

St. Hugo hosts post-holiday harp concert

BY RENA FULKA
SPECIAL WRITER

The Gothic, little stone chapel nestled near the gardens and ponds at St. Hugo of the Hills Roman Catholic Church will again set the scene for the Michigan Harp Center's annual Twelfth Night.

"The location is so beautiful. The acoustics are so wonderful," said Kelly Yousoufian of Troy, owner of the Michigan Harp Center at 15 Mile Road and Dequindre in Sterling Heights. "It's the perfect place for a harp concert."

A full house is expected for the post-holiday event, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 10, at the newly renovated chapel at 2215 Opdyke Road. "People are still in a great holiday mood, but they have more time to do something for themselves," said Yousoufian. "This concert is a great way for them to be exposed to the harp."

Headlining the evening is Ben Brown of Portage, a premier player of the Chromatic Cross. Strung Harp. Other performers include Troubadour singer Owain Phylle, the Decker-Ray-Yousoufian Trio on harp, violin and flute, the Sharrs and Jamila Dancers and Pipe Major Vernon Mathews. The Oakland County concert also features a replica of the historical lute harp used in the opera, "Meisenger." Concertgoers are welcome to take an up-front look at the instruments and meet with the performers after the program.

Now in its third year, the winter concert has been dubbed, "Twelfth Night," since the first

one was held at the Bloomfield Hills chapel on the Christian feast of the Epiphany, which is also known as "Twelfth Day." The Jan. 6 observance is a celebration of the manifestation of the divine nature of Jesus Christ as represented by the Magi, the wise men from the East who followed the star to Bethlehem to pay homage to the infant Christ Child.

A pianist since age 5, Yousoufian was introduced to the harp as a high school senior 18 years ago while studying at Michigan's Interlochen Arts Academy, where she completed post-graduate work.

"I've always wanted to play the harp since I was 5, but I never thought I'd have the opportunity," she said.

Since opening Michigan's only harp store five years ago, the Troy native now provides musical opportunities for other budding artists who share her interest in the harp.

In addition to teaching and performing at weddings, corporate parties and concerts, Yousoufian hosts the radio show, "Harp on This," at 9 a.m. every Wednesday on WFOH AM 14.60. "Harp concerts are very rare," added Yousoufian. "This is a way for me to give back to the community."

The Michigan Harp Center's third annual Twelfth Night concert begins at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 10, at St. Hugo of the Hills Chapel, 2215 Opdyke Road, Bloomfield Hills. Doors open at 7 p.m. Admission is \$12. Tickets can be purchased at the door or by calling (810) 268-2850.

BELIEFS Values

Muslims closer to Almighty at Ramadan

BY RENA FULKA
SPECIAL WRITER

With the sighting of the new moon on Dec. 30, Oakland County Muslims joined Islamic constituencies around the world in the nighttime prayer and special recitation from the Koran commencing their month-long Ramadan observance.

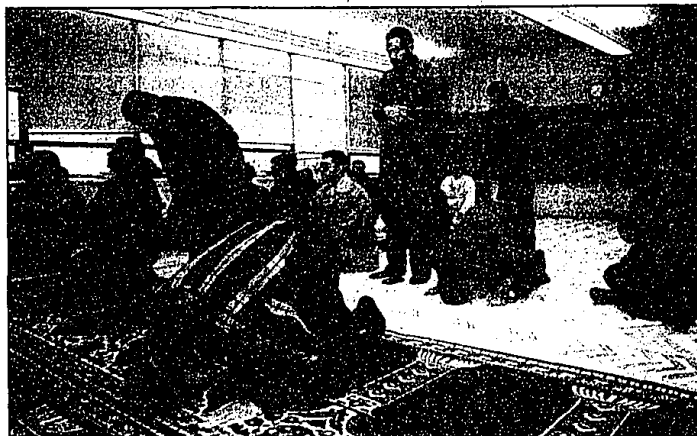
It was during the month of Ramadan that the Koran was revealed to the prophet Mohammed in the year 610 in the Common Era. Followers of Islam believe the Koran, the source of Islamic teachings and laws, is the last revealed word of God.

"Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar. It's the month of fasting," said Imam Syed Salmaan, who has been affiliated with Bloomfield Township's Unity Center since its founding four years ago. "The continuity of the faith was revealed to Moses, Jesus and the prophets before them. So fasting was there from day one because the people of the Book (Bible), the Jews and Christians, observed it."

The month-long observance requires followers to abstain from food, drink, smoking and sexual activity from dusk to dawn each day. Exempt from the fast are children, expectant or nursing mothers, the ill and the elderly.

"The most important aspect is the spiritual closeness that brings the person to God almighty," said Salmaan, chairman of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Michigan. "It's a month of giving, a month of forgiving and a fasting of the mind, speech, ears. We refrain from anything that will displease God almighty."

The feeling of going hungry also plays a role in encouraging the



Unifying experience: Muslims gather at Unity Center in Bloomfield Township for after-noon prayer. Followers of Islam pray five times a day in the mosque or at home throughout the year.

faithful to be more socially responsible to those less fortunate than themselves.

"The spirit of Ramadan is to give more charity and to do more good so that you will gain more rewards from God," said Iqbal Baig of Troy, who coordinates Unity Center's recently launched newsletter.

Ramadan is one of five pillars of Islam that provide a framework for spiritual life. The others are the

declaration of faith, praying five times daily, almsgiving and making pilgrimages to the holy city of Mecca, the birthplace of Mohammed in Saudi Arabia.

During the 30 days of Ramadan, a "hafiz" recites the Koran from memory chapter to chapter at the 35 mosques scattered throughout Metropolitan Detroit, which is home to an estimated 50,000 Muslims.

Arabic is the common language

used in mosques throughout the world.

A General Motors engineer, Baig leads the obligatory prayers at Unity Center and also serves as a substitute hafiz. He was still a child in his native India when he committed the entire Koran to memory.

"I was really young, 6 or 7, when I began. And I was under 14 when I

See RAMADAN, B8

Synagogue to host Joan Lunden as speaker

Joan Lunden, former Good Morning America host and author of books on healthy living, will be guest speaker at the annual CHOICES event scheduled for 11 a.m., Wednesday, March 4, at Adat Shalom Synagogue, 29901 Middlebelt, Farmington Hills.

CHOICES is the annual Allied Jewish Community outreach event and fund-raising luncheon sponsored by the Jewish Federation Women's Campaign and Education Department.

For nearly 20 years, Lunden hosted Good Morning America in addition to many prime-time TV specials called "Behind Closed Doors With

Joan Lunden." Her specials toured the CIA headquarters, Betty Ford Clinic and the Pentagon, among others.

She has hosted programs on parenting and appeared in parenting videos. She is the single mother of three daughters.

Among the honors and awards she has received are: Yeshiva University Spirit of Achievement Award, YWCA Outstanding Woman's Award, New Jersey Division on Civil Rights Award and Baylor University Outstanding Woman of the Year.

The National Mother's Day Committee selected her as the Outstand-

ing Mother of the Year in 1982-1983 for her dedication to motherhood.

She has written three books: "Good Morning I'm Joan Lunden," "Joan Lunden's Healthy Living" and "Joan Lunden's Healthy Cooking."

CHOICES chairwoman is Susie Pappas. Susie Leemaster is associate chairman and Hannah Moss, adviser.

Admission fee is \$25, with a required minimum \$150 pledge to the Women's Campaign. Complimentary baby-sitting will be available for children age 2 1/2 and older by reservation before Feb. 15. Kosher luncheon will be served.

Bingham Farms-based Unique

Restaurant Corp. is a sponsor. Tapper's Diamonds and Fine Jewelry of West Bloomfield and Weight Watchers of Farmington Hills will provide the favors.

Reservation deadline is Feb. 10, unless the program sells out earlier. Checks should be made payable to the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and mailed to CHOICES, P.O. Box 2030 Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-2030.

All reservations must be accompanied by a check.

For information, call Esther Weitzman at (248) 642-4260, ext. 181.

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