

Decoy carver shows his stuff

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

An invitation to go duck hunting with a friend is what sparked commercial artist Larry Hayden into becoming one of America's premiere duck-decoy carvers.

Hayden, of Farmington Hills, has won the highest honor in every contest in which he's competed, including the U.S. National Show, the Canadian National Show, the Midwest Decoy Contest, the International Decoy Contest and 13 Best of Show for decorative decoys.

"I've been carving for 19 years," Hayden said from his home studio, decorated with a few decoys and prints of water fowl.

"I started out as a hunter, but I phased out the shooting end. Because of the limited time I could spend on a marsh, I found I'd rather spend it shooting with a camera."

When Hayden began carving, he used his first decoys hunting. "I had more fun doing them than as a hobby," he said. "It was fun to watch the ducks fly in and swim next to the decoy."

Now his work is strictly decorative for sale and show. Each decoy is the result of 100 hours of work. Hayden studies his subjects in their natural habitat. One of his favorite duck-watching spots is Texas, a wintertime refuge for many species.

Photographs, sketches and even mounted birds help him recreate the fine detail work that goes into each decoy. He studies the feathering texture, color and shape.

HE BORROWS bird skins from museums to study plumage.

One of the design problems he has to deal with is floatation. Decoys are hollow so that they draw very little water when placed in a tank for judging. He uses basswood for its pliable texture.



"The grain in the wood lends itself to detail," he said.

Among recent honors for Hayden: inclusion of his biographical sketch and two print reproductions in a book called "American Artists of Renewal" and winning the first Texas Duck Stamp design contest for a drawing of a pair of mallards.

Hayden beat more than 70 contestants vying for selection of their design to be chosen for the stamp and a limited edition of prints. The stamp, which must be purchased by hunters and affixed to their license, generates revenue for preservation of wetlands.

Hayden also won the first Michigan Duck Stamp competition in 1977 for a painting of a pair of canvasbacks. He won the Michigan contest again last year for an acrylic painting of a pair of lesser scaup sitting in water on a calm day.

Hayden gave up his career as a figure illustrator for a Southfield-based company three years ago.

"Now I'm exclusively doing limited editions (prints) and carvings," he said.

The most common ducks around Farmington are mallards, he said. Hens are the most drab.

Hayden exhibits at the Wild Winds Gallery in Plymouth, Chandler's in Pieskesky and Wildlife Art on the Hill in Grosse Pointe.

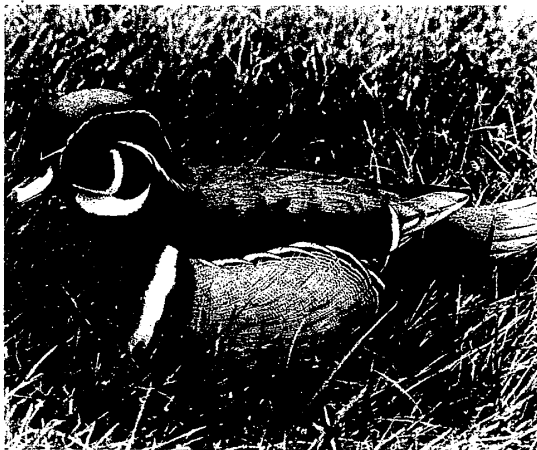


A hen pintail (above) shows the tremendous detail work that goes into Hayden's decoys. At left, carved basswood in the early stages of design.



Larry Hayden in his studio with a painting of a pair of ducks. Hayden works exclusively at home now.

Photos by
R. S. Wilson



A decoy on the front lawn of the Hayden household could easily pass for the real thing.

INSIDE ANGLES

BY MARY RODRIQUE

A **BOUQUET** of knitting needles to Mamie Bancroft of Farmington Hills who won first place in the 1981 Michigan State Fair's bedspread needlecraft and other handicraft contest.

The nation's oldest fair, which opened its 128th season on Aug. 28, continues through Labor Day, Sept. 7. It's administered by the state Department of Natural Resources.

SURPRISE is what insurance executive Richard Headlee of Farmington Hills expressed when 63 volunteers showed up for a recent meeting of his Michigan Citizens Supporting the President group.

Headlee hosted the crowd of Reagan supporters in the headquarters of Hamilton Life Insurance Co. of America on 12 Mile Road, where he is president. Headlee was expecting only 40 workers to spread Reagan's gospel across Michigan.

Among those present: Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson; Sen. John Welborn, R-Kalamazoo; former newscaster and candidate Vic Caputo; anti-ERA activist Elaine Donnelly; punk rock promoter Russ Gibb; State Rep. Kirby Holmes, R-Utica; Sen. Ed Fredricks, R-Grand Rapids; and Farmington Hills Mayor Donn Wolf.

BUS RIDERS take note: The 851 West Bloomfield-Farmington Hills Detroit Park & Ride SEMTA bus will be rescheduled starting Tuesday, Sept. 8. The first inbound trip will leave Pine Lake Mall at 5:45 a.m., with expected arrival at Blue Cross-Blue Shield at 6:54 a.m. And the second inbound trip will leave Pine Lake Mall at 6:14 a.m., with expected arrival at Blue Cross-Blue Shield at 7:20 a.m. The remainder of the schedule will remain the same.

LYNN SILVERBERG of Farmington Hills, spokeswoman for Michigan's Voice of Reason, an organization founded last year to counter the Moral Majority, will be keynote speaker at "Action Alert: Saving the Eighties" sponsored by the Womencenter of Oakland Community College, Orchard Ridge campus, Sept. 17.

The project will explore the impact of political and social issues for the Eighties. The issues in Public School students. Elementary students are to report to their schools Sept. 8, Tuesday for morning classes only; sixth-graders are to report to middle schools for orientation Sept. 9 in the morning, with all students reporting in the afternoon; and high school students are to register Sept. 8. Classes begin Sept. 10.

Sponsors of the event include the Michigan Education Association's Women's Caucus, the National Lawyers Guild of Michigan, National Organization

for Women, Oakland County Crisis Center, and Planned Parenthood. Activities are free.

WRITERS ALERT If you're interested in joining a local writers' group, come to the Farmington Community Center, 24715 Farmington Road, tomorrow from noon to 1 p.m. There's no fee. Bring a sack lunch and meet other writers. For more information call the center at 477-8404.

KUDOS TO KARMA Lochrie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Locarie of Farmington, who has been awarded a Ph.D. degree in English Literature by Princeton University. In 1977, Dr. Lochrie was graduated magna cum laude from DePaul University, where she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Mortar Board and spent a month as a reporter trainee with the Indianapolis Star in an experience related program. Dr. Lochrie joined the faculty at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu.

DR. WILLIAM BAHAN will speak on "The Planetary Initiative for the World We Choose" on Monday, Sept. 14, at 8 p.m. at the Mercy Conference Center, 28600 Eleven Mile Road. Dr. Bahan is a founding member of the Whole Health Institute of New York. Her serves as an international director of the Society of Emissaries and is director of the Art of Living Classes nationwide.

LASER TECHNOLOGY week is coming Sept. 21-25. Photon Sources Inc., 12160 Globe Road in Livonia, will host demonstrations. Operations of industrial CO2 lasers will be featured. Visitors will also get a firsthand look at laser work stations, accessories, computer control units, and techniques used in field service and customer training programs. A variety of laser processed production parts will be available for close-up inspection. Demonstrations will include ceramic scribing, precision welding, selective-area heat treating, intricate contour-cutting of steel, and rapid cutting of wood and plastic.

SCHOOL REMINDER: This is officially the last week of summer vacation for Farmington Public School students. Elementary students are to report to their schools Sept. 8, Tuesday for morning classes only; sixth-graders are to report to middle schools for orientation Sept. 9 in the morning, with all students reporting in the afternoon; and high school students are to register Sept. 8. Classes begin Sept. 10.

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