

Conversations

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intended.)

Pretty straight

In these days of "anything goes" in the art world, McCay believes that his greatest challenge as a teacher is to help students at the Center of Creative Studies—where he's associate dean—stay away from clever and derivative alternatives.

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Patrick McCay
Artist

In Scotland," he said. "Scots are pretty straight about a lot of stuff."

Finding his way

The rolling hills of Franklin aren't quite the rugged highlands of western Scotland where McCay grew up. But there's no mistaking the solitude it provides for McCay, and his wife, Jennifer Muir, a staff member at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center.

Two months after moving to Franklin from Indian Village on Detroit's east side, McCay is still

finding his way around the two-acre property.

Inside the living quarters, he proudly points out an antique porcelain sink still in use in the kitchen. And he's quick to offer a tour of the barn, where the smell of horses is ingrained in the wooden floors and walls.

As soon as he makes his first million, he promises himself, he'll renovate the old barn into a studio.

"But it's outside, as he imagines the impending changes to the natural landscape, when it becomes clear that McCay's pursuit of merging the literal with the abstract isn't a mere academic concept.

For a moment, being an artist and teacher are inseparable. "Working with students, it's like you're feeding them."

Like a spring-fed pond that turns still in early winter.

Frank Provenzano is an art reporter for the *Observer & Eccentric* newspapers. He can be reached at (248) 901-2667, or fprovenzano@oe.homecomm.net

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Lessons

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Nancy Mitchell, who returned to the area to juror the Michigan Fine Arts Competition. The one-time Cass Corridor artist isn't shy to state her opinions. But it was her refreshing honesty that left an indelible mark on this past year's arts competition.

Lesson: Honesty is a prerequisite for artistry.

Members of the writers group that has met at Mary Ann Verdi-Hus' home in Beverly Hills for the last 20 years. "This is our water cooler," said author Loren Estleman, one of the members of the group.

Lesson: Writers live in a solitary community.

Lucius Theus, president of the Southfield Federation of Arts, was adamant about the fundamental role of the arts in enhancing the quality of life. A former general, Theus came to metro Detroit as a high-ranking exec at Bendis Corp.

"Business has a responsibility to their employees, and having art in the work environment is necessary to round out one's life."

Lesson: Everything is connected.

David Pops of Birmingham, who might be the hardest working gallery owner in the area. By day, Pops is a project manager at Drucker Research. By night and on weekends, he plans exhibits at Galerie Blu in Pontiac. "I keep telling myself, 'Do what you love.'"

Lesson: Follow your heart.

Larry Smith of Bloomfield Hills, who chaired the Concours d'Elegance art auction committee. Smith defined his standard for a four-wheel work of art as "Drop-dead gorgeous," as in a sporty silver Porsche.

Lesson: Love of art isn't constrained to traditional forms.

Kitty Dublin, always one to recognize a good story. The Birmingham playwright was a finalist in the Turnip Theatre's Fifth Annual 15-minute play festival. Despite the paucity of opportunities for local playwrights, Dublin continues to flourish both as an artist and

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teacher.

Lesson: Write for yourself.

Donna Anderson, who left a lucrative career with IBM to pursue her love of art. Her gallery of African artifacts and historical textiles has recently relocated to downtown Birmingham.

Lesson: Remember...history.

Gay Rubin of Birmingham told of how she overcame the insecurities of being a "secret writer." In the last few years, Rubin has emerged as one of the most often-published short-story writers in the area.

Lesson: Persistence pays off.

Rich Rhan of Bloomfield Hills, who took a simple expression, "Duh!", and turned it into a book of personal growth. Rhan's book, "Evolve Yourself," opens with a quote from Dante and Jefferson Airplane. After years of struggle, the biggest influence of the book was probably on the author himself.

Lesson: The subject of every book is its author.

Geils

from page C1

"We've always had a special love affair with Detroit," said Justman.

"There is a real appreciation from the band that connects us with our fans in Detroit. They give us the energy we need and we go out and give 150 percent and try to leave it all on stage."

Look for the never-say-I've-heard-them-enough classics like "Give It To Me," "Whammer

Jammer/Hard Driving Man," and "Detroit Breakdown" to propel the evening into a frenzy.

And, oh yes, don't forget to save enough energy to join in on "Centerfold," "Freeze-Frame" or "Just Can't Stop Me."

Any new music?

"We have some new ideas, but right now they're in the think tank," Justman said.

That's OK because bringing

back the favorites makes all J. Geils fans feeling like they "Just Can't Wait."

Hitting the stage prior to the J. Geils Band will be another local favorite, Detroit's own Romantics.

Editor's Note: Jim Toth has been preparing for the concert by dancing in halls and continually singing "Detroit Breakdown." Not a pretty sight.

BOOK HAPPENINGS

Book Happenings features events at suburban bookstores, libraries and literary gatherings. Send news leads to Kelly Wygonik, *Observer & Eccentric* Newspapers, 36261 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax them to (734) 591-7279 or e-mail to hwuygonik@oe.homecomm.net.

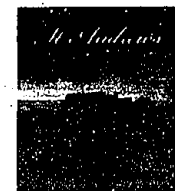
BOOK SIGNING

The authors of "The Conversation Piece" will appear at the Northville Barnes and Noble store to sign copies of their new book. Bret Nicholas and Paul Lowrie will be at the store 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 19. The book contains trivia questions and interesting facts that make great conversation starters. The store is located in the shopping plaza at Haggerty and Six Mile Road.

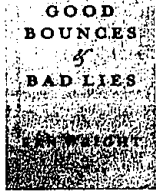
CCC WRITERS SERIES

Noted author Carle Hairyman will be the next speaker in the Oakland Community College Writers Live Series, Tuesday, Jan. 18. The program begins at 7 p.m. in the Jones Johnson Theater on the Royal Oak campus. Admission is free and the program is open to the public. Hairyman, who has written 10 books in a variety of genres, will read selections from her published poetry, essays, plays and fiction. A question-and-answer session will follow. Call (248) 540-1500 for more information.

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