

Contest

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"These commitments do not come without work, hard work. For they can be as fragile as we are strong," Lieberman writes.

Sharon Madden of Birmingham has a circle of friends that includes Pattie Robson, Linda Holtzman and Kathy Boydland. "So now we all remember the circle. And will never forget how it began," Madden writes.

Charisse Dore Niles of Canton writes of the two women she met at Eastern Michigan University in 1978: "A true friend is there when times are great and not so great. The willingness to take time out of a busy schedule to celebrate or be supportive — we have each done this over the years."

Gale Marcoe of Canton writes that she and her three friends have been close since junior high school in Allen Park 32 years ago.

"We have been through marriages, pregnancies, betrayals, parents' deaths, cosmetic surgeries and more, and have always been there for one another."

Pam Gruber of Troy and her friends met in kindergarten.

"We held each other's hands through pregnancies, miscarriages



DAVID APPLEBY

and a diagnosis of MS (multiple sclerosis)," Gruber writes.

"Through it all, we've remained closer than sisters."

One thing we didn't get? Letters from men. Either the guys don't hang in circles, or they don't want to talk about them.

"Circle of Friends," which opened last week at metro Detroit movie theaters, is a story of romance and three best friends — their loyalty, secrets, betrayals,

and most of all, search for true love.

In the fall of 1957, Benny (Minnie Driver) and Eve (Geraldine O'Rawe) eagerly escape the dull confines of Knockgen, their hometown, to attend college in Dublin. There they meet up with Nan (Saffron Burrows), a friend from grade school who has learned her way around the university from her years as a preo-

cious and social high school student.

A Savoy Pictures presentation in association with Rank Film Distributors, "Circle of Friends" is a Price Entertainment/Lantana production. The film is directed by Pat O'Connor and produced by Ariene Sellers, Alex Winitzky and Frank Price. The screenplay is written by Andrew Davies and is based on Binchy's best-selling novel. The film is rated PG-13.

Directing:
Pat O'Connor
nor directs
Savoy Pictures
"Circle of Friends,"
a witty,
charming
and poignant
love story.

Filmmaker hosts comedy benefit

BY BOB BADLER
SPECIAL WRITER

Before Quentin Tarantino hit it big with "Pulp Fiction," he made the cult classic film "Reservoir Dogs." Shot on a shoestring budget, "Reservoir Dogs," showed the movie-making community the immense potential Tarantino possessed, and set the stage for getting the financial backing required to make a major feature like "Pulp Fiction."

Meanwhile, an aspiring filmmaker in Birmingham, Pete LaDuke, has an idea. He's written a script for a 30-minute short film, "Back in Business," that he produced independently with the help of the Detroit Film Coalition and two local movie production pros.

Where's LaDuke getting the money to pull all this off? A significant portion of the funding, he hopes, will come from a comedy benefit he's holding at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle, 209 E. Fourth St., Royal Oak, 8 p.m. Mon., May 8. Tickets are \$20 and proceeds will go to benefit LaDuke's film project. Call (810) 544-6471 for tickets.

Did I forget to mention that LaDuke is also a local stand-up of some note?

"We've tried to put together several different headlines," LaDuke said of the benefit. "Jeff Brannan and Dan Ballard are both national headlines. Elliot Brannan and I are local guys. For \$20, you'll get a great show, and you'll have the chance to support local filmmakers. If we sell out the Castle, we can make enough money to get into post-production."

LaDuke has a simple, yet realistic, goal for "Back in Business." He wants to use it as a stepping stone to bigger and better things.

"My plan with this project is to shoot a low-budget 16mm film to be shown at film festivals throughout the country," LaDuke said. "Hopefully, it can win some accolades, some recognition. And then, I would like to begin shooting a feature film, a 35mm project, by this time next year."

Like Tarantino, LaDuke likes to think big and somewhat demented too. For proof of that, all you need to do is listen to the plot of "Back in Business," which LaDuke claims is quite a departure from his stand-up work.

"Back in Business" is a dark comedy," LaDuke explained. "Two brothers are morticians. Unfortunately, no one is dying, so they have to expedite matters a bit. The two brothers are English, so I had a lot of fun writing very witty dialogue. It's a script that could pass as a play. And even though it's such a taboo subject, I think it's handled delicately. It should have a wide audience. If this film makes some waves in the independent film market, perhaps it could impress someone interested in making it into a full-length feature. It's really an angle that no one has done."

At Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle — Mark Britten, seen on "An Evening at the Improv," and "Comedy Central," through April 16. Call (810) 542-9900 for reservations.

Pelasso's Joey's Comedy Club — Leo Dufour, seen on "Comedy on the Road," and "The Comedy Channel," with Tim Lilley, and Jim Hamm, April 13-15. Call (313) 544-6885 for reservations.

Second City — New revue titled "It's About Home" opens Thurs., April 20. Call (313) 965-2222 for ticket information.

The Hair's the Thing — Carrot Topp's one of the hottest acts in comedy today, and he's coming to the State Theatre on April 27. Some may find his prop-heavy material hilarious — others may find it derivative. Tickets are available at all Ticketmaster outlets or charge (810) 645-6666.

Very Impressive Mr. Coter — How many different Sweathog jokes can this writer come up with to plug Wayne Coter's latest appearance in the area? Sure, he's no Gabe Kaplan, but this former host of Fox's "Comic Strip Live" is still quite a funny fellow in his own right. Catch him at

Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, Ann Arbor, April 27-29. Call (313) 998-9080 for reservations. Ken Brown appears April 13-15, Tim Cavanagh, April 20-22.

If your club or event is not listed, fax information to: Keely Wygonik, Let's Go! editor, (313) 591-7279.

Marquee

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This moving drama by William Gibson, directed by Gail Susan Mack, unravels in mid 19th century America. It portrays the true story of Annie Sullivan and her struggle to communicate with the blind, deaf, Helen Keller.

Farmington Players is busy rehearsing for "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," which opens 8 p.m. Friday, April 28 and continues weekends to May 20 at the playhouse, 12332 W. 12 Mile Road, between Farmington Road and Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. Tickets are \$10, call (810) 563-2955 for curtain times and reservations.

Congratulations to Oakland Community College Culinary Arts students who made an impressive showing at the April 3 Michigan Culinary Art Salon, taking home a total of 33 awards. OCC students collected 11 gold, four silver, seven bronze and seven honorable mentions, as well as the show's four top awards — the "Auge," for best overall college entry, "Best Pastry Award," and two Judges Awards for Cold Buffet Platter.

Maurice Hodson of Farmington Hills received one of the Judges Awards for Cold Platter. Local students receiving honorable mentions included Myles Anton, Barbara Arch-

er, and Neil Diebold of Farmington Hills.

David Goudie of Redford recently participated in the Adrian College Music Tour to Windsor, Detroit and Adrian in mid-March. Goudie plays trumpet for the wind ensemble and brass quintet.

Parker Plague of Canton is appearing in "Hang the Moon," at the Purple Rose Theatre's Company Garage Theatre, 137 Park St., Chelsea, through May 21. The new drama by Suzanne Burr centers around Eddie Cooper, a middle-aged veteran who has been unable to leave the memories of Vietnam behind. Troubled by the choices he had to make during his

military service, Eddie refuses to face the realities he encounters in civilian life. The love, understanding and care of his family and friends help him overcome his guilt-ridden past and begin a new life.

Call (313) 475-7902 for ticket reservations and show times. Tickets range from \$10 to \$25. The box office is open noon to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, Saturdays and Sundays of performances, one hour prior to curtain.

Keely Wygonik is editor of the Taste and Let's Go! sections of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. She welcomes your calls and comments, 953-2105, fax 591-7279, or write: Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc. 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

Concert showcases Alma Smith Quintet

Concerts-in-the Garden series will feature The Alma Smith Quintet, 8:30 p.m. Sun., April 23 at the Radisson Hotel in Southfield. The afternoon concert, hosted by the Cultural Arts Division of Southfield Parks and Recreation, features a high tea at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$7.50 or \$4 for concert and coffee. Call (810) 354-4717.

Smith is not only a great lady of the keyboards, but a vocalist and composer as well. She has had an active career spanning over 50 years playing, singing, composing and generally delighting audiences with her enthusiasm and talent.

She will be performing with Herbie Williams on trumpet and flugelhorn, Drew Evans on drums, Will Austin on bass, and Vincent York on saxophone.

The Alma Smith Quintet will be performing a vast repertoire including jazz standards from Duke Ellington, Cole Porter, Dizzie Gillespie and Count Basie, and original compositions.

Here are some other upcoming cultural events in Southfield you won't want to miss.

Derby the Clown will be per-

PREVIEW

forming 1:30 p.m. Sat., April 22 in Room 115 of the Southfield Parks and Recreation Building, 20000 Evergreen. Tickets are \$3.25 per person, group rates available. Call (810) 354-4717.

Working with children of all ages is Derby's specialty. He studied clowning at Michigan State University, Lansing Community College and various workshops and conventions. Balloon sculptures, juggling, face painting, comedy magic and other mischief will bring a happy glimpse of simpler times.

The eighth annual International Folk Dance Festival, co-sponsored by the City of Southfield and International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit, returns to the Southfield Civic Center, 3:30-7 p.m. Sunday, April 23.



Guest artist:
Southfield's
Concerts-in-the
Garden
series will
feature Alma
Smith and
The Alma
Smith Quintet
on April
23 at the
Radisson
Hotel.

The event features 10 international dance groups in continuous performance and an ethnic buffet sponsored by area restaurants. Tickets are \$13.50 per person in advance, \$15 at the door. Call (810) 871-8600.

Mail-in service is available through April 15: Send checks payable to the City of Southfield to City of Southfield Community Relations Dept., 26000 Evergreen Road, P.O. Box 2055, Southfield, MI 48037-2055.

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(313) 965-2222

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