

What: "Authors on Stage," a series of dramatic readings from novels, short fiction and nonfiction  
When: 8 p.m. Saturday, May 10  
Where: Village Players Playhouse, Woodward Avenue at Chestnut, Birmingham  
Tickets: \$25, (248) 646-0658  
Proceeds will benefit Village Players and the Cranbrook Writers Guild.

## Angelo's wisdom: Information Age - communicate

In a society that reveres the imagery of youth and the "new," there's always the risk of losing perspective.  
Frank Angelo won't let that happen. "The greatest problem we have is communicating," he said. Just because it's called the Information Age, communicating effectively shouldn't be taken for granted. Angelo shakes his head, clenches his jaw and lets his experience speak for itself.

"My interest has been in the field of human relations," said the Beverly Hills resident and former managing editor of the *Detroit Free Press*. The condition of human relations doesn't even seem to be a topic on the national agenda.

That worries Angelo. Age hasn't given him a license to be so wise. That's come with a fount of compassion and a scrapbook of lessons.

In his 83 years, he's seen what "good communication" can accomplish, and the misery and confusion as a consequence of "bad communication."

He can't be accused of not practicing what he preaches.

### Clear in heart

Angelo is one of the organizers of "Authors on Stage," a series of dramatic readings this Saturday at Village Players in Birmingham.

The program presents actors interpreting a range of literary works, including excerpts from "Angela's Ashes" by Frank McCourt, "Tuesdays with Morrie" by Mitch Albom, and "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil" by John Berendt. The goal of "Authors on Stage" is refreshingly simple: to promote good writing.

And "good writing," as Samuel Johnson preached and Angelo knows first hand, can make a world of difference.

Thirty years ago when the Cranbrook Writers Guild was established, Angelo was directing the news coverage during one of the most turbulent times in Detroit history.

"Good communication" not only mattered, it was the difference between civil strife and revolution in the streets.

Angelo wasn't an editor caught behind a desk. He was on the streets getting a first-hand account. He also served on a range of civic boards.

"I felt profoundly responsible that the paper live up to its responsibility that human relations had to be improved."

He could pick up the phone and talk to Henry Ford or get information from a guy running an all-night bar.

Communication for Angelo has always meant bringing clarity to convoluted situations and precision to language. The kind of lucidness that good writing can bring to life.

For Angelo, it's quite simple. Clear in mind. Sincere in heart.

### From a sage

Unlike some of the more fertile debates about culture and race of 30 years ago, today's national discourse is reactionary and extreme, he believes.

According to Angelo, today's public discussions are more about coming up with provocative sound bites than sensible positions.

The proof is everywhere, from the tabloid's infatuation with celebrities to mainstream news' obsession with "breaking news" to the insipid folkiness of broadcast reporting.

Today, more than ever, "good communication" is required. Frank Angelo won't let that be forgotten.

Invariably, he shakes his head, clenches his jaw and lets his experience speak.

But sometimes, he confesses wondering whether anyone is listening. He'll go on. Just practicing what he preaches.

A wise man never loses perspective.

## HOMETOWN CANVAS MAKING ART MATTER



Betty Ruedisuel



Bill Waterhouse



Janet Torno and Gene Hammonds



Bob Sheridan



Jennifer Tobin



Marsha Chamberlain



Fern Barber

## MARKETING A CAUSE

Advocates make case for lifelong learning through the arts

For art organizations throughout the area, the ubiquitous "m" word keeps coming up - marketing.

Clearly, it's a sign that those who promote the arts aren't practicing elitism but a now-styled salesmanship aimed at mass appeal.

Throughout a recent two-hour public discussion entitled, "Building the Arts from the Grassroots," a panel of eight arts advocates swayed at the "m" word as it fluttered like a caged bee around their heads.

Apparently, they're getting used to talking like brazen entrepreneurs. Actually succeeding at marketing, however, is a game of hit and miss.

Welcome to Arts Advocacy 101, also known as, "How to sustain the arts at the edge of the 21st century."

According to panelists, the formula for success sounds like a 1980s mantra - a blend of populist appeal, capitalist zeal for self-sufficiency and a finely tuned marketing plan.

"Building the Arts from the Grassroots" was part of the ongoing public discussion about culture and community sponsored by the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*.

### Central to life

Other than to keep open their doors, the overriding objective for arts organizations is to convince their respective communities that the arts aren't tangential to life but central to lifelong learning.

The arts, the panelist agreed, provide an "inclusive" way to promote diversity and community pride.

WHAT: "Building the Arts from the Grassroots" was held Saturday, May 2, at the William Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills in conjunction with the Third Annual Farmington Festival of the Arts.

The forum was part of an ongoing discussion initiated by the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers* about the state of the arts in our communities. It is in response to the "American Canvas Report" released by the National Endowment for the Arts in the fall of 1997. This is the third of a series of articles, which addresses this subject. Previous articles were published on Oct. 26, 1997 and Feb. 1, 1998.

WHO: Participants in this forum, which addressed the mission of local art organizations, included representatives from:

- Ann Arbor Art Center - Marsha Chamberlain
- Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center - Janet Torno
- Canton Art Association - Gene Hammonds
- Farmington Arts Commission - Fern Barber
- Livonia Arts Commission - Bob Sheridan
- Paint Creek Center for the Arts, Rochester - Betty Ruedisuel
- Plymouth Arts Council - Jennifer Tobin
- Southfield Parks & Recreation Dept./Center for the Arts - Bill Waterhouse

NOTE: These art organizations offer a range of fine art classes, exhibits, annual art fairs, outreach programs and performance venues.

The commissions serve as umbrella agencies for local arts groups.

Available on Cable/Video

"Building the Arts from the Grassroots" will air during May on Channel 8 in Farmington/Farmington Hills. For a copy of the videotape, call Sally LePia-Perry, Farmington Area cultural arts coordinator, (248) 473-9583.

That's a hardy surprising position. But the panelists' idealism is tempered with a pragmatic attitude.

"I'm an idealist. My goal is to keep the arts alive," said Janet Torno, executive director of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center.

For Torno, that's meant changing the name of what was known as the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, thereby broadening its identity from a neighborhood organization to a regional art center.

"We looked at the demographics (of the membership), and realized

that we're a gathering place for people in the region," she said.

A "gathering place" is not to be mistaken as a substitute for public arts education, said Betty Ruedisuel, executive director of the Paint Creek Center for the Arts in Rochester.

"Schools cannot drop their arts programs," she said. "We're perhaps the next step for students. We can keep their interest alive."

Initial exposure and instruction to the arts, according to Ruedisuel, should remain in primary and high schools.

The recent success of arts organizations is largely based on an evolving grassroots interest in the arts that began with the cultural upheaval of the 1960s, said Marsha Chamberlain, executive director of the Ann Arbor Art Center.

"It'd be a mistake to position ourselves as an alternative (to public arts education)," she said.

"We provide programs to augment curriculums."

But as some public schools reduce funding for art programs, art organizations are indeed stepping up.

Instructors at the BAC, for instance, are teaching art classes to students from the Pontiac School District, which eliminated art from their curriculum.

### Centers for art

Arguably, the only issue more controversial than contemporary art seems to be public funding for the arts, said Bill Waterhouse, director of Southfield parks and recreation department, which oversees the Southfield Centre for the Arts.

The Southfield Center for the Arts offers facilities, and promotes the activities of arts groups through the city's cultural affairs office.

"We try to provide the basis for any organization to go out and raise money (to sustain themselves)," said Waterhouse. "But they have to take ownership."

While Livonia and the Farmington area have the equivalent of a

Please see CAUSE, C2

## ARTS FESTIVAL

### Greektown art fair delivers food, culture

#### Greektown Arts Festival

What: Produced by the Greektown Merchants Association in cooperation with the Michigan Guild of Artists and Artisans, the eighth annual festival features work by 125 visual artists and entertainment by local and national touring acts.

When: 5-10 p.m. Friday, May 15, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, May 16 and noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, May 17. The Imagination Station offers free art activities for kids and their parents from noon to 5 p.m. each day of the festival.

Where: Monroe, St. Antoine and Beaubien streets in Detroit's Greektown.

Cost: No charge. For more information, call (313) 963-9445 or (734) 662-3382.

Michael McCullough is working night and day to make sure he has enough woodcut prints for the Greektown Arts Festival Friday-Sunday, May 15-17.

The Farmington Hills artist is doubling his stock of black and white and color woodcuts of nature, lighthouse, animal, and ethnic scenes. They were a popular item at last year's show.

"Greektown is an excellent show along with Art in the Park in Plymouth and the Birmingham Art Fair in fall," said McCullough, a graduate of

Churchill High School in Livonia. McCullough likes the "energy of German Expressionists" Edvard Munch, actually a Norwegian, and Franz Marc who frequently used woodcuts, lithographs and intaglio prints to address social issues and political injustices in early 20th century Germany. McCullough owns prints convey a similar power. A black and white stormy seascape is reminiscent of the error in Munch's work.

Please see GREEKTOWN, C2



Woodcut print: "No One is to Blame" by artist Michael McCullough.