


Expressions from page C1

Then, Gonzalez's hands danced as he spoke in his native language. Like Callo, Gonzalez loves the dance so much he wants everyone to know about it. This is his second trip to the U.S. In 1994-95, he toured for six months, bringing tango and salsa to American audiences. "A dance only lasts three minutes but in those minutes you can express yourself in so many ways," said Gonzalez as Callo served as translator. "I want to go around the world introducing people to Argentinean dance. It's something that's inside of yourself that you can express on stage. I want people to understand what it's all about. Some people go through life without knowing that you can dance and not feel anything. You can dance and feel passionate love and you can dance and be angry. You can dance every emotion."

Gonzalez began studying tango at four years old. His parents used to send him and his brother to dance school to keep them busy. By age 14, Gonzalez was teaching. Then tragedy struck. His older brother, Hector Manuel, who Gonzalez admired as a dancer and person, was killed by a train.

"He was a great dancer and devoted to his art," said Gonzalez. "After his death I took dance seriously. Now I dance for the both of us. I do it for my brother."

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BY BETH HENLEY

In this Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy, three Mississippi sisters reunite to be with their dying grandfather. Leary, Meg and Babe are very different women, but they share powerful bonds. Together, they come to terms with death, their lives, and their enduring love for one another. It's a wonderful mixture of both comedy and drama.

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Festival from page C1

Back home in Argentina, Gonzalez and Cespedes dance at Casa Blanca, a club in San Telmo, with the Buenos Aires Ballet. They are also members of the Brando and Salta ballets. Cespedes started dancing at eight years old. She's now 26 and still loving it.

"I will do anything to learn," said Cespedes. "Even though I go to the university, I always come back to dance. The tango is the only dance that offers something different than other dances. We're living a very fast life and people don't take the time to understand. In this dance you can feel the other person and communicate. It can be love or with someone who will become just a friend."

You don't have to be a professional dancer to enjoy the tango. In addition to the production showcasing Argentinean tango and the country music of Argentina, Callo is hosting Penna in the arena. A Penna is an Argentinean celebration featuring food, music and dance. There will be a complimentary lesson before each beginning at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20. For more information, call (313) 561-3236.

■ Saturday, May 20 Gonzalez and Cespedes will teach the tango at Dance Avenue, 1860 N. Telegraph, Dearborn.

■ Saturday, May 27 at the Pittsfield Grange, 3337 Ann Arbor/Saline Road, Ann Arbor.

Have an interesting idea for a story? Call arts reporter Linda Whittemore at (734) 953-2145 or send e-mail to lwhittem@oe.honcom.net

Chorus from page C1

for music and other costs, and space for the chorus.

The group immediately began the schedule it continues today - a Christmas concert and Spring Show each year. They have per-

formed their Christmas program for patients and residents from Presbyterian Village in Redford each year since 1965.

Under the direction of Jim Whitten of Farmington, the Livonia Civic Chorus has grown to 70 members and holds auditions each January. "We are actively looking for new members," he said. Rehearsals are held Tuesday evenings at Frost Middle School in Livonia.

Whitten was appointed director of the chorus in 1994. Each performance throughout the year is closed with "Music You Are A Friend to Me." The chorus's signature song tells how much music means to the singers.

At the Christmas concert, former chorus members are invited to the stage to sing with the group.

"No founding members are in the Farmington area. Barber, as music coordinator for Farmington Public Schools, had produced a similar festival for students. Barber also founded the Farmington Community Band with his wife Fern in 1968. The band, which is a member of the Farmington Community Arts Council, closes the festival with a concert 3 p.m. Sunday, May 7."

"We wanted to find a way to showcase all of the arts groups and unify our talents," said Barber. "We'd done something like this in the schools over three days but with the Coe Center available we thought why not make it a week-long celebration? We bus students in on Tuesday and Thursday, and this allows kids in groups such as the North Farmington Jazz Band to perform."

"There's something special every day. We want to show what all is going on in the arts. The Farmington Players have been around a long time, and the community chorus is celebrating 20 years. Many of the groups have been here 20 years and up."

The Farmington Artists Club has come a long way since holding its first exhibit in a hobby shop in the plaza downtown. Founded in 1965, the club went from location to location until it was invited to participate in the festival. Annette Lind, one of the charter members of the club, remembers the early years when exhibits were held at banks and churches.

"I'm happy to be part of the festival," said Lind, who won an honorable mention for her mixed-media work based on a math equation. "There's lots of light, and the festival brings in a lot of school children and people to look at the art."

New this year is the PTA Reflections exhibit spotlighting more than 70 pieces of art, music and literature created by students from across the United States. More than 600,000 entries were received. A musical composition by Nico Canzano of Livonia can be reviewed by means of a score and tape.

"We're excited to be part of the festival," said Aimee Ergas, Farmington PTA Council board member. "It's a good way to reach out to the community and showcase the talents of our students."

Ellen Kendall agrees the festival is a vehicle for arts organizations to encourage culture in the community. It makes all the planning and work begun last August worth it.

"It's an opportunity to bring all the cultural arts organizations together with exhibit, demon-

strations, concerts," said Kendall, chairwoman of the Farmington Community Arts Council. "I don't think any other community does this. It's a community event."

"I'm hoping it will bring people not only from Farmington but from all over to experience the rich offerings," added Commendouros. "It shows how arts are working at a community level. So often we think of the larger institutions, but it's organizations such as the Farmington Community Arts Council that bring arts into the lives of our children and adults."

**Arts events**

A Summer lecture series begins as part of the festival with a presentation on Vincent van Gogh by Hope Palmer 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 2. Tickets are \$25 for three lectures or \$10 each. Call (248) 743-1818 to register.

The Farmington Community Chorus celebrates its 30th anniversary with concerts 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, May 5-6, at Farmington High School. Tickets \$10, \$5 senior citizens and students, (248) 788-5322.

Farmington Players open *Kiss Me Kate* 8 p.m. Friday, May 5. The show continues weekends Saturday, May 27. Tickets \$15, (248) 553-2955.

Bettie Cannon is a Farmington Hills resident and a member of the Livonia Civic Chorus.

Be our guest. Submit columns and stories for consideration in *Arts & Leisure* to Linda Chomin, arts reporter, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. Include a daytime phone number. You can also e-mail stories to Chomin at lchomin@oe.honcom.net, or fax (734) 591-7279. For more information, call (734) 953-2145, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday.

Author from page C1

graphs. When I would visit she'd say, 'Let me show you what I discovered.' My goal, I thought, this is a novel waiting to happen."

With encouragement from her mother, Laura, Nathan's great-granddaughter and a Plymouth resident, Ryan started the project that would become her first published novel.

It's easy to get lost in the story that begins in 1843 when Nathan Kingsley, a farmer in Livonia Center, builds a house for his new bride, Mary.

As the story spanning five generations unfolds, you'll become acquainted with the Kingsleys and feel as if you know them and their neighbors. Picture Livonia through the eyes of Mary and Nathan Kingsley - nothing but farm land and forests - no subdivisions or malls.

There's plenty of drama too - a runaway slave takes refuge in Mary's cellar, spiritualists hold a seance in the parlor, a diphtheria epidemic brings heartbreak to the family. Scheming Horace, Nathan's son, tries to cheat his wife out of her property and commit her to an insane asylum.

"It's a wonderfully romantic story," said Ryan. "The house did inspire me very much. There are no pictures of Nathan or Mary, so I don't know what they looked like. But the house is simple yet beautiful, and all done by hand. Nathan, 22, could neither read nor write, yet he built a house of classical symmetry in the Greek Revival style on land that 10 years before had been wilderness."

The Kingsley House is part fact, part fiction. Some of the events mentioned in the book really occurred, but not necessarily to Nathan and Mary or their offspring. There was a diphtheria epidemic in Livonia in the 1880s and many children died.

"So far people can't tell what's fact and what's fiction," said Ryan. "That's great, that's the way I wanted it to be - seamless."

Because she didn't have a lot of source material, Ryan relied on stories from relatives, research, and her imagination.

Her hope is that The Kingsley House will inspire other people to research their family history. "There are real treasures to be discovered," she said. "The Kingsleys were ordinary, yet they lived more than ordinary lives. They were farmers, yet I found wonderful stories about them. I was struck by the basic everyday-ness of their lives. I found the extraordinary in the ordinary."

**JOB SEARCH Tip Of The Day**

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