

ART BEAT

Art Beat features various happenings in the suburban art world. Send Oakland County arts news leads to Art Beat, Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, fax (248) 644-1314.

**STORY-TELLER**  
Betty Appleton of Birmingham who just returned from two weeks of teaching on a Navajo Indian Reservation in Arizona, will share Native American stories and chants at Borders Books on Woodward in Birmingham, 11 a.m. Saturday, May 8. Youngsters will have the opportunity to participate in a creative movement story. For more information, call (248) 203-0059.

**SONNET QUARTET**  
Oakland University's Department of Music, Theatre and Dance continues its partnership with four Detroit Symphony Orchestra musicians-in-residence when they perform as the Sonnet Quartet 3 p.m. Sunday, May 9 in the Varner Recital Hall.  
They will perform Dvorak's Terzetto in C, Op. 74, Shostakovich's Quartet No. 3 in F, Op. 73, and Beethoven's Quartet in E minor, Op. 69, No. 1

"Razumovsky." Tickets are \$12 general, \$10 seniors, and \$6 students. Call (248) 370-0019 for reservations and information.

**OPERA TODAY**  
The Verdi Opera Theatre of Michigan's fifth annual "Italian Songs and Arias Vocal Competition" for high school students reaches its final stage when 10 finalists take to the stage 4 p.m. Sunday, May 2 at the Italian American Cultural Center in Warren.

Tickets are \$7, \$5 seniors/high school students, and available at the door. For more information, call Verdi Opera Theatre of Michigan president John Zarvetti at (734) 455-8895 or the Italian American Cultural Society at (810) 751-2855.

Nearly 50 students submitted cassette audio tapes of two Italian classical songs or opera arias of their choice. At the concert, each finalist will be required to sing their two songs from memory. Each of the 10 finalists receive cash prizes ranging from \$50 to \$1,000. This year's judges are Jeanette Dagger, University of Windsor voice professor; Karen VanderKloot-DiChiera, composer, writer, educator and director of Michigan Opera The-

atre's community programs, and George Shirley, University of Michigan School of Music professor.

The 10 finalists are Natalie Conte, Warren; Kathryn Drake, Big Rapids; Peter Fredolillo, Okemos; Tamara Grove, Traverse City; Laura Lane, Marysville; April Marzee, Chelsea; Laura Nanes, Beverly Hills; Julia Rosen, East Lansing; Melody Yerko, Royal Oak, and Davin Youngs, Oostego.

**ART AUCTION**  
The Scarab Club holds its annual art auction noon Sunday, May 2 at 217 Farnsworth, behind the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Admission is \$5. Proceeds go towards restoring the historic Scarab Club built in 1928. For more information, call (313) 831-1250.

Livonia artists Jack Olds, Al Weber, Eileen Bibby, and Arthur Parquette have donated works. The silent auction runs noon to 2 p.m. The live auction begins at 2:30 p.m.

**ARTISANS' MARKET OPENS**  
The Ann Arbor Artisans' Market opens for its ninth season today in the Farmer's Market at Kerrytown, 315 Detroit Street,

Ann Arbor. The Market features fine arts and handmade crafts by more than 60 Michigan artists. Paintings, photographs, painted and tie-dyed clothing, bird houses, yard ornaments, furniture, jewelry, and wearable art are available 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. every Sunday through December.

Guest musicians, storytellers and art demonstrations add to the Market's diversity. Plants and produce are also sold in season.

Artists interested in exhibiting should call Marilyn Mattingly at (734) 453-2606.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

The Detroit Institute of Arts is looking for Gallery Service volunteers to greet and assist visitors in the museum's galleries. Make a difference in assuring the galleries remain open during museum hours. Afternoon weekend volunteers are especially needed.

A training session will be held 1:30-3:30 p.m. Saturday, May 15 in the Holly Room at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Avenue.

For more information, call (313) 833-0247.



**Storyteller:**  
Betty Appleton of Birmingham will share Native American stories during a May 8 program at Borders Books.

Small Clarkston theater perfect for 'Little Shop'

By SUSAN B. TAUBER  
STAFF WRITER  
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It's been at least 10 years since the Clarkston Village Players did a musical production at its intimate, 84-seat Depot Theater. But things just fell into place to convince its members to break tradition with "Little Shop of Horrors."

"The small theater just lends itself to this production," said director David Nelson. "It has a lot of special effects, especially the plant in the plant shop that grows and grows."

The plot involves a nerdy-type clerk (Seymour) in a plant store

who names a new plant after the woman he loves (Audrey). She doesn't love him back. Unfortunately, the plant needs blood to survive.

By the end of the show, the Audrey II takes over. It grows from a regular-size houseplant to one that's eight-feet-long and four-feet-wide.

"Seeing this show with props like that in such an intimate setting will make the audience feel like they're part of the production," he explained.

Neither Nelson nor his wife, Elizabeth Wingert, who has a lead role, is a stranger to the theater community. Their back-grounders are extensive. She's a

singer with Michigan Opera Theatre, for example. The couple has their own company, ON Broadway Productions. Nelson worked the light board for the first national touring company of "Les Misérables." The list could go on and on.

"They encourage people of all ages to come see 'Little Shop of Horrors.'"

Melvin Case, who plays the plant store owner, describes it as a cult play.

"Unless people saw the movie of the musical, they probably won't know any of the songs," he said. "They aren't normal. There's no duplication of melodies or words. But are they

ever fun!"

Music Director Sharon Thomas described the whole show as a spoof on the 1960s black-and-white horror movie by the same name. It was one of Jack Nicholson's earliest movies. Roger Corman was the director.

"Then it got turned into a musical. It's all very campy," she said, "with lots of 50s doo-wap music."

The musical was written by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken, well-known for many

things, including the score for the animated movie, "Little Mermaid."

"I think people will be talking about Depot Theater's production of 'Little Shop of Horrors' for a long time," said stage manager Donna Ellis.

They're likely to remember the fence that opens like the "Les Misérables" barricade, the way the musicians are hidden behind the scrim at the back of the stage, and, of course, the not-your-typical houseplant, Audrey II.

Luckily, they won't see the logistics of moving people and scenery around small back stage of the former railroad depot.

Depot Theater is located at 4861 White Lake Road, north of Andersonville Road in Independence Township.

Show dates are May 6-8, 3-15 and 21-22. Show times are at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays; 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

For ticket information, call the ticket line at (248) 625-6811. Ticket prices are \$15 each.

Stage from page C1

Keeping in mind that Meadow Brook is a 600-seat theatre with 30 performances of each show, Bloomfield has a big enough task filling what amounts to 18,000 seats for each production.

**Honoring the bard**

Long before "Shakespeare in Love" convinced mainstream movie audiences of the contemporary appeal of Shakespeare, Annette DePetris and Gillian Eaton never doubted the lasting power of the bard's works.

DePetris and Eaton are co-founders of Shakespeareance, a nomadic group of actors and producers modifying productions of Shakespeare's work to fit the venue — from a small, 50-seat

space of Planet Ant to the larger venues of a performing arts center.

"Part of our appeal is that we're fully portable," said DePetris. "There's a resurgence of interest in Shakespeare's work."

The mission of Shakespeareance, according to DePetris, is to make Shakespeare accessible and fun for new audiences. Hardly an easy task, despite the recent films based on Shakespeare's plays including "Henry V," "Much Ado About Nothing," and "Hamlet."

Both Shakespeareance founders have a long list of impressive credits. Eaton of Plymouth was a member of The

Royal Shakespeare Company. Meanwhile, DePetris is one of the area's most familiar actors, appearing in industrial films, commercials and on stage at The Gem Theatre, Jewish Ensemble Theatre, Performance Network and in Actors Alliance Theatre productions.

In addition to producing plays, Shakespeareance, sponsored in part by Actors Alliance Theatre, also offers workshops for actors and outreach programs.

"The classics aren't produced because they're perceived as being costly and difficult to produce," said DePetris.

"But who goes to Stratford to see Shakespeare's play? People from southeastern Michigan."

Festival from page C1

director of the BBAC, Ray Fleming, director of the Robert Kidd Gallery, Birmingham; Nicole Jacquard, metalmith and jewelry instructor at the BBAC; John Stephenson ceramist and University of Michigan professor emeritus, and sculptor John Cynar make their living by tracking the public's buying habits.

"We've increased the amount of artists in the last three years from 180 to 300, and 100 are new — they have never been in the festival before," said Jennifer Muir, BBAC special event coordinator. "We think that's because of our ranking (20th in the Fine Arts by the 1999 Art-Fair SourceBook) and artists feeling they do very well."

**Community event**

Muir is working with Birmingham gallery owners such as Ray Fleming, Elizabeth Stone and

George N'Namdi for select galleries to open for business, noon to 5 p.m., Sunday, May 9. It is just one of the ways the BBAC is trying to involve the community in the festival.

BBAC instructors will lead children's activities such as painting a flower pot for mom. Once completed, instructors will place a flower in each. Other activities include T-shirt painting and ceramic clay work. For a small fee on Saturday, children may also paint a silk scarf for mom as a gift.

Award-winning works from BBAC's High School Competition will be on display on the Community House terrace. The exhibit features 87 outstanding student artists from 19 local high schools.

Community groups such as the Village Players, St. Dunstan's Theater Guild, Troy Community

Chorus, and Troy Country Fiddlers will provide entertainment. Visitors will also be able to enjoy the sounds of the acoustic Hope Orchestra and jazz by The Warren Commission on the steps of city hall. Pandora's Puppets will delight young and old 12:30 p.m. Sunday.

"One of our goals is trying to increase awareness in the community about who the BBAC is," said Muir. "We're the ones who put on the spring art fair." Common Ground produces the fall art fair in Birmingham.

Founded 40 years ago, the nonprofit BBAC offers 125 art classes every semester, two children's summer art camps, and 18 exhibitions in three gallery spaces every year.

"The children's activities give an idea of what they can do at the BBAC," said Muir.

**The Michigan Creative Source Directory**

When you need to find someone fast, locate a production house, put together a crew, get your web site designed and operating, get contacts for a new job, or advertise your creative services, THE MICHIGAN CREATIVE SOURCE DIRECTORY is your resource tool.

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Conversations from page C1

Strut" and "Forbidden Broadway" — were at the Gem.

But while Forbes is foremost a developer, he cannot be solely viewed as a shrewd businessman.

**In full bloom**

At the gala opening of the Century Club, Forbes was surrounded by family, friends and well-wishers who share a belief in the

city's renaissance, and a deep affection for the man who stood and put his faith in a city when others were riding the fastest train out of town.

Few would be surprised at how deep his faith runs.

In the next few months, the garden of roses that Forbes has dedicated to his mother will be in full bloom. The garden is

located in the outdoor patio, not far from a sculpture of a fiddler modeled after Forbes' father.

Inside the Century Club, the colors and design of the Forbes' family tartan appears on the carpet pattern.

Nearly every detail of the Century Club and Gem is a meaningful piece of the past.

While Forbes may be a shining role model to preservationists, his commitment to meaningful commercial development

demonstrates that the future is much clearer when you know where you come from.

That's not just a message from a preservationist. That's a lesson that belongs in a time capsule.

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