief, three-dimensional effect that moves the image out of the flat picture plane.

Eisner currently works in her Royal Oak studio. Her art may be seen at the University of Michigan hospitals in Ann Arbor now to Jan. 10 and at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art in Fort Wayne, Ind. Her paintings will be exhibited Jan. 2-23 at the LRC Gallery of Sinclair College in Dayton, Ohio, and Feb. 10 to March 20 at the Lehigh Museum in Lehigh, N.Y.

HOLIDAY LOOK

A holiday show continues this month at Gallery Birmingham, 390 E. Maple in Birmingham. Featured are landscapes by Phil Bloyer, pastel garden scenes by Barb Grundmann, bright abstract collages by Jean Marie McKnight, figurative bronzes by Dorie Krusz and jewel-tone serigraphs by Rita Asfure. Call 540-8505.

ROYAL SCENE

Gallery Animato, 574 N. Woodward in Birmingham, has obtained the original (1935) architect's blueprint of Disneyland's best known landmark, Sleeping Beauty Castle. The blueprint, titled "Castle, South or Front Elevation," has a scale of 1/4-inch to 1 foot. At bottom right are Disneyland Inc./WED Enterprises Inc. and "Disneyland Received" stamps. The framed size of the blueprint is 29 by 40 inches. Call the gallery at 644-9312.