

## THE WEEKEND

### FRIDAY



Help clear the fields of rocks, watch a sheep shearing demonstration, or test your cleaning skills during Spring Farm Days, continuing through Sunday at Greenfield Village in Dearborn. Village hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., call (313) 271-1620 for information, or visit [www.hfmg.org](http://www.hfmg.org)

### SATURDAY



The Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Young People's Concert, 11 a.m. at Orchestra Hall in Detroit features Faust Overture, by 14-year-old composer Colin Tuck, and music inspired by space. Tickets \$8-\$31, call (313) 576-5111 or [www.detroitssymphony.com](http://www.detroitssymphony.com)

### SUNDAY



Soupy Sales and Marv Welch present TV Bloopers and more, 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Sunday, May 7, Farmington Civic Theatre, 33332 Grand River, Farmington. Tickets \$25, call (248) 473-7777.



The VSA Arts Festival 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, May 5, and noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 6, showcases more than 150 "very special" performers, including Fine Chimes, an art exhibit, and hands-on activities in art, music and movement at Wonderland Mall, Plymouth Road at Middlebelt, Livonia. Call FAR Conservatory, (248) 646-3347 for more information.

## A Farewell 'Kiss'



Kiss Me, Kate: Angie Tyburski, (left to right) Nate Kaufman, Marcia Peterson, Beth Egan-Bradthe, Lisa Muscio, and Eric Henrickson practice their lines for the production that features Cole Porter's music and lyrics.

## Players say good-bye to barn with production of 'Kiss Me, Kate'

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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Dressed in paint-speckled sweats, Emily McSweeney hardly looks like a director as she puts finishing touches on the dressing room of one of the lead characters in *Kiss Me, Kate*.

It's a bittersweet moment: *Kiss Me, Kate* is the final production at the old Farmington Players Barn on 12 Mile Road. After a fund-raiser and performance on Saturday, June 3, the red structure will be razed to make way for a new theater. The 240-seat facility is scheduled to be completed in time for the opening of the Farmington Players' 2001-2002 season.

A jack-of-all-trades, McSweeney believes when you're working on a large show, everyone has to pitch in. "And that's why the Farmington Players have existed for 48 years. McSweeney is at the theater, on a Tuesday afternoon, painting sets with the help of Beth Mackie, a volunteer. *Kiss Me, Kate*, a musical comedy with music and lyrics by Cole Porter, opens Friday, May 5.

"This is the part you don't get a lot of help with," said McSweeney. "But it's really like painting by numbers. Bill Mandt drew all of the designs on the flats and we're just filling them in. It's a lot of work and some of it is just tedious."

The set for the play-within-a-play only hints at the interior and exterior scenes in *Kiss Me, Kate*. Set changes will be incorporated into the musical.

### Moving the set

"We're not going to hide scene changes. The cast will be moving the set," said McSweeney. "There are 17 different scenes, but several repeat themselves. We begin by taking performers through the audience. During the opening number, the traveling troupe winds their way through the seats to the stage."

### Kiss Me, Kate

What: The Farmington Players present the musical comedy about actors in the middle of opening Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*; music and lyrics by Cole Porter

When: 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, May 5-6, Thursday-Saturday, May 11-13 and May 18-20, and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 7, 14, 21 and 27

Where: Farmington Players Barn, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, west of Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. Tickets: \$15, call (248) 553-2055

### Final Play

A special gala celebrating 48 years of community theater and the last show at the barn begins 6 p.m. Saturday, June 3 with hora d'oeuvres and a silent auction followed by *Kiss Me, Kate* at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$100. All proceeds to benefit the construction of a new barn theater. Call (248) 553-2955

Nate Kaufman (Fred Graham) and Angie Tyburski (Lilli Vanessi) play the lead characters preparing to open a production of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. The divorced couple bicker and romance their way through *Kiss Me, Kate* just as Petruchio and Kate in *Shrew*.

"Fred thinks he's a big shot," said McSweeney. "This is the out-of-town premiere in Baltimore, and the story opens at the closing of the final dress rehearsal and concludes with the end of opening night. We're turning the tables on the bard and having women play men because we were short of men. I want to go for the fun."

"Since rehearsals began in February, there have been a few bumps in the road with schedule conflicts. But the cast has been wonderful, working together and rolling with the punches."

### Labor of love

McSweeney spent hours researching the history of the play. She's brimming with all kinds of interesting information about *Kiss Me, Kate* including the fact it was the first American

musical ever produced in Poland. One of the most intriguing is the tradition of a ghost light that will greet the audience as they enter the theater.

"In Shakespearean time everything was out in the open," said McSweeney. "When theaters were enclosed, they had to use candles and kerosene lamps. When the audience would come in, a light - a ghost light - was lit so no one would fall into the pit. When incandescent lights came in the '20s and '30s, they kept the ghost light. It stood to appose the restless spirits of the theater."

### Behind the scenes

Backstage, McSweeney makes one last check of wardrobe for the production. The Farmington Hills director is responsible for assembling the men's outfits. Cynthia Tupper sewed all of the women's costumes.

"I love to do period costumes," said McSweeney. "Modern-day shows are fine, but I love to be able to research the period. This is in two periods, modern-day actors from the 1940s-50s era and *Shrew*, which is set in Shakespearean times."

Angie Tyburski loves the full-length skirts and gold and jewel colors of her Shakespearean costumes. Tyburski plays Lilli, Fred's feuding ex-wife. Lilli is well dressed, so her *Shrew* costumes are elegant.

"The Shakespearean dresses are gorgeous," said Tyburski, a Warren resident. "It helps you feel the part. Lilli is feisty, probably a little bit spoiled. She's in love with Fred but too proud to show it."

This is Tyburski's second production with a community theater, and she plans to do more come fall. She was in *The Women* presented by the Farmington Players in November.

"I just try to have fun with it," said Tyburski. "I try not to hurt Fred too much because I slap him a lot."

## BOOKS

## Fibblestax makes reading fun

*Fibblestax* by Devin Scillian, illustrated by Kathryn Darnell (Sleeping Bear Press, spring 2000, \$15.95)

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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Devin Scillian is a lot like the leading character in his new children's book, *Fibblestax*, loves words. He's especially at the peak of delight when naming a cat a cat, or a big mouse a rat.

It's not surprising that Scillian loves words. After all, he is a journalist who admits his favorite part of the job is writing. The WDIV-TV news anchor's journey into the world of country music as a writer and a player confirm life would be dull without the ability to create lyrical phrases that roll over the tongue and then ring in the human

ear. Scillian's love of writing for children goes back to his high school days in Junction City, Kan. It was there that Scillian wrote his first children's story. *Fibblestax* followed some years later.

If it hadn't been for the TV news anchor's involvement with literacy programs, *Fibblestax*'s words might have never been heard. Except for charming children at story-times in libraries, the story languished around for 10 years before it was published by Sleeping Bear Press in Chelsea this spring. Kathryn Darnell, a graduate of Franklin High School in Livonia, illustrated the book.

"It started with the word *Fibblestax*," said Scillian. "I got it in my head. I didn't know what it meant but I liked the way it

sounds. It got me to thinking about where words - me from."

Scillian admits *Fibblestax* is not an easy word to remember. But few will forget the young boy who goes around naming things - or the author who invents the villainous character Carr. A red-faced bear of a man, Carr calls flowers gunnywunka. He and *Fibblestax* eventually vie for the privilege of giving names to things.

"*Fibblestax* can be hard to remember or can be thought of as being memorable," said Scillian. "The trick was finding timeless ideas and then finding ways to make them fun for people. The book I grew up with - Dr. Seuss and Shel Silverstein - were ageless. A lot of adults despair the

Please See **FIBBLESTAX**, E2

