

Sunday, September 23, 2001

## 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.

**What:** Storytelling Festival featuring family and adult performances, and workshops. **When:** 7:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 28, and 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 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) 824-6368.

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 in the audience is a storyteller."

Massengill thinks his stories will help remind 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, Alvin Gladys, and a North Carolina dulcimer maker. Massengill came to New York's Greenwich Village from Tennessee 26 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.

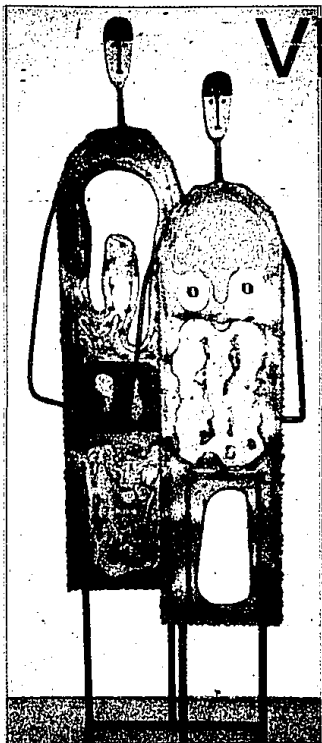
"When we get to a certain age, we think about the past, the moments when people were not talking past each other. I'm going to tell funny, sweet remembrances like one about the North Carolina dulcimer maker Edsel Martin, spelled Edlin like the cat. Martin like the guitar. He was part Cherokee, part mountain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

Please see EXPRESSIONS, C4



PHOTO BY TAZES YOUNG

**Folk lore:** 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  
STAFF WRITER  
lchomin@ee.homecomm.net

Nora Chapa 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.

Until, that is, 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."

# VERY Special ART

## Exhibit focuses on talent, abilities



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

*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 Arts Council in September and November 2002. "I think VSA is an important 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-



**Window on the world:** Donald Panyter 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 issues. It's easier to ask questions and stumble because it's around art. Art is safe."

Please See VSA, C2

### 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, 2281 Bonisteel 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 McCune at the University of Michigan at (734) 647-2655.

## CONCERT

### Music series heads south of the border

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER  
lchomin@ee.homecomm.net

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 — passionate tangos from Argentina, music by a Venezuelan composer and American jazz — as much as anyone in the 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 interest and founder of the jazz group Straight Ahead."

Kelly and Soave, an accordionist and bandoneonist,

### Chamber Music at the Scarab Club

**What:** Peter Soave Sextet opens a chamber music series with a program featuring music by Venezuelan composer Aldemaro Romero, new tangos by Argentine's Astor Piazzolla, and American jazz.

**When:** 7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 30. **Where:** Scarab Club, 217 Farmington, behind the Detroit Institute of Arts. **Tickets:** \$15 advance, \$18 at door. Call (248) 477-1487.

not only love the music but the environment in which it's presented. This is the fourth season for the Chamber Music at the Scarab Club series. The sextet played the first program in the historic building located behind the Detroit Institute of Arts.

"It's a real jewel," said Soave, a Farmington Hills resident. "Not too many people are aware of it. It has a warm, personal ambience. A lot of history lies between



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

Please See SCARAB, C3