



BEA SMITH

Farmington club is more than a garden party

A few days ago, I was asked why I joined the Farmington Garden Club. An interesting question, and something to really think about.

Naturally, there had to be a keen interest and love of gardening, which began while a child helping my mother spray her beautiful roses, weeding, watching the flowers of each season as they matured and blossomed, starting in early spring with the daffodils, tulips, hyacinths, prim roses and on into summer enjoying roses, delphinium, pinks, peonies, sweet peas, yes, even hollyhocks growing in back of the garage. Remember when we would make little old fashioned ladies out of hollyhock blossoms?

Then came the victory gardens (do I show my age?) and my husband and I grew tomatoes, corn, beets, lettuce, radishes, onions and on and on, even canning some of the tomatoes and beets. And that started an interest in horticulture and its many facets. Gardening is a hobby in which you are constantly learning. It is really fascinating. And wherever you go, you make more friends, exchange plants, and get ideas.

After 24 years in education, I retired and was asked to join the Farmington Garden Club. What a thrill! All the members were so friendly. The

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Renaissance man invokes spirituality

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER

Looking at a painting by Howard Weingarden is like rediscovering Renaissance art, with a bow to contemporary life.

Weingarden, honored Sunday as Farmington Artist in Residence for 1996, is a painter and portrait artist whose style is reminiscent of the Old Masters.

Ten of Weingarden's works are on exhibit now through Sunday in the Farmington Hills Activities Center, 28400 11 Mile Road, Suite 4, as part of a weeklong Festival of the Arts.

Weingarden says his teachers at the Detroit Center for Creative Studies in the late '60s were delighted he wanted to study the Old Masters, as opposed to the Abstract Expressionists so popular during that era. He later studied at Wayne State University, earning a bachelor of fine arts degree in 1976. His prints and paintings have been exhibited in various galleries across the U.S. as well as Canada and the former Yugoslavia.

In "Child and the Fairies," a little girl playing outside on an autumn day is slightly startled by small fairies dancing about. Thick brush strokes in warm colors suggest fallen leaves at her feet. In "Flora," with subtle color, he recreates the Greco-Roman Goddess of Nature. Flowers, either hand-held by his subjects or somewhere on the canvases, are prominent in many of Weingarden's paintings, evoking the Romanticism of an earlier age.

Through his paintings, Weingarden invokes a spiritual quality. "But one free of religious dogma," he says. "The Surrealists moved in that direction, but they never reached the spiritual mind."

"I'm influenced by many artists — Rembrandt, Raphael, even the pre-Raphaelite artists like Delacroix," he said. "My favorite 20th Century artist is Edward Hopper. He was able to extract an essence from the world



On the menu: Howard Weingarden poses with his wife, Helen, in front of a painting of her father, looking at a menu at Dennison's in Farmington Hills. For more photos of the Artist-in-Resident Tribute Sunday see Page 14A.

around him. That is where his strength lies."

Weingarden is a Renaissance man, dividing his time between painting, producing pen and ink drawings, reading books on the metaphysical, and even writing short works of fiction. He likes poetry and feels an affinity with Khalil Gibran.

"An artist should have broad interests, or else what type of substance will the work have?" he asks.

"I have cycles of productivity," he

said. "I work concepts out mentally and they manifest as entire series of paintings. Sometimes I know what I want and sometimes I improvise. But the finished product is always different from the plan."

"I disagree that an artist should find one style and stick to it. I strongly believe in keeping the mind of a beginner — always open to something new."

Two other prominent Farmington area artists were honored Sunday

with Service to the Arts awards. They are Betty J. Walker and Leo S. Peel.

Walker was feted for her work on behalf of the Farmington Musical, of which she has been a member for over 30 years. She has worked over the years to raise funds for music scholarships and has contributed her time and talent through a music program in the schools, local hospitals and nursing homes.

Peel was honored for writing two histories of Farmington. He has also taught young writers.

DON'T SETTLE FOR LESS



Photo by Rick Smith

Peachwood Inn, an older adult health care center, has just had its annual Michigan State survey. Peachwood received a perfect score. There were no citations for any infractions of state regulations. The survey team investigated not only the medical and social services Peachwood provides but also the environment in which our residents live.

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