

Arts & Leisure

Consummate composer creates month-long series

Some days, Karen VanderKloot DiChiera is the consummate composer she set out to become after graduating from Juilliard School of Performing Arts.

Other days, when the administrative details of her job and Michigan humidity become overbearing, she's definitely in a self-confessed decomposing mood.

But then, there are those in-between days when she finds an unmistakable harmony in the paperwork details and a sense of purpose emanating from the cultural quagmire of today's arts scene.

In-between is a good place to be.

Sprouted wings
In the days before one of the most extensive community outreach cultural programs in recent history, DiChiera is in an unflinchingly spontaneous mood. A trapeze artist who has sprouted wings.

DiChiera of Beverly Hills is the longtime educator in Michigan Opera Theatre's Department of Community Programs.

For the second year, she's developed a month-long series of more than 60 lectures, workshops, performances and demonstrations for students of all ages.

The series is simply titled, "Learning at the Opera House '98." And the list of class offerings reads as the ultimate homage to multiculturalism and consumer choice.

Coordinating the classes which will be taught by some of the area's most knowledgeable instructors of music, dance and art history was no small feat.

While some may have only seen a jungle of details, DiChiera performed with a maestro's orchestration and proficiency and a marketer's sense of programming.

An exhaustive 14-page brochure lists the classes, some of which go well beyond the traditional humanities, including courses on etiquette, massage and Chinese food.

The emphasis of "Learning at the Opera House '98" is clearly on cultural cross-pollination.

"If you have someone interested in poetry, classic music, then they might be interested in dance or opera."

Making connections
For DiChiera, connecting with those she calls "consumers of art" derives from a simple belief that most people want to know more about themselves.

Further, she believes people make discoveries about "who they are" and "where they fit in" through participating in the arts.

Last year, more than 500 students took classes at the Opera House. This year, DiChiera expects to far surpass that figure. And she's willing to use a shoehorn to squeeze students into the architecturally historic building near Detroit's Grand Circus Park.

As a testament to her resourcefulness and tenacity, she's scheduled

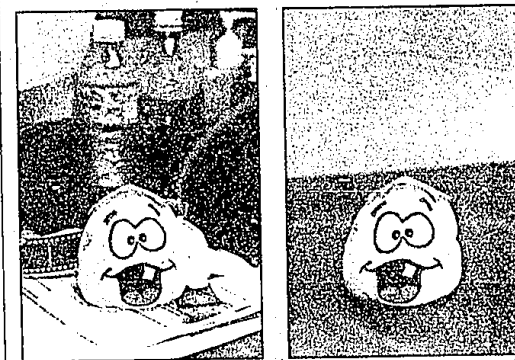
Please see **COMPOSER, C2**



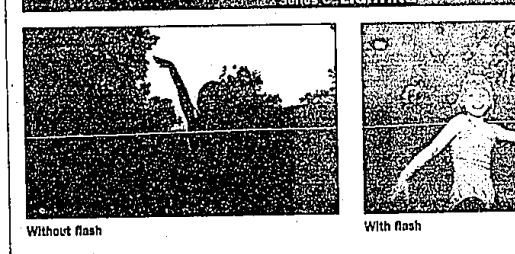
Reaching out: Karen VanderKloot DiChiera has developed an arts program aimed at students' comfort level.



Series A: PERSPECTIVE



Series B: COMPOSITION



Series C: LIGHTING

Observer & Eccentric photographer Jim Jagdfeld contends the assignment to demonstrate several principles of photography to accompany this article was one of the toughest of his career.

"As hard as I try, I just can't take a bad photo," said Jagdfeld, an award-winning photojournalist for his coverage of news and sports. Being the professional that he is, Jagdfeld was up to the task and shot some truly bad photos along with his trademark excellent pictures. The result is a quick look at the "do's and don'ts" of photography.

In "Series A," Jagdfeld demonstrates how a tight angle on the subject can enhance the intimacy and emphasize the personality of the subject.

In "Series B," Jagdfeld demonstrates how to achieve clarity by eliminating unnecessary clutter from a composition.

In "Series C," Jagdfeld shows how proper lighting creates depth and realism.

Preserving memories of Summer '98 - keep it simple

Picture This!

Standing behind the crowded merchandise counter at Woodward Camera in Birmingham, Peter Ristevich appears as a juggling ringmaster.

With the decisiveness of a snappy shutter, he is prepared at any time to pull out lenses, high-end camera bodies or the latest sleek point-and-shoot models for discriminating customers. "Sometimes people are pre-programmed by advertising," said Ristevich, a sales assistant, who rattles off features of cameras faster than the average bear goes through a picnic basket.

"Most people think that they need more features than what they really use," Ristevich shakes his head. Presumably, he's confused by how an easy thing like taking pictures has gotten so complicated.

In the electronic age where today's spiffy features means yesterday's purchase is obsolete, it's especially prudent, said Ristevich, for consumers to know the practical uses for their cameras, and the conditions for taking photos.

These days, Ristevich has put his spiel into overdrive.

As the summer vacation season gets under way at beaches, resorts and pool side, there is no busier time to point and click.

The summer appetite for pictures, however, often fades upon seeing wrongly exposed photos, pictures that don't capture the excitement of the

Please see **PICTURE, C2**

Screenwriting seminar fosters self-discoveries

Sometime before learning about the traditional three-act story structure and the cold reality of their long-shot chances of getting a script produced, students at Harvey Ovshinsky's screenwriting seminar receive a rousing applause.

The clapping, however, isn't coming from the Academy, adoring crowds or curmudgeon film critics.

"I get people to applaud themselves for just showing up, and spending the money to be here," said Ovshinsky, one of the area's most accomplished documentary producers who has held seminars at Cranbrook and The Community

House for the last 10 years.

"Success isn't writing the script but finding out whether it's what they want to do," he said.

There's no pigeonholing the typical student. They come from all types of backgrounds, and range in age from 14 to 65, said Ovshinsky, who has won Emmy awards for his documentaries, and has several scripts in development at Hollywood production companies.

Presenting himself as both support-



Harvey Ovshinsky

ing teacher and pragmatic critic, the gregarious Ovshinsky plays the role of full-time therapist to his students, many of whom, he said, have always wanted to write a script, but didn't know how or have the time.

"Many people in their 40s and 50s have probably been talking about writing for a while, but haven't done it," he said. "There's a need for them to express themselves and find out if they can."

Admitting that he doesn't hold back

WHAT: Introduction to Screenwriting: A Survival Course conducted by Harvey Ovshinsky
WHEN: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, July 11-12
WHERE: The Community House of Birmingham, 380 S. Bates, downtown Birmingham.
FEES: \$150, enrollment limited. Call (248) 644-5832 or (313) 886-8011 for information.

from talking about the stark realities of a writing career, Ovshinsky has aptly titled the seminar, "Introduction to Screenwriting: A Survival Course." He preaches that persistence not

Please see **SCREENWRITING, C2**

ARTS TAX

Is tri-county arts funding debate turning political?

For a topic like regional cooperation - whose time has come according to nearly all political factions in the metro area - there sure seems to be a lot of contention about what that cooperation will look like in practice.

Arguably, nowhere is that more apparent than last week's decision by supporters of a tri-county arts millage to wait until after the Aug. 4 primary before pushing the Michigan House of Representatives to vote on the measure.

The bill sponsored by Sen. Michael Bouchard (R-Birmingham), which would allow for revenue derived from a property tax of .6 mill to go to cultural institutions and arts groups, passed overwhelmingly in the Michigan Senate in late June.

WHAT: A bill sponsored by Michael Bouchard (R-Birm.) to establish a metro region council to levy a property tax up to .5 mill. Net revenues, arts groups and recreational facilities within tri-county area.

STATUS: Passed the Michigan Senate, 27-0. Currently, bill is in the Tax Policy Committee in the House.

INFORMATION: Michigan Senate Fiscal Agency, (517) 373-5383, or Sen. Bouchard's office, (517) 373-2523.

A mill is \$1 of tax for every \$1,000 of a property's state equalized valuation, half of market value, or taxable valuation, a figure less than market value

limited by law to inflationary increases.

The owners of a house with a market or taxable value of \$150,000 would pay \$37.50 with a half-mill arts tax.

"We don't want this to get bogged down in politics, or become a tool for those with their own agenda," said Bouchard. "We think it's wise to have a cooling-off period."

Without pointing fingers, Bouchard conceded that opponents of the elected officials who support the arts tax could twist the issue as simply a pro-tax initiative.

In an election year, that kind of rhetorical ammunition in conservative Oakland and Macomb counties could be

Please see **DEBATE, C2**



Financial support: Revenue from the proposed tri-county arts tax would support the area's 14 cultural institutions, including the Detroit Symphony, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit Zoo, Meadow Brook Theatre, Cranbrook Institute of Science, and Cranbrook Art Museum.