

## DISABILITY TALK



CARRIE TYNAN

## Society needs to change its perception of the disabled

Hello. My name is Carrie Tynan. I was born with cerebral palsy, which caused my hearing, visual, physical and health impairments. As a child I had open-heart surgery to repair five holes and two slits in my heart. I also went through years of speech and physical therapy. Today, I wear hearing aides and glasses.

I attended Cass Elementary and Stevenson High School in Livonia in the main-stream program. Those years were full of many ups and downs. After high school I searched for a small college that had support services for people with disabilities. I finally received my bachelor's degree in social work from Madonna University.

During my college years I finally accepted my disabilities and learned to live independently. More importantly, I learned to advocate for myself and to be my own person.

After graduation I went on several job interviews with many rejections. I finally found a job as a paraprofessional working with children with disabilities. I worked with emotionally, mentally and physically impaired children of all ages. I most enjoyed working with autistic children. It was very challenging and inspiring.

Through these experiences I learned how much I enjoyed helping and working with people with disabilities. Unfortunately, I was not a substitute paraprofessional, and I needed a more permanent job. I went on to work at a department store in customer service. However, I soon realized how much I missed my true dream of working with the disabled population.

Over the years I have kept a personal journal, writing about my feelings and personal experiences. I decided to start my own monthly column based on my experiences, the goal being to help and inspire others. I started researching the Internet looking for markets. Inspired Web Site contacted me with great enthusiasm to publish my column, "Carrie Writes," monthly. My topics included disabilities rights, accessibility and improving people's lives. Before I knew it, my column was published on Enabled Online, Disabled Person, Reach Out Magazine and Ideal Lives.

In addition to my online column, I moderate a weekly chat session on multiple disabilities at Hearing Exchange Web site. I am also writing my autobiography and short stories about teens with disabilities. When not writing, I enjoy reading, shopping, surfing the Internet and spending time with family and friends.

The hardest part about being disabled is coping with people's misconception of having disabilities. Many feel the disabled are helpless and incompetent. Many tend to draw away because they do not know how to act. In my younger years I lost friends because they didn't understand my disabilities and were embarrassed. I soon learned they were not my real friends because they couldn't accept me as a whole person.

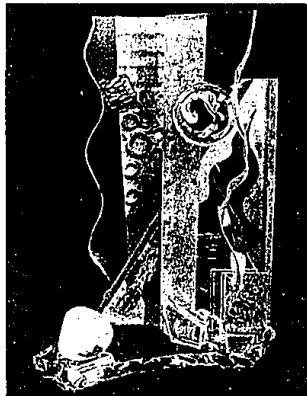
When I entered college many people in my dormitory were very protective, wanting to baby me and not hurt my feelings. I had to prove to myself and others how strong I really was. Today, I see my disabilities as characteristics of myself and as daily challenges. It is only fair to see everyone as an individual and focus on their positive characteristics. I went on job interviews where employers focus on the limitations of the disabled rather than on what accommodations can be made for them to do their job.

Many people are surprised that I attended college, write, and am independent. I say never make assumptions without having all the facts. All individuals should be respected and treated equally.

Carrie Tynan lives in Livonia. She will write a monthly column for the Observer-Newspress on a variety of disability issues. You may contact her by e-mail: [carriewrites@yahoo.com](mailto:carriewrites@yahoo.com) or at her Web site: <http://clix.to/writer-fiction>

## Enjoy festival's

# Art on the Grand



Variety is the spice of life: Above and right, a wide range of art, including contemporary sculpture and glass works will be on display and offered for sale at Art on the Grand.



Coming off a successful inaugural season, Art on the Grand will again occupy Memorial Park, near the Masonic Temple in downtown Farmington with a mix of fine arts, music and entertainment for all tastes and ages.

## Schedule of Events

### JULY 18

#### NOON - 9 P.M.

- 6-8 p.m. - Jeremy Kittel, U.S. Scottish Fiddling Champion and John Behling, master jazz guitarist

### JULY 19

#### 9:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.

- 2-7 p.m. - Balloon Man Dan & Lovely the Clown (grounds)
- 3-5 p.m. - Southern Son, Classic Rock
- 5-8 p.m. - Maurice the Art Critic, wandering comic
- 6-8:30 p.m. - Miguel Gutierrez Jazz Project

### JULY 20

#### 9:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.

- Noon-6 p.m. - Balloon Man Dan & Lovely the Clown (grounds)
- 1-4 p.m. - "Groucho Marx," wandering comic
- 2:30 - 4 p.m. - Red Garter Band
- 4:30 - 5 p.m. - Daphne Wright School of Highland Dance
- 5-8 p.m. - Maurice the Art Critic, wandering comic
- 6-8 p.m. - Benny Cruz Y La Buena Vida, Latin music

Art on the Grand, the new popular fine arts section of the Farmington Area Founders Festival, will return again July 18-20 to Memorial Park, located on Grand River Avenue in downtown Farmington. The initial fair last year was a surprising success, and received enthusiastic responses from visitors and artists alike, said Nancy Counoundouras, Cultural Arts coordinator for Farmington Hills and Farmington.

Art on the Grand features the works of artists from around the country in the form of paintings, wood, glass, jewelry, pen and ink and metal. As well as fine art to see and buy, the fair offers interactive art experiences.

Live music by high-quality performers in a cozy park setting is one attraction, with a schedule full of variety and style for all tastes, including the fine musicianship of Jeremy Kittel, a talented 18-year-old, named U.S. Fiddling Champion in 2000; the Red Garter Band, a lively festival standard; the Miguel Gutierrez Jazz Project, a young and energetic jazz group; and Benny Cruz Y La Buena Vida, "the Ambassador of Latin Music."

Along with music on the stage, visitors will be met by some characters wandering the grounds, including "Groucho Marx" or "Maurice the Art Critic." Children will be able to have their faces painted for free, as well as see "balloon art" on Friday and Saturday.

They can stop by the free Children's Art Tent and make a take-home creation, have their picture taken in a "masterpiece" face board, and become a part of painting, or wonder at a "live" sculpture. Tents featuring artwork from high school artists and the Farmington Artist Club will also be open.

Also on tap will be a special performance designed for seniors. The Farmington Hills Department of Special Services from 2-3:30 p.m. Thursday, July 18, will honor seniors 60 years and older with the World's Oldest Living Sex Section, who have just released their new CD, "Still Sexing It." Complimentary shuttle service will be provided by the department's special services senior division from the Farmington High School parking lot. Call 473-1856.

Art on the Grand is presented by the city of Farmington Hills Special Services Department with support from the Farmington Area Art Commission, Michigan Council for Art and Cultural Affairs and the Farmington Community Art Council. For more information, please call (248) 473-1856.

For more information about the Farmington Area Founders Festival, visit [www.foundersfestival.com](http://www.foundersfestival.com)



Wild art: Ted Nelson will be among the featured artists at this year's Art on the Grand, held during the Founders Festival.

## Officials dedicate sign at Sprague House

Mayor Nancy Bates dedicated an historical sign in front of the Alonzo Sprague House on June 22. Members of the Farmington Hills Historic District Commission, the Planning Commission, the Historical Commission and the Farmington Historical Society were there.

The 1847 Greek Revival house was built by Alonzo Sprague on a 46 acre farm that had been part of a larger holding his parents, Caleb and Lydia Sprague, purchased when they came to Farmington in the 1830s.

Caleb came to Detroit in 1834. He purchased a 190 acre farm in Farmington Township. The Sprague family built a log house. Lydia and Caleb had four sons, Alonzo, Lorenzo, Caleb J. and Jonathan.

Alonzo was 12 when his parents brought him to Farmington. He grew up and married.

In 1847 Alonzo and his wife Miranda built a house and had their first son, Elliott. Elliott was the first of nine children.

By 1864 the charming Greek Revival House was probably getting a little small. Alonzo and Miranda moved to another farm in the West Farmington area. They sold this farm to Alonzo's younger brother Jonathan.

Six years later Jonathan and his wife Helen sold the farm to Henry Mason. Henry Mason's family came to Farmington from Canada. Henry was two years old.

Henry Mason was active in local business and politics. He served as Farmington Township supervisor from 1867 to 1869.

After he died in 1896 at the age of 74, his widow Anna sold the property to Thomas Irving. Thomas Irving had a machine shop on Grand River in the city of Farmington. He did industrial metal work and also a lot of hand metal work with unusual designs.

Thomas Irving was born in England in 1855. He came to Farmington in the 1890s.

He and his wife Bess raised their grandchild, Lemuel Irving, who grew up in the house after his parents died.

At one time an apartment was built on the second floor in what were originally the up-stairs bedrooms. There was an outside staircase leading to the apartment.

Now the outside stairs are gone and so is the apartment. The bedrooms are restored.

Lemuel Irving married Mildred Graham whose family owned a near-by property. Lemuel eventually inherited the house and did extensive modernization and some additions. He died in 1983 and sold the property to another electrician, the present owner.

The house is a wonderful addition to the Farmington Hills Historic District. It even has its original outhouse, now converted into a tool shed. The old wells are capped, but their location is visible.

The house has a stone foundation and has a Michigan cellar where the original farmers once stored some of their produce. The main beams of the house are hand hewn timbers.