

Monday, February 28, 1983 O&E

## Louise DiVitto

# On stage and back stage with Greenfield Village Players

By Lorraine McClish  
staff writer

Two zany maiden aunts, a pair of crazy nephews and a brother who tries to hold the whole bunch together comprise the cast of characters of "Arsenic and Old Lace" now playing on the stage of Henry Ford Museum Theater.

"Every one of them is a part any good actor would give his eye teeth for," Louise DiVitto said. DiVitto takes the role of Martha Brewster, one of the zany aunts, in the Greenfield Village Players' production of the comedy that has continued to lure audiences since it was written in 1941.

"We have to stick with period shows, you know. It's part of our job to depict an era on stage that will tie in with some educational facet of the museum," the Farmington Hills resident said.

"We're very fussy about sticking to original scripts, showing the culture of that era. And we're very particular about authentic costumes and props. Anyone who enjoys the history of any one period in the museum can step further by seeing us act out the culture of that period on stage."

DiVitto has been a member of Greenfield Village Players since the group was formed after the success of a one-summer Drama Festival in the

village. Since 1968 the players have staged five full-scale productions a year.

THESE DAYS DiVitto is working both day and night at Greenfield Village.

By day her job is assistant to the management in the museum's Performing Arts Department. By night she is putting the end to the lives of lonely old gentlemen on stage in her role as one of the eccentric Brewster sisters.

"I still think of myself as an actress first, so when the casting calls are made — all of the shows have open auditions — every once in a while I'm there for the tryouts. Particularly for the character roles. They're a lot more fun, and you can do so much more with them than straight roles that so many times have no challenge at all," she said.

Challenges by day for DiVitto come from the technical ends of staging the museum productions, painting scenery, designing costumes or posters, or sending out publicity.

"Most recently I've been designing the sets. I have a degree in graphic arts and probably wouldn't have gotten this job if I didn't go back to OOC (Oakland Community College) to get it," she said.

And even though she still considers her job of supervising all of the vil-

lage's summer street shows as her favorite job there, "I never stopped acting, and I always seem to go back to it," she said.

DiVITTO WAS lured to Greenfield Village when a director invited her to audition for the players' first show after he saw her in one of Detroit's first cabaret shows, a forerunner to dinner theater here. She got the part.

Meanwhile she was a member of Livonia-Redford Theater Guild, a membership she's held now for about 20 years.

"And I still get calls from them every once in a while asking me to help out with something," she said.

She describes Greenfield Village as "a beautiful place to work; sort of like working in a small town. When I walk down the halls in the museum I feel like I'm saying 'good morning' to old friends or my neighbors on Main Street," she said.

She suspects she will meet other old friends when she's sitting on the other side of the auditioning table during tryouts for the museum's next show, "The Late Christopher Bean."

"Many, many actors and actresses come back for the tryouts because the museum has a good theater to work in, and the staff here bends over backwards to make the cast as comfortable

as possible," she said.

"ARSENIC and Old Lace" continues with 8:30 p.m. performances through March 12. All seats are reserved. Tickets are \$4.75, available daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the village entrance, or at the Museum Theater box office beginning one hour before each performance.



On stage Louise DiVitto carries the lethal glass of elderberry wine that puts the end to a dozen of her visitors in "Arsenic and Old Lace." Off stage she works in Henry Ford Museum's Performing Arts Department as assistant to the management.



Plans to convert the family basement into the Panama Canal are discussed in a scene from "Arsenic and Old Lace." The Brewster sisters are played by Ann Blecker, at left, and Louise DiVitto. Seated is Sam Yungermann who takes the role

of Dr. Einstein. At right is John Rogers, playing the role of Teddy who fancies himself as Theodore Roosevelt in the Greenfield Village Players production.

## Garden study course offered

Reservations are being taken now for a two-day "Gardening Study Course" offered March 23-24 in Orchard United Methodist Church by District I of Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan.

Members of Hill and Dale Garden Club are serving as hostesses.

Among the guest lecturers are Kenneth Allen, botany and biology instructor at Schoolcraft College, whose talk is called "Techniques for Growing Out-

door Flowers."

Nancy Butler, Washtenaw County extension agent, will tell about "Plant Classification."

Gregory Patchin, an extension service agent from Michigan State University, will talk about proper pruning.

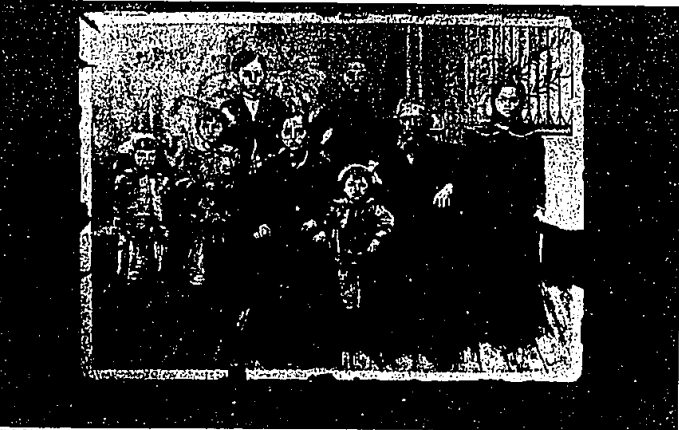
Leu Nelson's talk is called "The Environment on Plant Growth." Mary Gerathy, known as "the herb-lady" from Greenfield Village, will tell her secrets of success in growing, preserv-

ing and utilizing herbs.

The agenda also lists a teaching tour of Matthaei Botanical Gardens.

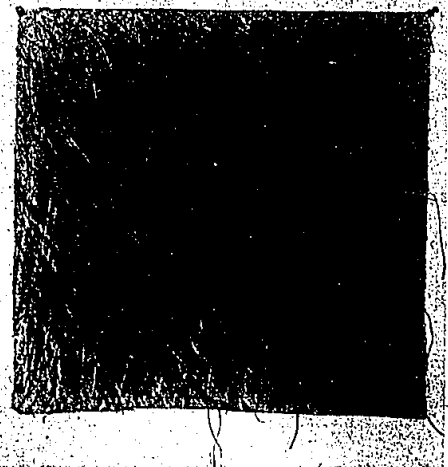
The course runs from 8:50 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Cost for the course is \$10 a day. Those who wish to work toward certification as a Gardening Consultant will be charged an additional \$2 for the test which will be given March 25.

Gunderson will take inquiries at 553-8223.



## Two winners

Artists Eileen Aboulafia and Barbara Dorchon, who share a studio in Farmington, are both winners in the Center for Creative Studies Alumni Show, now on exhibit in the Detroit Artists' Market, 452 Randolph, Harmony Park. Aboulafia won for her work "Europe II" (above), and Dorchon for "Sedition" (at right). Aboulafia, using oils and mixed media, produces paintings and assemblages which are nostalgic, illusionary and photographic. Dorchon's work is executed with pastels, crayon, pencil, graphite and fibers to create abstract canvases of depth and motion.



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