

Hot tickets

On exhibit

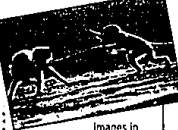
Check out Claudia Shepard's paintings through Oct. 19 at Au Courant Interior Design Studio/Gallery, 23255 Woodward, Ferndale. Included in the show is one of Shepard's dress paintings.



her signature work. Gallery hours are 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. (248) 548-3770.

Wildlife photos

The BG Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibit opens Saturday, Sept. 21 at the Detroit Zoo, located on the I-696 service drive at Woodward. Ninety



Images in the exhibition are winning entries taken from a photo competition organized by the BBC Wildlife Magazine and The Natural History Museum in London. Admission to the zoo is \$8 for adults, \$6 for senior citizens and children, ages 2-12. (248) 398-0900.

Fall festival

Press apples for cider, dip a candle or make a corn husk doll.

Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 21-22 at Kensington Metropark near Milford. The activity schedule for both days is:

- Rosco the Clown, featuring Balloon Man from noon-3 p.m.
- Children's stories by Ron Hinman at 1 and 2 p.m.
- Candle dipping and apple cider making from 1-3 p.m.
- Barn building from 12-30 p.m.
- Barn raising from 2:30-3 p.m.
- Dairy demonstration with cow milking at 3 p.m.
- Rosco's Magic Show at 4 p.m.
- Horse-drawn hayrides from noon-4 p.m. The cost is \$2.50 for adults and \$2 for children and senior citizens.
- The Northern Stars Country Couples dance team also will perform at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 22.
- The Kensington Metropark nature center will offer fall-related crafts from 1-4 p.m.
- Most events are free. Admission to the park is \$3. (800) 477-3178.

# Politicians are FAIR GAME for satirist Mark Russell

BY KEELY KALESKI  
STAFF WRITER

He's just a 70-year-old man, jumping up and down at his piano, defying his government, avoiding being a standing target. Is he on a mission, or just doing it for the money, or fun?

"On a mission, I like that," said Mark Russell, political satirist, PBS comedy icon, and guest of honor at Detroit Public TV's first *PBS Premiere* Night special event 6-10 p.m. Monday, Sept. 23. "But I'm still basically a lounge act. I should have a tip glass on my piano."

His performance at the Gem Theatre in Detroit is a highlight of the evening that includes:

■ A cocktail hour with accompaniment by musicians from the recent Sphinx Competition at Orchestra Hall.

■ Strolling dinner and an open bar.

■ Live and silent auctions of donated items that include art from Park West Gallery, a Blacklame Mink Coat, travel, jewelry, shopping sprees and more.

■ Sneak peek at highlights of the new Fall Season on Detroit Public TV.

Russell grew up in Buffalo, N.Y., and has fond memories of visiting his two favorite uncles in Detroit.

"Seeing the president on the Ambassador Bridge yesterday brought back a lot of memories," he said. "I haven't been to Detroit for awhile. I'm looking forward to it."

Comedian, songwriter, and satirist, Russell defies description. What do you call a guy with a knack for writing parodies with political themes who pounds piano keys and government at the same time?

Funny? Outrageous? Witty?

Russell is all of those things. His newest parody is *Proud to be Saudi Arabian* to the tune of *Proud to be an American*. It's difficult work, things can change overnight and writing one of these songs he says is kind of like a crossword puzzle—you have to make everything fit, but not telegraph the jokes.

He gets his ideas from reading newspapers—*The Washington Times*, *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. It's not a question of volume, he looks for the absurd, what someone said, or did. "I have 535 writers," he says. "One hundred in the Senate and 435 in the House of Representatives." Sometimes he'll even watch network news for inspiration.

When Russell's on the road he reads local newspapers to make things topical. He'll be talking about Iraq and corporate scandals, and how you never used to worry about nuclear weapons in Dearborn until Sept. 11.

His comedy special first aired on PBS in 1976, and consistently places in the top five rated shows on that network. He's also a weekly commentator on CNN's *Inside Politics Weekend*, writes a syndicated column, and has recorded CDs, tapes and videos.

Not bad for a guy who got his start at the smoke-filled Carroll Arms Hotel Bar on Capitol Hill making up songs about customers, many of them politicians.

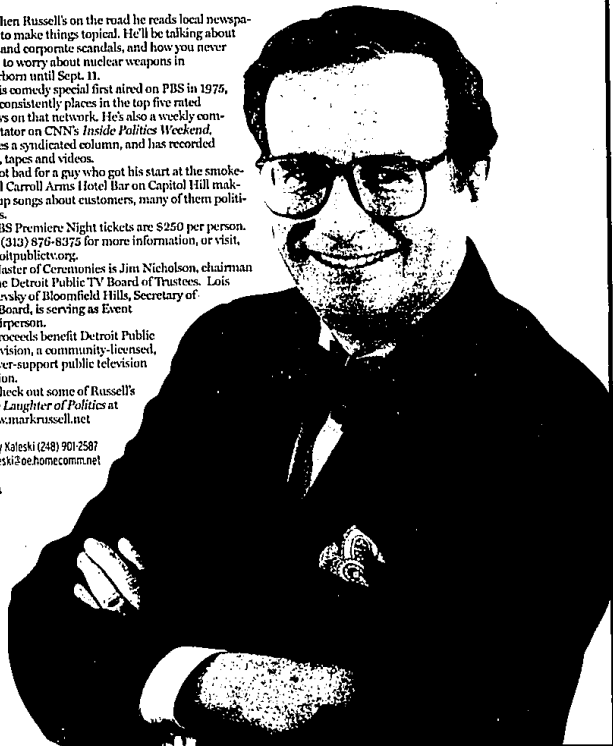
PBS *Premiere* Night tickets are \$250 per person. Call (313) 876-8375 for more information, or visit, [detroitpublictv.org](http://detroitpublictv.org).

Master of Ceremonies is Jim Nicholson, chairman of the Detroit Public TV Board of Trustees. Lois Shauvelsky of Bloomfield Hills, Secretary of the Board, is serving as Event Chairperson.

Proceeds benefit Detroit Public Television, a community-licensed, viewer-support public television station.

Check out some of Russell's *The Laughter of Politics* at [www.markrussell.net](http://www.markrussell.net)

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## Comedian wannabes write own show

JIM STRICKFORD  
CORRESPONDENT

Don't think Detroit is the place to start a comedy writing career? Think again — and just ask Cara Trautman.

The 27-year-old Bloomfield Hills resident studies improvisational comedy at the famed Second City Theater's Detroit location. She and four other students recently culminated a year-long comedy-writing program by writing a stage revue, *Crass Reunion*. It will be performed on three consecutive Tuesdays, starting Sept. 17, at Second City, 2301 Woodward, across from the Fox Theatre in Detroit. The show begins at 7 p.m. A showcase of improvisation classes starts at noon on Saturday, Sept. 21. Admission is \$5. (313) 965-2222.

Writing students complete five levels of eight-week classes. During the first four levels, students learn about different comedy techniques and styles, as well as characterization, with an eye toward writing for the stage.

The fifth level is the ultimate final exam. The students, under the tutelage of Second City main stage



Director Kiff Vanden Heuvel (left) in a show planning session with head writer and teacher Kiek Hanley.

performers, write and produce their own show. They audition and cast actors, create a show theme, refine previously-written sketches, devise new material, write songs, design programs, create props and publicize the show.

Trautman enrolled at Second City after returning from two-and-a-half-year stint in the Peace Corps in Gabon in Africa.

"My time in Africa made me realize that if you have a dream, it stays with you," Trautman said. "Many of the people I met over there didn't have the opportunity to pursue a dream like mine. To live in America made me realize that I had to give this a try. So many people in the world will never have the chance to

PLEASE SEE COMEDY, D4

## Golf resorts add spas, other fun

BY MARY QUINLEY  
CORRESPONDENT

My golf fanatic siblings were skeptical. Yet I knew better.

"Of course it's possible," I said, referring to my claim that vacationers could spend a day or a weekend at a golf resort, never set foot on a fairway or green, and enjoy themselves.

To prove my point, I decided to trek north of the city. My non-golfer buddy, Victoria Diaz of Livonia, happily accompanied me to check out some of the mitten-shaped state's golf destinations. Each resort we visited featured fabulous golf opportunities. We declined.

Instead, we indulged in magical massages, a dinner



Head north to a golf resort and indulge in a facial.

PLEASE SEE RESORTS, D6