

FINE ARTS

Local businessman serves on NEA committee

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
STAFF WRITER

Amid a tumultuous debate two years ago about federal funding to the National Endowment for the Arts, actor-turned-chair of the controversial agency Jane Alexander made a speech before the Economic Club of Detroit. William Halling of Bloomfield Hills remembers that Alexander made a compelling case before the legions of supply siders.

Apparently, Halling, president of the Economic Club and a lifelong Republican, made an equally impressive impression on Alexander, who hasn't quite engendered the affection of House and Senate conservatives during her recently completed four-year term.

When time came 18 months ago to assemble a steering com-

HOMETOWN CANVAS

mittee for a comprehensive report examining the pressing needs of nonprofits, Alexander returned to Detroit. She selected Halling as one of 48 people to oversee the organization, compilation and drafting of "American Canvas."

Since the report was published three weeks ago, it's been a catalyst in a national debate about the arts. Basically, the 193-page document examines the reasons for the growing anxiety about the lack of an infrastructure to support fledgling and established artists and arts groups into the next century. The purpose of the report, according to the NEA, is to both examine the condition of nonprofit arts while presenting an ambitious agenda

to preserve the American cultural legacy.

The report considers a range of issues, including the impact of the reduction of public funding, cutbacks in public arts education programs, and the "elitist" attitudes of some artists and cultural institutions.

During the 12-month research phase, Halling attended many public forums around the country to listen to the concerns of artists, art advocates and business people. The discussions made a deep impression about how the arts play a vital role in building culture and a sense of community.

"If we're going to draw business and top executives to this area, we have to make Detroit more attractive and the arts are a part of that," said Halling.

Today, the self-described

"businessman with a limited art background" is an arts advocate who realizes the need for innovative affiliations among business and arts groups.

"Our effort was to look at partnerships and collaborations that showed how the arts fit into our daily lives," said Halling.

"There was a sense that we were working on something historic, a document that would make a call to action so if the NEA ever was eliminated, there'd at least be legacy on what could be done to keep the arts alive."

In early October, Alexander resigned from chair of the NEA. In the last budget appropriation, the NEA received \$28 million, a decrease of two-thirds from its early 1990s budget of \$148 million.

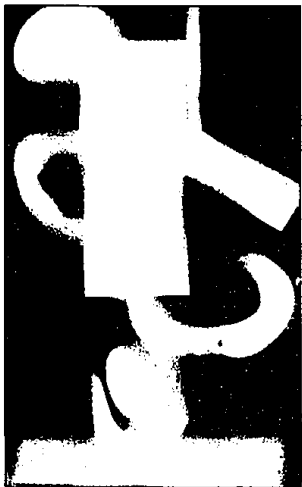


Arts advocate: William Halling of Bloomfield Hills served on the NEA's steering committee to oversee the compilation of the report, "American Canvas." Halling is president of the Economic Club of Detroit.

ART BEAT

Spark of light:

"David Smith: Sprays and Drawings," Hill Gallery through Nov. 29. 407 W. Brown Street, Birmingham; (248) 540-9288.



Send items for consideration in Art Beat to Frank Provenzano, arts reporter, Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers, Inc., 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, or fax (248) 644-1314.

FARMINGTON ARTISTS CLUB FALL EXHIBIT

The fall exhibit of the Farmington Artists Club will be held Thursday-Sunday, Nov. 6-9 at the historic Spicer House in Heritage Park, Farmington Hills. Hours: 3-9 p.m. Thursday; 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday & Saturday; and noon-6 p.m. Sunday. Heritage Park is located at 24915 Farmington Road, between 10 and 11 Mile Roads.

The exhibit consists of four sections: a juried show, a non-juried display, works by the Farmington Senior Painters Group, and an assortment of unframed art works. Media include oil, watercolor, acrylic, gouache, pastel and printmaking.

Award-winners include: first place to Lillian Langerman of Southfield for mixed-media, "The Morning Light"; second place to Regina J. Dunne of Livonia for her pastel, "The Morning After"; third place to Lorelei Christy of

Farmington Hills for her colored pencil work, "Oh yes I Can!"; and, fourth place to Jane McKenna of West Bloomfield for "Rushing Water."

Honorable mention went to Sook-Kyung Hong and Beverly Schroll of Farmington Hills; Alice Nichols of Farmington; Mandy Hissano of Commerce; Gail Thomas of Northville Township; Regina Engelhardt of Detroit; Suzanne Bauman of Bloomfield Hills; and Jim Patterson of West Bloomfield.

FAC has more than 150 members who live throughout metro Detroit. They meet the second Wednesday of each month, September to May (except December). Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the lower level of the Farmington Hills Library, 32737 W. 12 Mile Road, between Farmington and Orchard Lake roads.

RECITAL NOTES

Metropolitan Detroit Musicians League will present its eighth annual "Adult Recital" 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 9 at Hammell's Steinway Hall, 156230.

Pianists scheduled to perform include Myrle Hughes, Rick Gostenick, Anne Decker, Dr.

Kenneth Tucker, Deborah Tucker, Alice Ricci and Susan Feigen-

son. Many local piano students might know the teachers of these pianists. They include Glenn LeClair, Toma Schwartz, Arvi Sinka, Betty Stasson and Ruth Berczyk. The public is invited to attend. Admission is free. (248) 624-1334.

FACE TO FACE

The Pontiac-Oakland Symphony Orchestra, under the leadership of Music Director and Principal Conductor Gregory Cunningham will perform their second concert of the year on Sunday, Nov. 9 at Oakland University's Varner Recital Hall.

The program, "Face to Face with the Orchestra," will feature the Reverend Dr. Robert Bailey of Trinity Baptist Church in Pontiac. Rev. Bailey will narrate "Young Persons Guide to the Orchestra." He will also join the orchestra to conclude the concert with Aaron Copland's "Lincoln Portrait."

The program also includes selections from Bizet's "Carmen," and Handel's "Water Music Suite."

Before the concert, the symphony is hosting a Musical Instrument Petting Zoo.

Clarinets, flutes, violins, cellos, drums and other instruments will be available to play, compliments of McCourt Music and Len's String Shop.

Musicians will be at each instrument station to answer questions and offer instruction.

Concert tickets: \$12 adults, \$6 students/seniors. (248) 334-6024.

EPTOMANIA

Volunteer at least three hours a week at the DIA's "Splendors of Egypt" exhibit. Great visitors, serve as a host/hostess in the galleries. Training begins at the start of each shift - 10 a.m. & 12:30 p.m. Wednesday-Friday; 10 a.m. & 1 p.m. Saturday & Sunday. (313) 833-0247.

BBA HOLIDAY SHOW

Bloomfield Birmingham Art Association seeks volunteers to staff 1997 Holiday Sales Show, Dec. 1-13. Volunteer jobs include host, greeter, sales consultant, merchandise restocker, sales coordinator, gift packer, computer sales operator. 1516 S. Cranbrook; (248) 644-0866.

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■ "No Sell Out," by Tony Cokes, Doug Anderson, Kenneth Armstead and Mark Pierson, is over-the-top political poetry of machine-gun images. The biracial collective offers an angry indictment of insipid commercial culture while praising the prophecy of Malcolm X.

■ "Deserts," created by Viola, is a slow-motion surrealist account of falling through the looking glass. With the lush visual strokes of Viola's painterly vision, a simple spilled puddle of water is transformed into an imaginative entry into a visual ocean.

Collectively, these videos tranquilize, mesmerize and provoke. When considered alongside the stillness of the black and white photography, the combined effect is a push/pull feeling, similar to suddenly stepping off a treadmill after a brisk walk.

All in all, that makes "Still and Moving" definitely a stroll worth taking.

Scarab Club Photo Exhibit

In more traditional terms, the 28th Michigan Photography Exhibition presents the visions of photographers from around the state.

The 78-piece show presents plenty of familiar views of the Great Lakes state: the rocks of Little Presque Isle; lighthouses at Copper Harbor and Au Sable; empty rowboats at the water's edge.

There's also the standard Ansel Adams look alike photos and some rather trite images of angles, cobblestone streets and shadow photography.

Nonetheless, the execution of the work across the board represents fine photographic artistry. Besides the artists, credit should also be extended to the jurors Tom Halsted of the Halsted Gallery in Birmingham, Deanna Sperka, CCS photography instructor, and legendary photojournalist and Observer & Eccentric! columnist Monte Nagler.

Several standout entries were submitted by local residents, including "Bejeweled Jungle

Gym" by Sybil Mintz of West Bloomfield, "Visions of Family" by Bruce Beek of Rochester Hills, "Weathered Face" by Salvador of Bloomfield Hills, and "Blue" by Ted St. Clair of Plymouth. Other local photographers who submitted works include Elaine Redmond of Beverly Hills; Michelangelo Fortuna, Ray Manning, Gene Meadows and Charles Norwood of Birmingham; Dan Meuse, and Judith Yanker of Bloomfield Hills; Susan Lightner of Farmington; Alan Lowy of Farmington Hills; Dennis Cottone of Lathrup Village; Janet Kellman of Plymouth; Jeff Lapossy-Gaydos of Rochester; Nancy Stocking of Rochester Hills; Martin Connelley of Southfield; Barbara Abel, Neil Farkas of West Bloomfield.

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considers it a second language and is more comfortable having someone else translating her poems.

"We sit down together and polish the poems," she said. "He gives me the manuscript and we go over it. He reads the poems aloud so I can tell if it's just right."

She praised Codish for his intelligence and sensitivity in handling her poems.

She said Hebrew is a very precise language with many shades and colors not found in English, in which one word can convey multiple meanings.

"In English, you might lose some, but it also gains. English has its own acoustic energy that is not in Hebrew. I like it just as

well," she said.

Covensky will be reading her poems in Hebrew 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 16, at the Oak Park center. Paul Winter will read the English translations.

Marilyn Rowens

A spritely stick figure with curly hair and glasses helps Livonia's Marilyn Rowens put her philosophy of life into perspective.

For 22 years, she has been turning out tiny booklets featuring her delightful stick figures in numerous situations with short captions commenting on life's ups and downs. The most recent self-published booklet is "Finally ... On-Line!"

"I learned from Shakespeare that brevity is the soul of wisdom," she said. "Everytime I expressed something it was with a caption."

She began by turning out her cartoons for the Birmingham Temple newsletter once a month. These eventually led to the first of several booklets, which have been used as fund-raisers for the Institute for Secular Humanist Judaism.

"I've been involved with creative dramas and was creative director at the temple for 20 years," she said. "I've worked with children and philosophy students. I became very involved in expressing philosophy in short captions."

Her dramas included a 16-

year stint with a group WEDO, Women Employed in Dramatic Outreach, that offered a moderate response to feminist ideas beginning in 1976.

She admits the curly-headed figure is her alter ego.

"Whatever the crisis is the stick figure is able to come up with a caption that is healing, soothing and presents the ability to smile through adversity. It's a healing tool," she said.

She calls it cartoon therapy.

Rowens and other area writers will meet with the public 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 9 at the Janice Church Epstein Gallery at the West Bloomfield Center.

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