

Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300

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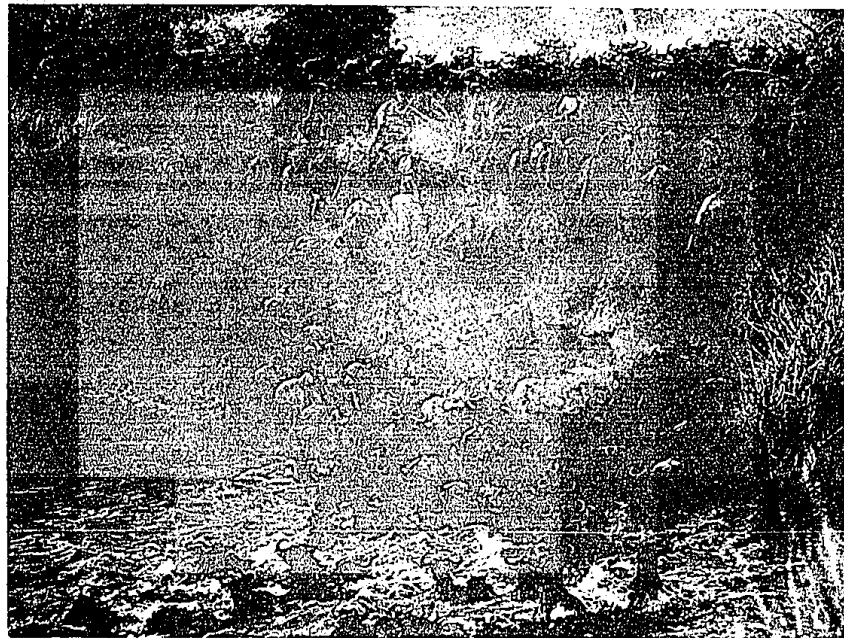
'In New Guinea I was working out of a dugout canoe. The river was 25 feet low and I had to carry everything up the muddy banks to the villages and I kept sliding down, but I really love it.'

— Norman Weiss



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

With knapsack, camera, he goes



It often takes the leader of the wildebeests a long time to decide where and when to lead the herd across the river in Kenya to better feeding grounds. Norman Weiss and his guide happened

to be right in front of the chosen spot at the most opportune moment.

In search of great shots

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

SANDIE WEISS THOUGHT her husband, Norm, was a little crazy to fly all the way to New Guinea for 3½ days of picture taking. That is, until she saw the pictures. Now she agrees with him, they're among the best he's ever taken.

She's an independent travel agent working out of Fisher Travel of Southfield and he's a dentist with a passion for photography that started when he was 13 and has continued for more than three decades. As travel agent and photographer the West Bloomfield couple have traveled the world, she researching accommodations and he taking pictures.

The New Guinea trip, which she couldn't make, was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, a 3½ day national tribal sing-sing, a gathering of tribes people from all parts of the country.

Weiss, a back-country photographer, said, "I carry two complete Hasselblad systems on my back, a backup of everything, three strobes, a 35 mm Leica. If everything else breaks. It's 50-60 pounds of equipment on my back and I don't even notice. Two years ago I picked up a padded knapsack."

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"I'd shoot for half a day, jump on a (rush) plane and shoot another half a day. In eight days, I was on 17 flights. I go after what I want," Weiss does all of his own printing and framing, likes the darkroom work and the control which it

gives him. "My problem is that I don't have enough time to stay in the darkroom."

STILL, HE'S PRODUCED enough work to fill his house and private home gallery, plus two and possibly a third show at the Macomb Art Center on the Mount Clemens campus of Macomb Community College. His photographs from Africa were exhibited there last year and his exhibit there now is titled, "Children of the World." The New Guinea photographs are next.

His photograph of a herd of wildebeests crossing a river in Kenya to follow the grass from the Serengeti Plain won first prize in a show at Macomb Arts Center last year.

"This is a rare film. A lot of them get killed, they break their necks . . . There's no predicting when and where they'll cross," Weiss said he and a guide were parked right at the place where they decided to cross. "I got on the roof of the Land Rover to get the angle. They were coming right at us."

The Weisses are planning a photographing trip to Africa this summer for 20 people. He will give several preparation classes before the trip.

"It will coincide with the migration — the peak migration time."

He said he particularly likes to photograph in Third World countries. "In all the Third World places I've been, people are very content, they don't know anything else. I find people are very nice. I carry a lot of toys, pens and stickers. And rings are real big, the kind a dentist gives for being good — and lots of T-shirts. I usually offer to pay when I take pictures, but I don't like to pay children. In the jungles of Cancun a friend

told me he didn't like to pay children because it turns them into beggars."

"I FIND ARABIC COUNTRIES very interesting. The thing is to get into the back country. I live in market places. I can sit there for two or three hours and watch. I get away from the tourist areas to the local markets. Arabic countries are very good for photographing faces."

Weiss was speaking quickly and naturally as he lifted one 16-by-20-inch color print after another from a flat box. "Late afternoon is my favorite time to shoot. I like that deep red sun. Everything I shoot is with a strobe. I never shoot without accessory lights — that is where I get the detail in the eye. Most people want to pose. I try to get them not to pose. Most people are hams at heart. Their attention span is very short, you have to work quickly. You're really intruding on their environment. Most have a little kid hanging on them or were doing something."

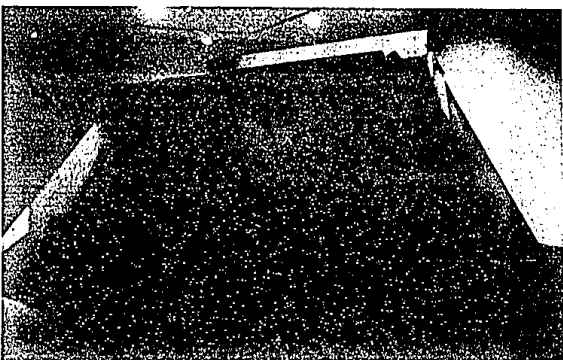
Weiss, said that while he has never had any photographic training, he worked his way through high school and college as a photographer.

"The Weisses' son, Steve, is a cinematographer with First Generation Film & Video of Chicago. While Weiss said he is in awe of the technical side of his son's business, he did make one significant contribution. When Steve Weiss needed some movie footage of Africa for a video for a major national account, his father came to the rescue. With a brand-new \$198 movie camera, he made the footage from a balloon on his last trip to Africa and said after seeing the video, that for a first try, it came out quite well. The Weisses also have two daughters.



The New Guinea woman, who had beautified herself with mud for a special occasion, had just rolled and lit her cigarette as Weiss set up to take her picture.

Finally, sculptor has adequate gallery space



Michael Hall's "Krakatoa/Waltz Crater" Inches high, 100 inches wide and 120 inches deep. of steel and wood is part of his exhibition at the Art Gallery of Windsor. It is 99

By Manon Melgaard
special writer

It is time well spent to visit Michigan sculptor Michael Hall's one-person exhibition at the Art Gallery of Windsor.

In 10 new sculptures, Hall, who has led the sculpture department at the Cranbrook Academy of Art since 1970, makes no claim to pretentious. His works unabashedly echo such products of industry as dumpsters, incinerators, boxcars, kilns, chimneys and columns.

Powerful and provocative, these structures speak a language of symbols and metaphors within the context of Midwestern industrial architecture and the wider framework of American art, cultural and social history.

Entitled "Mind to Matter — the Waltz Sculptures," the series evolves from Hall's systematic approach; in this case, three separate sheets of aluminum are folded into a four-sided form with an opening at the top, suggesting a vessel or a reliquary.

The title might sound euphemistic, but as the waltz is composed in a three-quarter time, Hall uses this three-into-four concept as a parallel to discover how many forms and variations may be made from this musical rhythm.

THE SCULPTURES are used-looking and monumental in scale. One can imagine our descendants wondering at the elaborate and almost ritualistic procedures 20th-century workers and craftsmen had to employ in order to fashion large structures out of sheet metal.

One behemoth, the approximately 16-foot high inclining trapezoid, "Waltz-Stele," resembles anything from a memorial

monument to a dumpster or a giant paper-shredder. The possibilities of interpretation are limitless.

As Hall said, "Art has content and style and is tied to that which irritates, provokes, beguiles, uplifts and otherwise locates an age."

It is doubtful whether any other location in the area could offer the high ceilings of the first floor gallery of the Windsor facility together with a second floor balcony where the works can be viewed from above. A smaller room leading from the main first floor gallery also includes a few of Hall's minimalist sculptures and a video tape of the artist, who demonstrates his manual work process and very articulately explains the philosophy behind his structures.

The Art Gallery of Windsor reopened in December after a 15-month closure, when asbestos installation was removed from the building and a large project of redesign, construction and reinstatement was implemented.

Apart from an ambitious program of ongoing temporary exhibitions scheduled for 1988, the gallery houses an extensive permanent collection of 19th and 20th century art and a selection of Canadian Inuit art.

The cafeteria gives a superb view of the Detroit riverfront from the third floor, where space has been developed for contemporary, changing exhibitions and a new photography gallery.

The present exhibition continues through Feb. 10. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, until 9 p.m. Thursday-Friday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday, 445 Riverside Drive, Windsor. Admission is free.