

CHAT ROOM



Joyce Campbell

Consider 'La France' for visit before millennium

There is just one very special place in the world where you can look up in awe and experience this public display but affectionate countdown to the new "millennium" - La France! It is just one of the many ways the French have joined in with the rest of the world community, celebrating and welcoming the new millennium. This countdown, which appears on the second level of the Eiffel Tower, changes daily, subtracting the number of days (jours) to the year 2000.

As I saw this display for the first time last spring in Paris on this most renowned monument, I reminded myself of the beautiful legacies the French left to the world at the turn of the last century. Architecturally, La Tour Eiffel, L'Opera de Paris and La Basilique du Sacre-Coeur are still monumental treasures that continue to amaze and mystify countless visitors. Furthermore, culturally, I believe that the Masters of Impressionism - Monet, Renoir, Degas, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Pissarro, Sisley and Cezanne - embodied and opened everyone's eyes to the coming of change and the new 20th century in their paintings.

A passion for culture

Giverny, the home of Claude Monet, continues to be a source of inspiration to me and in my cultural lessons for my French students. Each time I travel to France, my love of this country's culture and language becomes even more passionate.

What French legacies will be created at the turn of this century? Already, the "euro" is changing European history economically and even perhaps geographically. Modern structures continue to rise and continue to be either embraced or disdained by the public and critics (The way the French love and hate their buildings still hasn't changed from the last century).

Please see CHAT ROOM, B2

History buffs show and tell for fun

From vintage photos of the Farmington area to German army field glasses, history buffs have fun with old things.

By KATHIE O'DONOHUE
SPECIAL WRITER

The handful of inch-long iron spikes and a closed-ended wrench were passed around the room while Ruth Trombley invited those in attendance to guess the nature of the items.

Most people wouldn't care, but this group of history buffs, members of the Farmington Historical Society, became animated. After a half dozen respectable guesses, Trombley explained they were spikes that were screwed into horseshoes used in the early 1900s for horse racing on frozen lakes in her native Minnesota.

The annual show-and-tell night held recently at the downtown library was informative and fun for the history enthusiasts. The society meets the fourth Wednesday of each month and is open to anyone. Member Nancy Leonard explains that the group's goals include "promoting the history of Farmington and Farmington Hills and creating awareness." Formed in 1961, the society is separate from the Farmington Historical Commission, which is appointed by city council. Leonard says "This is for fun." Indeed, a cordial atmosphere was evident this night, peppered with good-natured banter, camaraderie and an obvious affinity for history.

An eclectic assortment

An eclectic assortment of antique memorabilia was presented, including books describing the "super highways" of Oakland in 1928, with pictures showing Woodward Avenue traveled by vintage autos. Photos shared by local historian Ruth Mochlman showed stark, unsettled land west of Farmington Road at the turn of the last century. Pictures of area residents at that time reflect somber, unexpressive faces that hid the desire to discover their stories and wonder about curious clothing and hats as well.

Gus Siegmund presented a 2 1/2 foot

long marine telescope, circa early 1800s. He described it as somewhere in the vicinity of "20 power" and having a tiny gate that covers the objective. Siegmund also brought a walnut and brass tool he referred to as a "gentleman's level."

"The average carpenter wouldn't have owned this... hobbyists had fancy tools such as these," he explained. "It belonged to someone from the middle or upper class."

A pair of field glasses from the German army dating around 1915 was displayed by Gus' brother, Bob Siegmund. They were approximately eight power and still functional. Siegmund said

"such glasses were made in great quantities for the military service." He recalled playing with them as a child.

Steeped in history

The plethora of historical markers scattered throughout town is testament to the fact that Farmington is steeped in history. Nancy Rickert, whose home appears on the Historic Home Tour, noted that she descended from General Robert E. Lee and as an interesting side note, she related that her sister's husband is a descendant of Ulysses Grant.

Others spoke of Farmington area set-

Please see BUFFS, B2



Who's there? Above, Gus Siegmund talks about his nautical telescope. At right, Brian Golden pretends his trolley car money changer is a flute.



Show salutes local connection to Underground Railroad

Come celebrate Black History Month Sunday at the Farmington site that was once a part of the famed Underground Railroad.

The Longacre House presents John Willie Payne, local author, historian and storyteller, as he illustrates with

song and dance "The Underground Railroad's Michigan Connection." It will be presented at 2:30 p.m. and again at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 7, at the Longacre House, 24705 Farmington Road. Admission to the one-hour show is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors

and \$3 for students.

Originally a Victorian farmhouse owned by Abolitionist Palmer Sherman, the Longacre House grounds served as a station for runaway slaves near the end of the Civil War. Sherman helped 13 slaves escape to Canada.

Payne presents untold stories about Farmington's participation. He premiered the production in 1995, after six years of research and writing.

"I got interested from an assignment

Please see RAILROAD, B3

Dr. Macchelles
AUCTION AT THE GALLERY
Friday, February 12th at 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, February 13th at 11:00 a.m.
Sunday, February 14th at Noon

Exhibition Hours:
Friday, February 12th 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday, February 13th 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Monday, February 15th 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, February 16th 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, February 17th 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Thursday, February 18th 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

HEINRICH BURKEL
(German 1802-1869), oil on canvas, 22" x 32", Sunday #2012

This month's auction features a Grand Blanc, MI collection of fine French and Chinese furniture, marble sculptures and pedestals, European bronze sculptures, 19th and 20th oil paintings including Frank Duval. Also featured is a Lincoln Park, MI collection of over 225 circus posters from the 1930's, 19th c. Continental religious oil paintings removed from Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor, Ontario, jewelry sterling silver, crystal and bakel and other fine furniture from the M. Sagerdof Trust of Greenville and Coldwater, MI, Session II.

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