

Sculpture walk seen as Southfield focus

By Shirley Rose Ideen
staff writer

Long known as a city without a downtown, Southfield may soon become a sculptural parkway designed to create an elegant focus.

The city's Business Consortium for the Arts (BCA) is working on the parkway, still only in preliminary planning stages.

Each month delegates to the consortium's rotating steering committee gather at 7 a.m. to discuss the business of bringing culture to the workplace and to all people in Southfield.

"You might think the people are half asleep at that hour," says Lucius Theus of the Allied Corp., "but we give them a hit of strong coffee and they pick up and get a lot done."

A Birmingham resident, Theus came to Bendix two years ago after retiring as the commander in charge of accounting and finance at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Presently director of civic affairs for Allied (as he was previously for the Bendix Corp.), Theus is the corporate coordinator for the BCA.

Once a city official, he liked the idea that Southfield is the perfect place to spawn a cultural revolution. Those who are in on the action know the upheaval has already begun.

Southfield put its commitment to the arts on record when the city hired Marilou Belanger, a Farmington resident, as the first full-time arts director in any Oakland County city.

IN HER two years on the job, she has overseen art shows, coordinated free exhibitions, and produced lectures, trips, an opera workshop and other various programs.

"Art for everyone," Belanger pronounces. "And the consortium is unique. There's been no known example for us to follow."

The first phase on the BCA's agenda, bringing art to the public, has been in operation for several months with the cooperation of the 88 member businesses and corporations.

In the first months of BCA's phase one, 303 individuals were part of 43 performances including dance, vocal, instrumental, lectures, mime, and art exhibitions in various media.

"People who are shy of their own artistic knowl-

edge now are having art brought to them in their workplace," Theus says. He adds that Allied Corp. employees have willingly volunteered to help at receptions when new exhibitions opened.

"We rotate our meetings as well as the performances and exhibitions. Some restaurants in Southfield are exhibiting works provided and find it hard to fathom that there's no charge."

"It's good for them. It's good for the people and good for business."

Art experiences to date have been brought to Federal Mogul, Holiday Inn, Bendix, American Motors, Allstate Insurance Co., Prudential Town Center, Macomb County Insurance Co., Tel-Twelve Mall, and the Gulf and Western Corp., and others.

The city has provided staff, transportation, materials and sound systems for the performers.

"PERFORMANCES are videotaped and the tapes go to the performers, which can be a big boost for them," Theus says.

Moving ahead on the consortium's phase two, the steering committee is looking for a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). "This will help us do the design work and get on with it," says Theus. "That may take a while but it will be good for us."

Belanger says the results of the proposal to NEA will be known in October, but the Southfield blueprint was well received.

"The parkway will be accessible by road, bike, and walking," she says. "Corporations will donate sites for seating areas. We may get rotating pieces donated. Each will have a plaque so viewers can enjoy the art by themselves."

Louis Redstone, noted architect and a consortium committee member, told morning meeting participants recently that Brea, Calif., has an ordinance which provides that some sort of art work be included in building plans before a permit is issued.

Beverly Goltner, associate superintendent of Southfield Public Schools, noted that through the consortium partnership "the lives of many people can be enriched beyond the dollar and cents value."

Two VISIBLE manifestations that the consortium is on its way are its new logo, designed by Laura Landmesser, and the premier sculpture, designed and built by Mel Leiserowitz and put in



Presentations by the Business Consortium for the Arts included a mime group who performed at Bendix and the Prudential Town Center.

'People who are shy of their own artistic knowledge now are having art brought to them in their workplace. It's good to find the workers enjoying a performance or viewing an exhibit.'
— Lucius Theus

Antique show announced

The Oakland Humane Society will hold its fifth annual antique show and sale Friday, Saturday and Sunday at Birmingham Masonic Temple, 357 N. Woodward, Bloomfield Hills. Hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$2.

Art work doesn't look good if not displayed right," says Theus, "what we're looking for, and LIT is researching, are functional flats that might be both a shipping container and a display board."

Promised on the seal of the city of Southfield are: Culture, Commerce, and Education. With a climate rich in artistic experiences and reaching for even more enrichment, the city's arts movers and shakers are getting up steam in their cooperative

the cost of feeding and housing the more than 400 animals currently in residence at their shelter. The Society, which operates solely on public donations, memberships and fund raising events, doesn't destroy animals, but tries to place them into good homes.

All proceeds are used by the non-profit Humane Society to help defray

For antique show information, call 892-7822.

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