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topographer for community and local newspapers in the mid 1970s, Solomon has risen in the free-lance ranks to become a well-known celebrity photographer.

Her work has appeared in *Time*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *The New York Times* and numerous regional publications. She's also a regular contributor to ABC's "Good Morning America," and a spokesperson for Kodak, promoting photography as a tool of expression for young children.

"I like to make people feel comfortable," she said, tossing her long-brown hair over her shoulder.

"It's just me and my camera, and I try to find the most natural light that complements them. Once you start complicating things, you get further from revealing (the subject's) natural expressions."

Her choice of adjectives like "cool," "awesome" and "killer" along with her sweeping hair gives her a youthful exuberance. While the date of birth of her for-

mer classmate at Birmingham Seaholm, comedian Tim Allen, is known, she's not willing to publicly acknowledge her age.

Solomon's celebrity subjects also share an apologeticness. On her crowded office wall, she's arranged a lineup of America's celebrated aristocracy including Jack Nicholson, Jimmy Stewart, Johnny Carson, Elizabeth Taylor, Candice Bergen and Paul Newman.

She is still giddy about having taken photos of Robert Redford, and doesn't know if she'll "keep it together" in the presence of Bert Bacharach.

A self-described natural-light photographer, Solomon travels just about anywhere to capture her subjects in a "meaningful environment."

She may travel to Hollywood to photograph glamorous movie stars at the Oscars, or to Francis Ford Coppola's vineyards in northern California. Or to the streets of Bloomfield Hills to document the route of a 39-year postal delivery veteran on his

last day of work. To capture Wyeth's inner revelations, Solomon traveled to Cushing, Maine, the site of Wyeth's former studio, and the place where he painted his indelible 1948 work, "Christina's World."

Make room on the wall

The idea to photograph Wyeth came from an unlikely news source, but familiar confidante, her husband, Barry Solomon, a local attorney. He noticed in a *U.S. News & World Report* brief that Wyeth's landmark birthday was coming up. Shortly after, she contacted assignment editors

at ABC. When Solomon received approval, she was on the next three planes that got her as close as a three-hour drive to Cushing. The day before the photo session with Wyeth, Solomon arrived at the old farmhouse.

The next morning she arrived two hours before the scheduled early morning shoot to study how the natural light filtered through the house.

It's not all spontaneity, she said. "I do my homework so it looks natural."

When the tall and weathered-skinned Wyeth showed up, he had a few ideas about Solomon's

photographic composition. "He knew exactly what would look good," said Solomon. "If Andrew Wyeth wanted to tell me what he thought would work, I was willing to try it."

At one point, Wyeth posed in front of a mirror in the identical manner of his 1940s self-portrait. "He told me that a portrait doesn't have to include a person. I never thought about it like that." It was a moment of insight into Wyeth's style of implied gesture, which distinguishes his works.

Whereas a crew from "CBS Sunday Morning" took nearly 10 hours to film Wyeth for their

July 13 show, Solomon handled her assignment in an hour-and-a-half.

Apparently, it didn't take her long to reveal the heart of one of America's most compelling artists. In her photographs, Solomon shows how the struggle for artistic honesty has etched deep lines in Wyeth's tranquil countenance.

"There's a tremendous interest in famous people," she said. "Certain personalities reflect our times. Andrew Wyeth is one of them."

Move over Liz. Watch it Jack. It's time to make room on the wall for Andy.

Conversations from page C1

will initiate a play development workshop designed after theatrical workshops held at New York's renowned - but now closed - Circle Rep Theatre.

"I don't think anyone is doing what we're doing" said Radcliff. "In the local community, there's no place for playwrights to develop."

Unlike most other theater companies concerned with attracting audiences, Heartland takes a long-term approach. Radcliff calls it "process-oriented" theater. That doesn't quite resonate with the excitement of a live performance. But it makes possible the refinement of live theater.

She concedes that audiences

would rather be entertained than realize the artistic evolution of a play.

"We don't serve any particular audience," she said. "We set out to nurture theaterists."

Nurturing artists, who, in turn, foster deeper meaning of our shared cultural experience. "Theatre is needed today more than ever. It's the only live art form where what happens on stage is not what will be the same the next."

For Radcliff, cultivating theater as a vibrant form isn't simply a task. It's a calling. And fortunately, when it comes to the arts, she's not alone.

Radcliff along with other likely nominees are on the frontline in

the fight for self-expression. They confront those who favor a homogeneous culture of feel-good escapist entertainment.

And they're the ones who stand up in defiance when the politicians talk about eliminating arts funding.

By promoting the arts, these ambassadors of tolerance make a positive difference in our communities.

Name your nominee

Birmingham and Bloomfield residents have until Thursday to nominate their choice for the second annual Cultural Arts Award.

It may sound trite, but the cul-

tural arts award isn't about winners and losers. It's about community prepared to elevate the role of theater.

Art is indeed a means to heal. And to those ambassadors of the arts who see hope in despairing creativity in madness, it's time to say, "Thank you."

For more information on Heartland Theatre Co., call (248) 433-1233.

Do you have stories about an arts group, artist or arts-related issues? Please contact Frank Provenzano, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009, (248) 901-2557.

Former Bloomfield Hills resident's film premiers

Film director Michael Sandoval, a former resident of Bloomfield Hills, will return to the area this Sunday, July 27 for the premier of his short film, "Solace."

The film will be shown at 1:30 at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor.

"Solace" examines the struggles of a Vietnamese immigrant in Michigan. To cope with the loss of a beloved who passed away in a Thai refugee camp, the protagonist, Hoang, retreats

to a rural farm where he lives with an ornery old man.

Shortly after Hoang settles in, a woman also moves onto the farm. She soon asks questions about Hoang's past life. Eventually, Hoang confronts the pain of resettlement and the death of the woman he loved.

Sandoval wrote the film script in 1994 during his days as a graduate student in the University of Michigan's Creative Writing program. "It's a dark movie,"

he said. "But it also has a lot of hope."

The film was shot in an abandoned barn house on Chelsea Lake. "It was winter when we began to shoot, early spring when we ended," he said. "The melting snow and ice served as a metaphor for how the main character moves from emotional limbo to addressing the death of the love of his life."

Sandoval, a Cranbrook grad, has been nominated for a Direc-

tor's Guild of America award for Asian-American film making.

"Solace" will be shown with two other short films: "Carnival," a four-minute surreal narrative about a man who loses his daughter in an abandoned amusement park; and "The Good Son," a documentary about the tenuous relationship between a Filipino American stickfighter and his evangelical preacher father.

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