Conversations from page DI

bricks and mortar, the lifeline of

bricks and mortar, the lifeline of the organization runs through the memories of those who stood up and took responsibility to fos-ter the arts in the area. There were many, no doubt. But for the Halls, Thom and Averill stand tall. Then again, there comes a time for everyone to stand up, said Cap.

Standing up

At one time, the responsibility of the BBAA leadership fell on Cap. He was one of the associa-

tion's first presidents in the late

tion's first pressiones at the me-1960s. A retired mechanical engineer at Ethyl Research Laboratories in Ferndale, Cap and he learned about the BBAA by "osmosis," meaning he heard about the association through Carolyn's participation as an avid volun-teer and exhibition committee

teer and exhibition committee member.
In 1957, Cap and Carolyn already had two of their three children, and she was eager to get involved in the arts.

Curolyn, who had graduated from Cranbrook in 1952, isn't someone who just took up art. She's an artist in the truest sense, always looking to create. Whether it's her large-scale soft sculptures, a quilt, a fiber composition or a special art assignment for one of her five-grand-children.

The crucial phase for the BBAA, she said, was when Ken Gross assumed the directorship; the association expanded staff and

received corporate and federal

received corporate and federal grants.
Word was spreading. Throughout the area, people interested in taking an art class outside the formal academic setting were turning to the BBAA.
During a transitional time after Gross' tenure, the Halls claim Susic Citrin stepped up. She encouraged volunteers, raised funds, got the stalled expansion program underway and found the new director, Janet Torno.

Carolyn, who has written sev-

Carolyn, who has written several books on fiber arts, has an appropriate title for the 40-year BBAA history. She calls it, "A Place to Psint."
"This will sound like a cliche, but I believe it: Without art the soul shrivels, "the said." If you have a child who can't read, you still can teach him to sing.

After 40 years, the Halls look fondly at the BBAA. They've found a place in their own book of momories to put in perspective their years of volunteer work.

"It was a place where we all came together," said Cap. "You'd lean on a friend to be on a committee. Yeah, no doubt about it, we met our best friends there."

Editor's note: Look for the special section commemorating the BBAA's 40th anniversary in

the BBAA's 40in annuersary in todays paper.
Frank Provenzano is an arts reporter for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. He can be reached at (248) 901-2687, or send information to 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009.

Our Town from page D1

some people feel intimidated

some people feel intimidated stepping into a gallery, said Leslie Drolet, director of community relations at the Community House.

About one-quarter of yearly fund-raising at The Community thouse is raised through the annual art exhibit. Last year, nearly 30 percent of the art work was sold. While a modest commission is assessed, most of the projected \$100,000 revenue comes from individual and corpoomes from individual and corpo rate donations.

"We're all artists"

"We're all artists"

With a long list of impressive gallery exhibits to her credit, artist Thayer is in the class of the area's most thoughtful and talented painters. Yet when it came time to show her work alongside artists with much less experience and skill, she didn't laristate to submit her painterly compositions to Our Town.

Modesty aside, to have an artist such as Thayer involved is not typical for even a juried large-scale exhibit. "We're all artists," said Thayer of Lathrup Village. The exhibit reflects what's going on artistically in the community.

But make no mistake about it. Our Town is not where you'll find depictions of urban stress, angst, political statements or a view from beyond the envelop.

There are few, if any, cutting-edge or experimental works. The focus, quite clearly, is on display-

ing an array of woll-crafted works that largely fall in the "derivatively decorative" rather than "strikingly original" catego-ry. That's not a criticism of the quality, but a passing observa-tion of what may appeal to most attenders.

Our Town revisited

Our Town revisited
When Gerak assumed the
chair of the annual exhibit three
years ago, many artists scoffed
at the "place-specific" theme of
Our Town. To many, the reference to Thornton Wilder's idyllic
Everytown, USA, in his 1938
play, "Our Town," was schmaltzy
at best, and at worst, provincial
and exclusionary.

On the contrary, the 12-year record of the exhibit has proven to be consistently inclusionary and diverse. In addition to main-stream appeal, many artists find Our Town's approach refreshing-ly "non clitist."

Not only does talent comes in all shapes, colors, and sizes, there's enough evidence of familial relations among the artists that the original intent of Oue. Town may need to be revisited.

For instance, among the participating artists are a handful of relatives: mother and son; mother-in-law; husband and daughter-in-law; husband and wife; and, father and son, to name just a father and son, to name just a few.

■ When her son, Jason, was a child, Eileen Monteiro of Bloomfield Hills bought him sketch pads, rather than coloring books.

"I thought it'd give him an opportunity to express himself, not just to try to stay in the lines," said Monteiro, whose watercolor of eggplants, "Snuggling," is included in the Our Town Exhibit.

Obviously, Jason, currently a senior at Detroit Country Day, has learned to express himself. His colored-marker drawing in the student Our Town exhibit is just one of many of his compositions.

■ Carole Hadley of Rochester

has been in the exhibit for the last 10 years. She sent her daughter-in-law Joy Bender Hadley, a Marquette resident formerly of Birmingham, an application entry form to the show.

show.

Eight years ago, they had a
two-person exhibit at The Community House. Carole composes
vivid watercolors of her
Rochester home garden and the
family farm in the Upper Peninsula. Meanwhile, Joy's entry into
the show is on acrylic, "Flying the show is an acrylic, "Flying High In A Marquette Winter Sky."

■ Gail and Robert Piepenburg of Farmington Hills symbolize the promise of Our Town. This year's show is Gail's first, while

and design at Oakland Community College, has worked in the collections of the Smithsonian and Detroit Institute of Arts.
Gail is on a leave of absence from her art teaching position at Power Middle School in Farmington. "These are not Sunday artists in the oxhibit," she said. "For all of us, art is an essential part of our lives."

The works of Peter Crow Gilleran and his father, Peter J. Gilleran and Birmingham may not resemble each other in style, but their passion for art is similar in substance.

The elder Gilleran is a former first-prize winner in the Our Town exhibit who works in his studio, while his son can be seen around his Birmingham neigh-

berhood behind his cosel painting watercolors on location.

Perhaps those who criticized the hokey notion of the Our Town theme diefar know about the third act of Wilder's play. At the dramatic pinnacle, Wilder's characters reveal that the basis of oternal hormony may not be too different than the principles that foster the spirit of community.

Our Town oxhibit may have stretched a metaphor in coming up with its title, but what better mus for an art show with a diverse range of artists whose works help define the unique features of living in this region. What's in a name? Just look at the art and figure it out for yourself.

Publish from pageD1

Each year, nearly 10,000 books are self-published. Most of the books are nonfiction with an increasing number of self-help, travel, parenting, and gayles-bian titles in recent years. Ironically, in the Information Age as more books are published, Jenkins contends that there's actually a narrower range of topics being published by the major houses.

Essentially, in the last 10 years, subject niches have been created in the market while self-publishing has become more

affordable, said Jenkins, whose firm, Jenkins Group Inc., has its own small publishing company and produces a newsletter reporting on trends in the small press industry.

Yet marketplace realities are ever-present.

Yet marketplace realities are ever-present.
Retail book stores may be a good place to buy books, but they're not a place to self your self-published book, said Jenkins, who recommends self-publishers consider a list of book distributors when figuring total

publishing costs.
"With an oligopoly among book sellers, they buy from big houses

with the understanding they can return unpurchased books," said Jenkins.

return unpurchased books," said Jenkins.

They can afford to offer a big ger selection and lower prices to consumers. But the understanding is that they'll handle the books from big publishers, not small presses or self-publishers.

To compete smartly in a publishing jungle of gianta, denkins advises self-publishers in four areas: avoid the "me, too," a.k.a. "they published a book so can I's spend time identifying the market of potential readers; realize most people are attracted to a book based on cover design; and,

seek publicity.

"Although most people judge a book by its cover, ultimately abook's content is what matters," said Jeakins.
For writers who dream of a seven-figure contract with a major publisher, keep in mind that Tom Grace of Ann Arbor self-published his book, "Spyder's Web." Recently, Grace singed a three-book contract with Warmer Books for nearly \$1 million.

with Warner Books for nearly \$1 million.

"The big publishers still look for good writing," said Jenkins.
"It's still pretty difficult to discover good writers.



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