

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

Counting down the days till '99

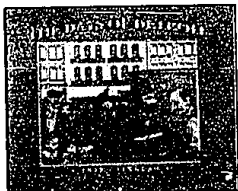
Why is it I never remember to buy a calendar for the new year until Jan. 1 is almost on the doorstep?

After searching for an Irish Wolfhound calendar to no avail, I found the next best thing—the 1999 “Days of Detroit.”

The Detroit Historical Museum’s calendar is a fun and educational way to keep track of time. Developed by Livonia resident Jim McConnell, who co-chaired the project with wife Annette, the calendar marks each day of the new year with a historical event.

Did you know Paderewski performed at the Detroit Opera House on Jan. 12, 1892, or that a meeting was held at that same location March 17, 1875, to send relief to Crasshopper Suffers in Nebraska? Or that on this day in 1879, the Red Wings played their first game at Joe Louis Arena?

In keeping with the historical theme, all of the calendar’s art features scenes from the past, including Troy artist Doug Parrish’s painting of businessmen carrying out transactions on Lundy Woodward Avenue in 1899. Originally commissioned by R. L. Polk for his executive offices, the Detroit street scene is featured on the cover. Underwritten by R. L. Polk (headquartered in Southfield), the calendar benefits the Society which provides major funding to the Detroit Historical Museum, including the Detroit Historical Museum, Dossin Great Lakes Museum, Historic Fort Wayne and the Historic Moross House.



Woodward Avenue 1899: D.M. Parrish of Troy created this Detroit street scene for the 1999 Detroit Historical Museum calendar.

A day at a time

The idea for the calendar to record Detroit history day-by-day came naturally to McConnell. He’s a longtime history teacher for Dearborn Public Schools and annually takes 2,400 fourth and eighth graders to tour the Detroit Historical Museum. For 1999, he’s planning a bus trip for the kids to visit historic sites in Detroit.

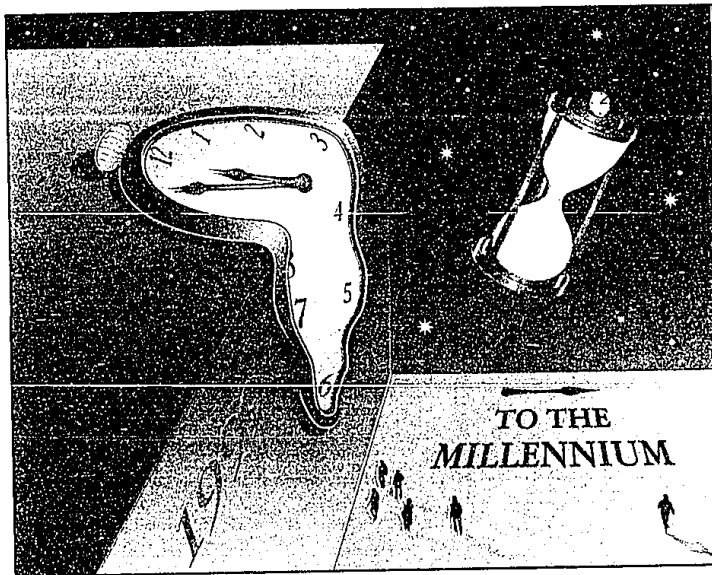
Since first mentioning the project to the Detroit Historical Society to identify each day of the year with a historical event two and one-half years ago, McConnell has spent hundreds of hours researching the State Archives in Lansing, materials at the Burton Historical Society, and reading the Detroit Public Library’s 1953 history, “Detroit in Its World Setting, a 250-Year Chronology, 1701-1922.” He’s read more than a few books, including biographies of key personalities, and newspapers, and visited Websites. Annette created most of the data base for the calendar’s events. The McConnells originally began volunteering their time at the Detroit Historical Museum five years.

“I’m learning some of the minutiae of Detroit history, when the last hope-drawn fire vehicles were used,” said McConnell. “What impressed me was the famine in Ireland in the 1800s, Detroiters were helping people in distress back then. I knew about our helping other countries, but didn’t know it started so early.”

Parrish’s “Detroit Street Scene” painting appears not only on the cover but also for the month of May. The rest of the art, including paintings of Detroit’s 1805 fire and the arrival of the iron horse in 1837, is by the late Robert Thom. Formerly of

Please see EXPRESSIONS, B2

NEW YEAR INSPIRES REFLECTION THROUGHOUT ARTS COMMUNITY



HOPES AND RESOLUTIONS

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN AND FRANK PROVENZANO
STAFF WRITERS

Chile the champagne. Cue the song of the moment — “1999” by the artist formerly known as Prince. And watch in the rearview mirror as the 20th century slips over millennium’s edge. For now, it’s time for that end-of-the-year personal-improvement ritual known as a New Year’s Resolution.

For some of us, a resolution is a pragmatic exercise like trying on shoes — merely a case of finding something that fits. But there are many people in the arts community whose hopes for the new year will shape the future culture of our metropolis. The following is a random sample of some of those resolutions. So, shake off the holiday slumber and follow along. It’s as good a time as any to lift a glass, appreciate family and friends, and hope for peace.

“I’m hoping for a renewed awareness of the value of the arts to the fabric of our lives.”
“And I hope support for not-for-profit organizations will be more forthcoming in terms of volunteer time and monetary contributions.”

— Janet E. Torno, executive director, Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center

“I hope the good, positive feelings in the city of Detroit continue. And as the economy continues to boom for the area for many of us to participate in that growth. Finally, my hope is for the museum to become more connected to

the communities throughout the region.”

— Maurice D. Parrish, interim director, Detroit Institute of Arts

“My hope is to reach our youth through art education and entertainment. And through the arts, help us understand the various cultures by uniting us in a common appreciation and respect for our neighbors.”

— Marlowe Belanger, manager, Southfield Centre for the Arts

“We’re about to unfold our most exciting year, from ‘Weird Science’ in winter to contemporary Cuban art in summer to a hot British artist in the fall. My goal is to make sure that even more people know what we’re doing, and possibly to increase our attendance by 25 percent.”

— Gregory Wittepp, director, Cranbrook Art Museum

“My hope is to get this facility renovated, search for a larger space, and to broaden the scope of what art is.”

— Ann Blatte, executive director, Paint Center for the Arts

“I’m resolved to work harder in getting publicity and reviews on my artists.”

— David Klein, owner, David Klein Gallery

“Our resolution is to move the Detroit Artist Market in a more prominent location within the Cultural Center.”

— Maria Luisa Belmonte, executive director, Detroit Artists Market

(NOTE: A building at the corner of Forest and Woodward is likely the new home for DAM, currently located at South Field in Detroit.)

“In the upcoming year, we hope to become a place where families make repeat visits because of diverse and thought-provoking exhibits and activities.”

— Staff of Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

“Our resolution is to continue to let people — all over the metro area — know that they’re welcome at Cranbrook.”

— Elaine Gurian, interim director, Cranbrook Institute of Science

“We’re going to celebrate 30 years in 1999. We hope to continue to provide wonderful arts experiences for all ages while expanding our audiences and the visibility of our local artists.”

— Jennifer Tobin, executive director, Plymouth Community Arts Council

“Our hope is to attract talented students; to secure funding for special projects such as visiting artists; to restore the faculty studio; and, to look for partnerships with the community.”

— Doug Semison, newly appointed art dept. chair, Madonna University

“We’re resolved to continue to try to improve our attendance by bringing orchestral programs to our audience that they feel comfortable with, and to raise enough money to stay in the black.”

— Robert Bennett, president, Livonia Symphony Orchestra

“Our hope is to hire a PR person for the Livonia arts festival; to install a new piece of sculpture in the civic center complex; to continue the scholarship program for youth; and, to provide artists with opportunities to exhibit their

work.”

— Bob Sheridan, president, Livonia Arts Commission

“To resolve to become involved with the education programs in the schools and to develop a close relationship between the community and the educational process in the schools.”

— Russell Reed, conductor, Plymouth Symphony Orchestra

“My resolution is to spend more time with my music, and to continue to raise funds for the Detroit Opera House’s many projects.”

— David DiChiera, general director, Michigan Opera Theatre

“I’m hoping to get back to writing and spend more time with my family.”

— Geoffrey Sherman, artistic director, Meadow Brook Theatre

“I hope that the sometimes hostile differences between countries, political parties, races and religions will diminish so that we can work together to create a better tomorrow.”

— Chuck Forbes, real estate developer, owner, The Gem Theatre

“For a healthy new year for ‘At Home’ reporter Mary Klemic, currently on extended medical leave. May 1999 bring Mary back to her coworkers at the Observer & Eccentric. For the record, we miss you, Mary.”

— Observer & Eccentric staff

EXHIBITION

Three artists shed skin to expose their art

Acrobatic: The wooden and fabric sculptures of Italian artist Elena Berriolo are highly animated, yet formal.



BY FRANK PROVENZANO
STAFF WRITER

fprovenzano@oe.home.com.net

Drawing a line between the literal and metaphorical has never been an easy task for reviewers of contemporary art. Especially when “art” can be considered as whatever you think it is.

The meaning of contemporary art, for some, lies with the vagaries of the interpreters, thus making “art” one long self-absorbed argument. (The popular Broadway play, “Art,” dramatically makes this point.)

Attaching a label such as minimalism, abstractionism, expressionism or any other “ism” can be the knell for originality.

Perhaps that’s why Paul Kotula steps lightly around any steadfast descriptions of the three distinct exhibits currently at Revolution, an airy streetside gallery along Woodward Avenue in Ferndale.

But make no mistake, Kotula, director of the radically urbane gallery that shows a mix of international, New York-based and local artists, isn’t without his own interpretation.

“These are three women artists dealing with issues of sexuality and sensuality that gets quite abstract,” he said.

Actually, the works of Elena Berriolo, Jae Won Lee and Gina

Three Solo Exhibits at Revolution

- “Enclosed Gardens,” fabric and wooden sculptures by Elena Berriolo
- “Absent One,” ceramic sculpture by Jae Won Lee
- “Recent Works on Paper” by Gina Ferreri

WHEN: Through Jan. 16

WHERE: 23257 Woodward Avenue, Ferndale; (248) 541-3444

HOURS: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; closed Jan. 1-4

Please see SKIN, B2