

THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY



Columbia Pictures' "The End of the Affair," Oscar winner Neil Jordan's story of love betrayal and jealousy, opens today exclusively at the Main Art Theatre, 118 N. Main St., Royal Oak. The film stars Julianne Moore and Ralph Fiennes.

SATURDAY



The Antifreeze Blues Festival, 8 p.m. at the Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale features Pinetop Perkins, (pictured), Robert Noll's Mission, Madcat and Kane, and The Hastings Street Grease Revue with Harmonica Shah. Tickets \$20, call (248) 544-3030.

SUNDAY



Jewish Ensemble Theatre presents "Prisoner of Second Avenue" 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. in the Aaron DeRoy Theatre, lower level of the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road at Drake, West Bloomfield. Tickets \$16-\$21, call (248) 788-2900.

HOT TICKET



American baritone David Pittman-Jennings performs Gustav Mahler's version of Ludwig Van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, 8 p.m. Thursday-Friday, Jan. 6-7, 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 8, and 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 9 at Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets \$19-\$68, available at the box office, or call (313) 676-4111.

Testing her 'metal'

LOCAL CARVER CONQUERS THE ICE AND THE MEN



Gold medal winner: Tujana Raukar took first place in the college individual category at the Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular in 1999.

Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular

What's the 18th annual winter festival features ice carving competitions for professionals, amateurs, and high school and college students, an "Ice Trolley" which includes Peppermint and other cartoon characters, and celebrity charity skating competition. Warm-up center in the Flagstar Bank at Ann Arbor Trail and Harvey. When: Open 24 hours a day, Wednesday, Jan. 12, through Monday, Jan. 17. For more information or directions, call (734) 439-9157 or visit the Web site at www.pennino.com/plymouth. Where: Kellogg Park, The Gathering and Central Parking Structure in downtown Plymouth.

Skating party ■ Plymouth Whalers ice skating party 5:30-7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 16, at Compuware Arena, 14900 Beck, Plymouth. Tickets \$5 at the door, reservations not necessary.

By LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Tujana Raukar looks nothing like a typical ice carver. At 5-foot, 2-inches tall, she more than likely will be dwarfed by the rest of the competitors at the Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular.

But don't underestimate this Plymouth woman. Underneath all that heavy clothing beats the heart of a carver that can wield a chainsaw with the best of them.

In the two years she's been carving ice, Raukar's taken gold nine times and recently placed third in the National Ice Carvers Association national competition in Pennsylvania.

"All those guys tell me it's unusual to compete against a woman carver because I'm so small and all those guys are so big," said Raukar. "It is physically exhausting. I have to think about that when I'm drawing. I have to make smaller pieces and fuse more because the ice is so heavy."

Raukar plans to enter not only the individual category but also the 20-hour team competition beginning 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 14 in Kellogg Park. She and her husband Paul will work together during the grueling event in which carvers create large scale sculptures from 10 blocks of ice that weigh 300 pounds each.

Not just a competition

"It's not just to compete or winning the prize," said Raukar. "It's 'do you like your sculpture?' I like that the sculpture expresses certain feelings so they're not just blocks of ice but come alive. Ice sculpture is here and then it's gone but that's the beauty to catch that moment. If you miss it, you miss it."

Even though Raukar received

her culinary training in Croatia, it wasn't until after moving to America four years ago that she began carving. As a food artist for the Ritz-Carlton in Dearborn,

Raukar displayed a natural talent for carving vegetables. Her supervisor encouraged Raukar's sculpting abilities by giving her a set of Japanese carving tools.

At the Ritz-Carlton, Raukar uses the mediums of butter, chocolate, taro root, napa cabbage and other vegetables to create colorful displays for tables. A visit to the Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Festival two years ago triggered her interest in ice.

To learn the basics, she took classes at Schoolcraft College in Livonia with Chef Dan Hugallier.

After carving hundreds of ice sculptures, from a 14-foot Eiffel Tower to horses and corporate logos for Jaguar and Audi, she opened a commercial carving business, Ice Dreams, in Plymouth.

"Practicing makes you do better," said Raukar.

This is the first time, Raukar

will compete with professionals at the Plymouth competition.

Last year, she won two gold medals as part of the Schoolcraft College team. Students spend four hours carving while professionals must endure 20 hours of cold to complete their creations in the team event. Raukar and Paul, who've been working side-by-side in the culinary industry for 10 years, will dress warmly in ski suits and several layers of clothing. In years past, wind chills have sent temperatures dipping to 20 degrees below zero.

In that cold, exposed skin can freeze in a matter of minutes. Raukar isn't worried

though. Carving will keep her warm.

"Carving is non-stop exercising," said Raukar. "You're doing many push-ups placing the ice and moving it into position. How you hold the chain saw is impor-

tant to get your cuts, so you have to dance around it."

Outdoor museum

Watching the carvers create their sculptures is part of the fun of the Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular. Sandra Watta, who organizes the festival with her husband Mike, said that "it's like an outdoor museum experience" because visitors can walk around and see all of the sculptures. More than 100 of them will be displayed in front of businesses and throughout the downtown area.

A skating party with the Plymouth Whalers at Compuware Arena, celebrity charity carving competition, a "Celebrate the Centuries" exhibit at the Plymouth Historical Museum, and an appearance by artist William Moss at Creative Framing & Gallery on Ann Arbor Trail adds to the festivities.

From 1-5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 15-16, hammer dulcimer music by Betsy Beckerman, and free hot cider at the Saint Joseph Mercy Arbor Health Building on the corner of Ann Arbor Trail and Harvey provide a respite from the cold.

There will also be a warming center in the Flagstar Bank at Ann Arbor Trail and Harvey.

Winter event

"It's America's No. 1 free family winter event which opens

Please see CARVING, E2



THEATER

Edgy mystery opens Meadow Brook's 2000 season

Talk about a Y2K bug that won't go away.

In "Dangerous Obsession," the psychological thriller at Meadow Brook Theatre, audiences will find a winding trail of clues leading to the answer of why a mere acquaintance is terrorizing a happily married couple living in Grose Pointe Park.

Smooth sailing into the millennium horizon? Not exactly. This bug provides plenty of jitters.

The yuppie couple is unexpectedly tossed into a stormy sea of uncertainty when a man whom they met months earlier during their vacation shows up unannounced at their door.

The uninvited guest is partly a stalker who envies the couple, and partly in shock since his wife was

killed in a car accident. How are his obsessions with the Grose Pointers and the circumstances of his wife's death related?

Well, therein lies the mystery. Written by novelist N.J. Crisp, "Dangerous Obsession" was initially performed in England in 1987. And the play was last performed at the American Heartland Theatre in Kansas City in 1999.

The three-character play is directed by Debra Wicks, interim artistic director, who directed last fall's "Tintypes," an American musical set in the 1890s. She also directed last season's award-winning, "Gift of Glory," a story about the relationship



Thriller: Robert Morgan (left), John Biedenbach and Tracey Copeland in a scene from Meadow Brook Theatre's presentation of "Dangerous Obsession."

Please see MYSTERY, E2