

Suburban Life

Lorraine McClish editor/477-5450



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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Martha Chalfant's east-meets-west garden contains about 300 tulips, 1,000 grape hyacinths and 300 daffodils, but she says her favorite is the tomatoes. She designed the patio and surrounding beds

and got landscape assistance for the rest of the grounds from Jim Sizozinski of Goldner Walsh in Pontiac.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Gold medal winner Frank Carrico's vegetable garden is separated by walkways. Some of the beds are elevated with steps which provides drain-off after heavy rains.

By Lorraine McClish staff writer

Seven area gardeners were given medals, cash prizes and a thanks for making their outside environment an enjoyable experience for neighbors and passers-by from the Farmington Garden Club.

Three now hold gold medals, and four hold silver medals given out after the judge's final tally of the club's first "Good Neighbor Garden Contest."

Frank Carrico took a gold medal for his practical and well designed vegetable garden where 3-by-4s are used to terrace a sloped lot at 29209 Bartlett, in Farmington Hills.

Gold medal winner Martha Chalfant won the top prize for her all-around well-landscaped garden with colorful flowers worked sensitively into the design, at 11000 Coronett, Farmington Hills.

Paul Paddon won his gold medal for what the judge's called "fantastic color." Paddon, who lives at 27844 Branzyne, starts all of his annuals from seed and works nutrients into the soil before planting.

Five judges from the club worked for two weekends throughout the two cities visiting the gardens of the nominees, who were named by neighbors and friends.

"The contest was our way of saying thank you, as well as publicly recognizing the gardeners who give pleasure to others," said Barbara Denton, who is president of the club, and served as one of the contest judges.

Denton is also a nationally accredited landscape design critic, whose purpose is to act as guardian, critic, promoter and planner of home and civic beauty.

THE JUDGES gave Walter Sunquist a silver medal for "a bright and beautiful addition to downtown Farmington." Sunquist's home at 32905 Grand River features a gazebo and decking off the house surrounded by annuals.

Marj Eitschele took a silver medal for the herb garden she grows and harvests for her extensive craft endeavors. Her garden at 33911 Macomb in Farmington "provides a lovely peaceful setting," the judges determined. In addition to herbs, the garden includes a small pond, an unusual bird feeder, and a tree house built three different times for children and grandchildren.

Silver medal winner John Modestz's garden is still in the growth stages. Judges were captivated by the wood deck, gazebo with brick paths and antiques incorporated in an interesting manner on the large wooded back lot at 32321 Valleyview Court in Farmington.

Chris Pickens was awarded a silver medal for the garden area that has been established in the public right of way between the sidewalk and the curb at 23308 Barfield in Farmington Hills.

"The garden adds greatly to the neighborhood where gardens are few," Denton said, adding that Pickens planted his garden in the hope that it would motivate others in the area to do the same.

Judges who worked with Denton for the contest are Eileen Abbott, Betty Frankel, Jan Dolan and Jess Lind. Abbott is a member of the Landscape Critics Council. Frankel is a garden columnist, a member of the critics council and a landscape design appraiser. Dolan is a gardening consultant, somewhat similar to a design critic, but with emphasis on botany, growing and good gardening.

The three gold medal winners also took cash awards of \$50. The silver medal winners took cash awards of \$25. All other nominees were awarded certificates of recognition.

"We had good community response to our first contest," Denton said, "but we know there are many more gardens of beauty and bounty in our area. We hope these homeowners and apartment dwellers will be entered in our next contest. We're planning to sponsor our next one in July 1986."

Job well done Gardeners thanked for beauty spots

Singer's voice lifted to boost opera students

By Shirlee Rose Iden staff writer

Marjorie Gordon has always believed that music is in her genes.

"I wanted to sing as long as I can remember and had music lessons since infancy," says the noted artist, a member of one of the world's largest musical families.

To date, the lyric coloratura soprano has logged an enviable track record of fluency, musicianship and versatility in opera, orchestral concerts, chamber music concerts, solo recital, theater, television, and radio, and she's still running.

With 40 major operatic roles in her repertoire, she has operated by the maxim: love music, have voice, will travel.

Married to violist-conductor Nathan Gordon, she has traveled with him to many parts of the world, usually on music business.

Gordon, who describes herself as "New York born, bred and buttered" came to Michigan as a "husband follower" when Paul Paray of the Detroit Symphony hired her husband as first violist.

Both Gordons have made themselves part of the metropolitan cultural community. He founded the Dearborn Symphony, conducted the Woman's Symphony and she started Detroit Opera Theatre.

"TODAY this has evolved into the Piccolo Opera Theatre, but it was the very first professional opera company here," she says. "Now we are invited to become Southfield's resident opera company. And we have the Piccolo Regional Opera Society (PROS) started to encourage opera growth."

"You can't live in a desert of culture and there's no need to, either. We have so much talent here."

Mining the talent is quite important to Gordon as is giving opera talent the opportunity to perform. Presently, she is involved with promoting a vocal competition being sponsored by the city of Southfield and the Maccabees Life Insurance Co.

The new competition, part of Maccabees' "Quest for Excellence" program, is open to vocalists in Oakland, Wayne, Washtenaw, Macomb, St. Clair, Livingston, Ingham and Monroe counties,

according to Maccabees vice president of communications Vincent Mercer.

Maccabees will award three grand prizes toward educational expenses of \$3,000, \$2,000, and \$1,000.

Cost of the competition are being underwritten by Maccabees with additional funds raised by PROS.

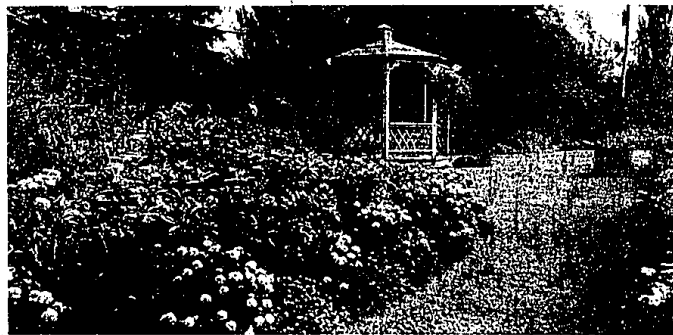
APPLICATIONS will be taken until Oct. 25 with a preliminary selection due Nov. 23-24. "In January we will select three groups of nine vocalists, then narrow it to nine finalists and the three winners," says Gordon.

"We hope to give the singers opportunities to perform in the area. Piccolo Opera is already internationally known and the Mid-Michigan Opera Company is planning an opera showcase."

Gordon says the vocal competition participants must live in the eight county area, be American citizens, have recommendations from two professional musicians and be prepared to sing five operatic arias in four languages.

Applicants must also apply a cassette or reel-to-reel tape of 15 minutes or less duration with the application, copy of birth certificate, and a \$10 check or money order as entry fee.

Those wishing to compete should obtain their application in person from the Cultural Arts Division of the Parks and Recreation Department at the Civic Center. To obtain one by mail, write: Piccolo Regional Opera Society of Southfield, 26000 Evergreen, Box 2945,



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

An estimated 4,500 annuals make up the splash of color planted and cultivated by Paul Paddon. The

gardener works nutrients into the soil before planting, and starts all of his plants from seed.



JERRY ZOLYNGUY/staff photographer

Marjorie Gordon, coloratura soprano and founder of the Piccolo Opera Company, describes the vocal competition being mounted by the Maccabees Insurance Co. in Southfield as a way to bring opportunity to opera students. Applications are being taken now for the competition which has cash prizes up to \$3,000.

Southfield 48037-2055.

"We want to keep the competition simple for now," says Gordon. "We expect many different levels of competency."

PRESENTLY PROS is asking for contributions to help fund the competition as well as opera programming. "We have different categories of contributors such as the Caruso Circle, the Pinza Circle and the Callas Circle," she explained. These contributions should also be sent to the Civic Center address.

Gordon, recently elected as secretary of the Michigan Center for the Arts, a center proposed for Southfield, says administrative duties have been keeping her busy. She has been an adjunct professor of music at Wayne State University since 1961.

Despite the fact her family are all musicians, they encouraged her to study in another field to make a living. "I decided to try dress designing and started Hunter College (New York) at age 17 as an art major.

"I had a minor in math and couldn't even add two and two, so I changed to Biology with a nature science minor. I've used every bit of this education."

On the musical side, her learning began "in fancy with piano lessons at age 5." But Gordon always knew she wanted to sing.

"My mom took me to the piano teacher at 8 and I was asked 'What do

you want to do?' and I said 'sing.'

At 17 she began vocal training, later making her debut with the New York Philharmonic.

"MY UNCLE was Mischa Mishakoff and one time I was visiting him and his bride as a quartet was rehearsing. I noticed a dark-haired man and it was musical."

From "noticing" grew courtship and Marjorie Gordon and Nathan Gordon were later married.

"They have a grown son and daughter and one grandson.

Part of her full calendar is her schedule of teaching at home. "I have students who have sung all over the civilized world in opera and jazz performance," she says.

"Maria Erving of the Met came to me at age 16 and I got her scholarship from the Music Study Club and Cranbrook. She later married Sir Peter Hall. Singing students come to you as adults, so they come fast and so."

"It's like having children all over the place."

Gordon's goal is to give her students and other their place in the operatic spotlight in their own areas.

"I hope the vocal competition will be a start in supporting the students and establishing a resident choral opera program we can enjoy right here."