

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1993

CREATIVE LIVING

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GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

Take time out for gardening books

This is such a busy time of year that once in a while we need to put our feet up and read or study a good book. Following are a few for your consideration.

"Enjoying Roses" (Ortho Books, \$39.95) is a beautiful and beautifully written account of these popular flowers. The history of the rose is fascinating reading and is just the beginning of the abundant information.

Major classes of roses are presented in very clear terms so that the proper rose can be selected for a particular site. Information about planting roses in the ground or containers guides the most novice gardener. Nothing has been omitted — from their care, arranging, displays for judging, propagation and hybridizing, to enjoying them in crafts and recipes and photographic tips.

The encyclopedic section of the "most outstanding roses available commercially in the U.S." is icing on the cake. Get this one!

Great gardens

In "Designing a Garden" (Camden House, \$19.95 paper), author Allen Peterson guides us through the seasons in his one-acre garden in southern Ontario. He explains how the garden is an extension of the home and how and why he combines many kinds of plants for great effect and continuous bloom.

Peterson gives design ideas that can easily be adapted to our own gardens. I like the way he correlates everything and the naturalness of his garden. A wealth of information.

"The Living Garden: The 400-year History of an English Garden," George Orlish (Houghton Mifflin, \$10.95 paper), describes a tract of land first cultivated in 1556: the first garden planned by the homemaker, with herbs.

We become acquainted with and follow the family and the subsequent test owners, and learn about the earth and all the intricacies of plants and animals (domestic and wild) and their relationships to the ecology and each other. Captivating narrative.

"Invitation to the Garden: A Literary and Photographic Celebration," edited by Ferris Cook (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, \$45), contains exquisite photos taken by nine distinguished garden photographers that artfully illustrate the plants.

See FIGLEY, 3D

Tree decor in D.C. has local connection

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

Every time President Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton — as well as hundreds of thousands of visitors — admire two special Christmas trees in Washington, D.C., this year, they are looking in the glow of work by Birmingham residents past and present.

Fran Nicolson of Birmingham and Groves High School graduates Renee Green (now living in the Chicago area) and Ed Risak (now living in Marquette) were called upon to help decorate the national Christmas tree or the White House Christmas tree. It was the first time each of them handled such a task.

Green, a holiday lighting specialist with General Electric in Chicago, designed the lighting for the national Christmas tree. Nicolson and Risak are among the artists who decorated the White House Christmas tree.

Green is GE's technical support person for the North Central United States. She has been with the company for three years. Her predecessor, who had the assignment for 17 years, retired.

"I was very pleasantly surprised," Green said. Work on the tree began in February. When completed, it featured more than 10,000 lights, along with custom ornaments and a fiber optic tree topper that resembles a little universe in cobalt blue and gold.

"I think the topper is fantastic."

Green was present for the official lighting, when she talked with Hillary Rodham Clinton.

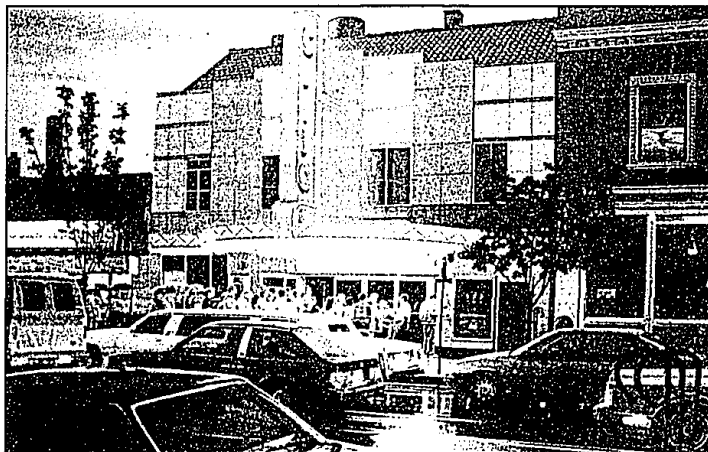
"We were in the Blue Room of the White House. I had talked to her a little bit before (at a previous ceremony for the tree). She said to me, 'We can see your tree out the window.'"

See DECORATION, 3D

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Creative Living next week:

- A visit with former Birmingham resident Jennie Jones, whose photographic exhibit of scenes from Cleveland and Detroit opens at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association next month.
- Mary Klemic's Perspectives column.
- Exhibitions, art gallery event listings.



STAFF PHOTOS BY STEPHEN CANTRELL

'Civic': Details fill this photorealist work of a familiar Farmington Hills scene by Robert Gniewek. Gniewek's paintings are on display through January at the O.K. Harris/David Klein Gallery in Birmingham.

Dark side is bright, folded scenes open up

■ Photorealist paintings on canvas and still lifes on folded paper are displayed at the O.K. Harris/David Klein Gallery in Birmingham.

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

A double feature is now showing at the O.K. Harris/David Klein Gallery in Birmingham: Night and the City, and The Paper Chase.

You won't see the movies of those titles with Richard Widmark, Robert DeNiro or John Houseman at the gallery, 430 N. Woodward. What you will see are works by Michigan artists Robert Gniewek and Gail Eisner.

Gniewek's oil on canvas paintings are urban street scenes at night. Eisner's still life paintings are on paper that is then folded into three dimensions.

Gniewek is one of the artists featured in the book, "Photorealism Since 1980," The Dearborn resident, who attended Wayne State University, has exhibited nationally.

His scenes range in subjects from bustling casinos to small diners. Streets may be full of people and almost radiating heat from glaring lights; or empty and slick with water, glistening like a leather jacket.

The details are so clear that the scenes look familiar even if the viewer has never been there. Faces aren't always distinct, so the viewer could imagine he or she is portrayed among them.

The Civic theater in Farmington Hills is the subject of one work. Crowds under the marquee are bathed in light. Posters outside the theater advertise "Good Fellas." Neon letters are reflected in windows.

See EXHIBIT, 4D



'Violets and Tea': Through folded paper, this painting and others by Gail Eisner present perspective in a different way.

Designer counting on beads

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER

From the time she was a little girl, Tracy Stanton has had a love affair with beads. She collected them wherever she could, treasuring dearly the Czechoslovakian and Italian glass as well as Austrian crystals from the 1930s and 1940s.

Stanton is now incorporating the vintage beads into a hot new jewelry collection for the 1994 fashion season. Necklaces and lariats arrived at Jacobson's in Birmingham, and Laurel Park Place in Livonia one month ago.

Lampworked glass beads bound together with gold tone spirals. Sparkling faux rubies, emeralds and sapphires catch the light and eye descending upon the wearer.

"I try to attract attention with the color. I like to find unusual shapes and color than the eye goes right to them," Stanton said in an interview at her Birmingham home.

"I really think that my pieces are works of art because that's how they're meant to be."

Finding combination

Designs for Stanton's jewelry begin as a giant jigsaw puzzle consisting of hundreds of pieces. She intuitively scores "the right combination," adding a millefiori bead here, eliminating an Austrian crystal there. All the while she bears in mind the thought to create a piece as if she was going to wear it.

"I make what I like and people seem to like what I make. I like to look at pretty things. I try to use the best of everything and the most unusual."

"Just to design one piece can take all day. Thinking about designs is something I do subconsciously all the time. I wake up in the middle of the night thinking about them."

A notepad and pencil by the side of the bed ensures that an idea, sure to be an eye catcher, will not slip away by morning.

For the interview Stanton was dressed in a denim outfit consisting of jeans and a shirt. To accent the outfit she chose a double strand choker of blue beads with interconnecting large silver links.

See JEWELRY, 4D



STEPHEN CANTRELL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Designing woman: Tracy Stanton, a Southfield Lathrup High School graduate, models some of her jewelry designs. Stanton looks for "the right combination" when making her pieces.

Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or fax them by calling 644-1314.

LANSING SHOW

A sculpture exhibit by M. Pamela Stump, who taught sculpture at Cranbrook Kingswood for more than 20 years, will take place Jan. 4 through May 2 at the Helen Gallery of the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame, 213 W. Main in Lansing, six blocks south of the state capitol. Call 617-484-1880.

Among Stump's commissions are the Cranbrook Educational Community, Kingswood School and Village Club in Bloomfield Hills; Providence Hospital in Southfield; the Rochester Hills Library; and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Troy.

Art Beat

VOLUNTEER OF MONTH

Janet Prince of Bloomfield Hills, a longtime volunteer for the Detroit Institute of Arts, was chosen by the Volunteer Committee of the DIA Founders Society as its November Volunteer of Month. Prince has most recently been chairman of gallery service, the DIA's newest and largest of eight volunteer committees. It was formed in December 1991, after state funding cutbacks necessitated the layoff of a number of security guards, along with other staff.

With heavy personnel reductions, the gallery schedule was cut. Gallery service volunteers were sought to be an "eyes and ears" presence in the galleries so they could be opened. Prince was put

in charge of running the gallery service volunteer committee, and a massive recruiting program was conducted. Today, all DIA galleries are open "99 percent of the time," Prince said.

"We've trained over 400 gallery service volunteers, but there's a 'solid core' of about 250, including many couples," she said. "That seems like a lot of people, but we still need more."

"It's a turn-on. The volunteers love being surrounded by great works of art — and studying them leisurely. And they feel a real sense of pride, knowing they're helping to make it possible for the galleries to stay open."

Prince had proven her ability to manage large groups of volunteers. She chaired the 125-member gallery information committee for two years. These aides give DIA visitors a red-carpet treatment when they enter and conduct them through the museum.

Prince has been a DIA volunteer for nine years.