

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

Guest speakers celebrate books, famous women

Nancy Pearl knows that recommending books is never an easy task for librarians. Her first request for a good fiction novel came in 1987 at the Detroit Public Library where she advised readers after graduating from the University of Michigan.

What: The Schoolcraft College Women's Resource Center celebrates Women's History Month with a series of lectures and a symposium.

Lecture and buffet luncheon — 11:45 a.m. Wednesday, March 28 in the McDowell Center, Room 200. Admission \$5, \$3 students.

Monday, March 26 is the ticket deadline, call (734) 462-4443.

Nancy Pearl speaks about her recently published book — 7 p.m. Friday, March 30 in the McDowell Center, Room 200. Both the lecture/luncheon and presentation by Pearl take place on the main campus, 18800 Haggerty, between Seven and Eight Mile roads, Livonia, (734) 462-4400.

Pearl will moderate a symposium on books and reading — 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 31, followed by lunch, in Room 320 at the Radcliff Center, 1751 Radcliff St., south of Ford Road, Garden City, (734) 462-4770.

in celebration of March as Women's History Month.

Mysterious

"I think that it's very mysterious why people find certain books fascinating," said Pearl, a librarian and executive director of the Washington Center for the Book at the Seattle Public Library. "They like books for reasons they're not aware of. It's usually something in their background."

"Reading fiction is primarily an escape. People read fiction to look into other people's lives. Many of us are voyeurs at heart. Reading about other people helps us with our own."

Please see EXPRESSIONS, C2

Now Read This

By the book: Nancy Pearl will share insight from "Now Read This," a reference book she wrote to help readers choose enjoyable mainstream fiction.

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STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BEEKER

Practice makes perfect: Ann Leiting and David Lipford play with the Plymouth-Canton Middle School Orchestra every morning before attending their regular classes. Erin Zurbuchen (bottom left) and Catherine DePentu team up to teach the dedicated young musicians.

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Catherine DePentu lets out a blood-curdling scream halfway through "Rosin Eating Zombies from Outer Space." DePentu, director of orchestras for Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, is "trying to create pictures in the heads" of the 80 or so students in the district's middle school orchestra.

It's a little past 7 on a Tuesday morning, and these young string players are beginning to come to life after rising early for the class at Plymouth-Canton High School. The music is a compilation of every bad horror film ever made, and the students are loving every minute of it.



Dedication — Students with their dedication, the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools Orchestra invited the group to play at a concert in February. Today's lesson, with DePentu and Zurbuchen, is just a few of the reasons students, such as associate concertmaster Scott Huddas, join the orchestra. The experience inspired Huddas so much that he plans on one day becoming a member of a professional ensemble such as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

ened the school day. At one point it was held only on Saturdays, then put back to first hour, which is zero hour for these kids. We started out with 20-25 students four years ago. There's now close to 80."

Joey Chesney is one of the students who gets up early and leaves for school while it's still dark to play with the orchestra. "If he has a lot of projects to assemble before school Chesney rises at 4:45 a.m. That takes dedication and discipline — and a mother willing to drive him to the class at the high school. After the 45-minute session, Chesney boards a bus that takes him to Pioneer Middle School to begin his regular school day."

"I think orchestra is educational and very good," said Chesney, who began playing violin four years ago as a student at Kembrook Elementary in Farmington. "The teachers are really good. They make jokes and make it fun."

DePentu's sound effects and the humor she and Zurbuchen infuse between lessons are just a few of the reasons students, such as associate concertmaster Scott Huddas, join the orchestra. The experience inspired Huddas so much that he plans on one day becoming a member of a professional ensemble such as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Fun

"I just thought it would be fun," said Huddas, who won a scholarship to attend Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp this summer.

Rachel Johnson couldn't agree more. She's waiting outside the locked door to the choir room at 6:30 a.m. eager to play with the orchestra.

"It's just fun to play," said Johnson, an eighth grader at West Middle School.

"Most of us are here because it's really fun," added Alycia Wilder, who began playing violin in fifth grade at Lawton Elementary in Ann Arbor. "At the end of the year we go to Cedar Point as a field trip. One of the hardest things is getting up, but also some of the things we play are kind of tricky."

Concertmaster Brittna Auerbach doesn't find the music as challenging as her schedule. The 13-year-old rises at 5:30 a.m. for orchestra then stays after school for swimming or softball practice, depending on the season.

"I do like orchestra cause it's fun to play," said Auerbach, who began playing violin three years ago.

Notable devotion

Early risers embrace music

"I like playing fiddle tunes like 'Finnegan's Wake' and 'Eightsome Reel,' but it's difficult, especially when I do sports. Then I'm at school from 7 to 5. I usually go to bed at 9."

Recruiting

DePentu and Zurbuchen actually recruit students from Plymouth-Canton's five middle schools for orchestra just like coaches do for sports teams.

"We take all of the middle school orchestra kids and part of the high school orchestra on field trips so all fifth graders can learn about the class," said DePentu. "Each of the kids in the orchestra say they have friends who would play if it were during the school day so we made a proposal to the school board a year ago, and resubmitted it again in the fall, to include orchestra in the regular school day. We're optimistic with the new administration and the enthusiastic students and parents."

"The only students we lose are because they're overwhelmed. It's the inability to keep up with the schedule."

DePentu and Zurbuchen take turns teaching vibrato, slide and other techniques such as ear training. Zurbuchen plays a few notes, and then asks students to repeat what they heard.

DePentu, violin tucked under her chin, helps string players sitting in the back row. DePentu and Zurbuchen are still tuning instruments for some of the students, and teaching them the basics. It's all part of the process of nurturing these young musicians.

Zurbuchen recently began a class for 15-18 fifth grade violinists at Gallimore Middle School where

Please See DEVOTION, C2



Getting warmed up: Kirsten Schaefer practices fingering techniques for the tune "Rosin Eating Zombies from Outer Space."

FUND RAISER



Benefit auction: Cheryl Conlin donated this vibrant oil "Up the Mountain" for the Plymouth Community Arts Council fund-raiser.

Dinner auction appeals to arts lovers and everyday people

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Diane Harrison holds up the pink princess gown she hopes some mother will "just have to bid on for her little girl." The costume comes tucked inside a toy chest hand painted by Leslie Kabza. Harrison came up with the idea for the one-of-a-kind item as a way to attract a broader variety of bidders at the Plymouth Community Arts Council's dinner auction Saturday, March 31. The 10th annual event, "An Evening of Elizabethan Elegance," promises a night to remember. The little girl, whose mother goes home with the toy chest, won't be the only one dressing up.

"I'm excited about my costume," said arts council executive director Jennifer Tobin. "We get to be kings and queens. My husband gets to be a knight. It's going to be so much fun. Everybody loves to dress up and pretend."

Matt Watroba will don the robes of King Henry VIII to lead bidding for the live portion of the auction. Along with the more than 40 art works by Edee Joppich, Donna Vogelheim, Phyllis Hochlowski, Leslie Masters, Cathy Dyer, Pam Grossmann, Barbara Demgen, and Jack Olds there will be a print from Wild Wings Gallery. Jim Quinlan's painting of boats under full sail is already drawing the attention of arts council members. So too are tickets to Red

An Evening of Elizabethan Elegance

What: A gala dinner/auction featuring live music by The Couriers.

When: 6 p.m. to midnight Saturday March 31.

Where: St. John's Conference Center, 44045 Five Mile, Plymouth.

Tickets: \$60, call (734) 410-4278.

Please See AUCTION, C2