



While one portion of Lois Bro's home studio is filled with all of the equipment needed for sculpting, another portion is devoted to all the equipment needed for dressing dolls and creating soft sculpture.

A penchant for dolls

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Her studio now comprises the entire ground floor of her home where Bro begins with a clay portrait model for the doll's head, hands and feet, and follows through with mold casting, pouring and firing in porcelain, sanding, hand painting the porcelain, making the doll's body construction, then dressing the doll.

She also creates life-sized sculpture portraits, limited edition dolls, and is now mid-way into her Women Artist Series that was featured in "Doll Reader," a national publication.

Next to come in the Women Artist Series is Sarah Bernhardt, and when her doll-image is completed will be added to a slide-lecture package to be used in presentations.

"It's all to be shared. I am not a closet collector. Anything that's worth keeping or collecting should be out on display, shown, shared and appreciated," she said.

She shared her doll collection with others by opening a doll museum in Royal Oak and that sharing-philosophy is one of the characteristics the art commission's selection committee states as a must when choosing its Artist-in-Residence for the year.

BRO SHARES her love for creating dolls by teaching in "Dolls by Joyce" in Westland on a regular basis and has offered a wide variety of classes in both soft sculpture and sculpting in Farmington Community Center on a periodic basis.

She is a featured artist in Carolyn Hall's book "Soft Sculpture" and she is creator of "Burnie Bird."

The original "Burnie Bird," a soft sculpture creation, is in Children's Hospital now. The character was commissioned by Detroit Chapter of National Council for Jewish Women and is used as a symbol for burn prevention.

Center shares award

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A QUILT that is now hanging in one of the center's rooms depicts the heritage of the house, and because it was a gift from volunteer quilters, it simultaneously depicts the warm feelings residents have about having their own community center.

A similar example is a children's book which contains a history of the house, written again by volunteers, The Ridgewriters, who use the community center as a meeting place.

The grounds are utilized almost as much as the insides of the house, for picnics whether public or private, for shows from the amphitheater stage, for painting classes, for nature study, for building snowmen.

"The building provides the physical structure, but it is the human element of the staff and volunteers which guarantee its continued success," said Alice Nichols, a member of the selection committee which named this year's award winners for Farmington Area Arts Commission.

"We're fortunate to have such a center which connects the history of the past and reaches to the future in service to the arts and in service to our residents," she said.

Short story returns to favor

By Cathie Breidenbach
special writer

The recent Short Story Symposium sponsored by Detroit Women Writers and Friends of the Detroit Public Library drew writers and devotees of the short story to the main Detroit Public Library for a two-day conference.

The symposium is a new endeavor for Detroit Women Writers who also sponsor the popular Oakland University Writers' Conference each October.

Symposium director, Cynthia King, said, "There was a hunger for literary dialogue among Michigan writers so we decided to bring literary people to the Midwest for a conference. We felt we were immensely successful; not only did we break even and not go in the red, but there was excitement in the auditorium and people came away with the feeling

Conductor is saluted

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sicians can hear themselves play in an auditorium, rather than in some catch-a-catch-can band room. That contribution was one of our most fortunate."

OAKWAY SYMPHONY has been heard, at one time or another, in every city in the Plymouth-Troy route. The years have brought varied presentations that ran from the symphony's performance with Victor Borge at Meadow Brook to the closing of Founders Festival as fireworks were shot off in synchronization to the "1812 Overture."

Along the way, cabaret concerts became a standard part of Oakway's subscription series, generally given in Madonna College for the different style of music that demands a different kind of space.

"We only give one of those a year and I know we would be sold out if we gave one a month," DiBlasi said. "I decline that because Oakway is a symphony orchestra and I want to keep it where it belongs. I believe in good music and just want to play good music well."

What DiBlasi describes as "a feather in Oakway's hat" is the Young Artists Fellowship competition, funded by Michigan Foundation for the Arts.

"We started that for young musicians about five or six years ago and now it's being copied all over the state. This year we had five winners who not only got money prizes, but are featured performers for one of our concerts in the year."

"That's one of the fringe benefits that came out of Oakway; that and the unknowns who started to play with us and are now going up the ladder and being able to demand some pretty hefty salaries," he said.

ON THE MONEY end of things, in Oakway's beginning years only union card holders got paid. Three years ago the turning point came when all of the musicians began receiving salaries.

"Ticket sales don't do this. Ticket sales never do this, there are always special projects, special fund-raisers that have to be arranged by our board and our women's association to keep us in operation," he said.

DiBlasi describes his profession as "a free-lance musician" and he describes Oakway as "one of my several full-time jobs."

A former trumpet player for Detroit Symphony Orchestra, he performs on both trumpet and piano with Full Cycle Quartet which keeps him busy playing music for whatever the occasion throughout southern Michigan.

"I'm a performer," he said. "My first love is performing. I was certainly not committed to conducting when we started out, but I've stuck with it for 12 years because of the committed musicians that are in Oakway, the high calibre who come to auditions every year, the believers who back us, and the full houses who turn out to hear us."

DiBlasi said the symphony is always looking for board members. He is always looking for dates to fill up Full Cycle Quartet's calendar. And Oakway will be auditioning for new members for its 1985-86 season.

"You can call me about any of these things at 522-7846," he said.

that literature is a pretty grand thing."

One hundred sixty-eight writers from all over Michigan and out of state attended the discussions, workshops and readings by nine accomplished writers.

A panel of small press editors introduced the audience to the many literary journals which publish quality short fiction and have launched the careers of many short story writers.

WILLIAM ABRAHAM, editor of The O. Henry Awards for the past 18 years, chooses the winning stories for the annual collections primarily from those published in literary journals.

Three New York editors, William Abrahams of E.P. Dutton, Ted Solotaroff of Harpers and Gordon Lish of Knopf discussed the status and future of the short story.

King calls the three, "men who were crucial in perpetuating a revival of the short story in America."

Multitasking short story contests and increasing interest in short fiction inspire many to claim that a short story renaissance is in progress.

Editors Abrahams, Solotaroff and Lish spoke of the reality that despite burgeoning interest in short stories, publishing houses still sell far fewer story collections than novels. The consensus was that "There is no future in writing short stories if you want to get rich, but good writers don't need to go hungry."

Critics, agents and editors explored what elements make a story memorable and worthy of publication.

Elinor Benedek, editor of "Passages North" literary magazine, said she's "always hunting for the story with that something that changes the reader, a prick of the pin or a blow on the head."

Nine published writers who've collected an impressive array of awards and accolades for their short fiction read from their work. The varied stories had in common rich, sometimes lyrical language and the ability to hook listeners into the world of the story through the writer's mastery of the storyteller's art.

Nancy Willard, Newberry award-winning author of children's books and author of the acclaimed short story collection "Angel in the Parlor," opened

the readings and spoke of the connection between storytelling and story writing. "Telling a story is as simple as conversation. The object of the game (of fiction) is to tell the lie and in the telling of it to make it true."

CONTEMPORARY stories read by Michigan writers Stuart Dybek, "Childhood and Other Neighborhoods"; Pautette White, and Janette Kauffman, "Places in the World a Woman Could Walk"; and stories by Max Apple and Gordon Lish were all written in the present tense and from first-person point of view.

This is a departure from the entrenched tradition of telling stories in third person past tense. This new style of storytelling has the advantage of immediacy and strong emotional impact.

As Alan Chuse, writer and critic for National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," said, "Stories make shapes out of feeling."

The stories read at the symposium offered listeners ways to cope with their own lives and their own mortality. They shaped experience and offered sense, certainly not the didactic sense that old-time stories were expected to provide, but an emotional sense that lingered in memory.

CHEUSE and Charles Baxter, "Harmony of the World," and the soon-to-be-released "Through the Safety Net," read from their work as did Michigan writer Gloria Whelan whose stories have been featured in the O. Henry and Pushcart collections of prize-winning stories.

At round-table workshops, each participant had an opportunity to read his own story and hear a professional writer and others in the group discuss its merits and weaknesses.

In conjunction with the symposium, Detroit Women Writer's sponsored a short-story contest. Doris Langford of Ann Arbor won \$500 and publication in "Metropolitan Detroit" for her first-place entry, "And I Wonder What She's Thinking This Life Is."

"Passages North" will publish the second prize story, "Home" by Jan Gerber of Fremont, who received a check for \$175. Maria Bruno Holley of St. John won \$75 for her third place entry.

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