

## ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

**Storytelling helps us connect with each other**

**A** week after the attack on the World Trade Center, David Massengill sounds as if he's recovering from the shock that thousands of New Yorkers were buried under the rubble of the collapsed twin towers. New York has been his city for the last 25 years, and it hurts to watch the families and friends grieve for the innocent victims.

Two weeks ago the loss of a close friend, who was a chef in one of the towers, left him reeling.

This week he plans to talk about New York when he appears at a storytelling festival on Friday and Saturday at the Livonia Civic Center Library. It's all part of the healing process for him.

"I love New York," said Massengill. "Everybody who lives here, belongs here. That's what Storytelling Festival featuring family and adult performances, and workshops. When: 7:30 p.m. Fri., Sept. 28 and 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sat., Sept. 29. Registration begins one-half hour earlier on both days. Where: Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile, east of Farmington Road. Tickets: \$45 both days, \$40 Saturday only, \$12 Friday adult performance (\$8 age 60 and up), and \$2 Saturday family performance. Call (734) 761-5118 or (313) 824-6388.

persuasion — race, religion, it doesn't matter. Everybody belongs here. I take pride in that. I'll be telling New York stories about living here and connecting to people.

"What happened in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania is truly tragic. Being a storyteller is more important at times like this. Storytelling allows us to talk to each other like human beings. Hearing a story helps to heal things. Everybody has a personal story. Everybody has a disability.

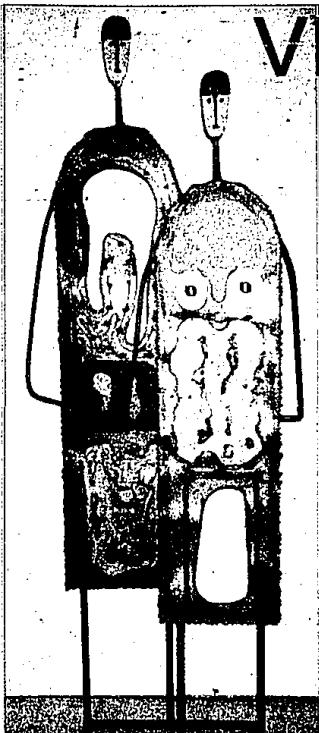
Massengill thinks his stories will help people and people of our past and the laughter we found there. At age 60, he's doing a lot of looking back. There'll be stories about his father, Aunt Gladys, and a North Carolina dulcimer maker. Massengill came to New York's Greenwich Village from Tennessee 25 years ago to be part of the folk music movement. Between stories he plays his songs, some of which have been recorded by Joan Baez and the Roches.

"When we get to a certain age, we think about the past, the moments when people were not talking past each other. I'm going to tell funny, sweet remembrances like one about the North Carolina dulcimer maker Edsel Martin, spelled Edsel like the car. Martin like the guitar. He was part Cherokee, part mountain man. His whittlings are in the Smithsonian. His hound dogs are very famous."

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**Folklore: New York storyteller David Massengill tells tales about family and friends in a festival at the Livonia Civic Center Library.**



**Constructions: John Neering welds life-size figurative sculpture from metal.**

By LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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**N**ancy Chapo Mendoza marvels at the quality of work she selected for the *Art With a View II* exhibition presented by VSA arts of Michigan (formerly Very Special Arts). The West Bloomfield artist never realized the struggles artists with disabilities encountered as they created paintings, sculpture, clay, and mixed media works for the exhibit opening Sunday, Sept. 30, at the University of Michigan.

One week in, she fell and broke her arm in four places while hanging a painting. For eight weeks Mendoza spent many hours trying to figure out how to create art while wearing a cast from her shoulder to her wrist.



**Many faces: Richard Perez struggles with cultural and disability issues in this clay work titled "Interconnectedness."**

## CONCERT

### Music series heads south of the border

By LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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Listening to members of the Peter Soave Sextet talk about their upcoming concert at the Scarab Club is enough to make any music lover want to buy a ticket.

Farmington violinist Velda Kelly is looking forward to the program of passionate tangos from Argentina, music by Venezuelan composer and American jazz — as much as anyone in this audience.

"I'm excited about everything," said Kelly, who plays with the Peter Soave Sextet, Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra, and as an extra with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. "The sextet is so much fun to play with. The music is different from what we normally play — new tango music by Astor Piazzolla, very rhythmic, sultry music. Venezuelan music by Romero has a more popular edge. It's complex and interesting music, and American jazz favorites performed by Peter and Marion Hayden, a well known bassist and founder of the jazz group Straight Ahead."

Kelly and Soave, an accordionist and bandoneonist,

# VERY Special ART

**Exhibit focuses on talent, abilities**



**Road to market: James Smith threaded a brush through his fingers to paint this scene in**

*Art With a View II* artists deal with the challenges of disabilities everyday.

"I thought the work was excellent. In the eyes of a viewer who didn't know, they wouldn't know the artists are disabled because it's a good show," said Mendoza, who's preparing to exhibit at the Plymouth Community Art Council in September and November 2002. "I think VSA is a great vehicle to encourage artists and anyone with a physical disability. Breaking my arm left me with an appreciation for people with physical disabilities.

"It gave me a better understanding of working with a physical disability, not to mention the depression you go through."

Judy Calloway hopes, like Mendoza, viewers come away from the exhibit with a respect for artists with mental and physical impairments. Second in a series of biennial exhibits, *Art With a View II* spotlights the artistic achievements of professional Michigan artists. After jurying by Redford sculptor Sergio De Giusti, the first exhibit toured 13 museums, art galleries and centers around the state. Calloway is looking for spaces to book the exhibit through June 2003. The first stop is sponsored by the Council for Disability Concerns at the University of Michigan.

"We're putting work out there that deserves to be exhibited," said Calloway, an Orchard Lake resident. Calloway coordinates *Art With a View II*, one of the programs offered by VSA arts of Michigan. *Art With a View II* provides arts classes for disabled persons of all ages as well as a registry for profes-

**Art with a View II**  
What: An exhibit featuring painting, drawing, clay, and metal sculpture by professional artists with mental and physical disabilities.  
When: Sunday, Sept. 30, to Friday, Oct. 12. Viewing hours are noon to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 1-5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday.  
Where: Art Gallery in the Media Union, 2282 Beaubien on the North Campus at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Call VSA arts of Michigan for information about its programs at (313) 832-3303, or Pat McCull at the University of Michigan at (734) 647-2655.



**Window on the world: Donald Paynter used acrylics to create this painting after a stay in a mental institution.**

**sional artists. "The most interesting thing is the artist's expression. Curiosity is the nature of disabilities. People in all sectors of society are having to face disability issues. The exhibit provides an arena to talk about disability, creating opportunities for people to address the issue. It's easier to ask questions and stumble because it's around art. Art is safe."**

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**Music of romance: The Peter Soave Sextet includes (left to right) Velda Kelly, Soave, Victoria Halton, Barbara Zmich, Nadine Deleury, and Marion Hayden.**

Please see SCARAB, C2