

# Trying something 'new' requires patience

I LOVE new art media or new techniques using old media. I love new art papers and boards and am thrilled for whatever time I can spare to experiment with them. The first time you try something new you must certainly be patient with yourself because whether it is "new" or not — it's new to you.

I remember many years ago my family and a few relatives decided to drive to Florida for a few weeks. I had time off from work so six of us piled into our car and off we went.

Passing a newly built bank, my wife yelled, "Oh, Dave, pull in here. We've got a check to cash. We're going to use it for our travel expenses."

Now we had only traveled about one mile and I said, "Oh good, I needed a break to stretch my legs anyway."

Of course, we were all gut-taught when we pulled into the bank. As

I steered into a parking space, Sandy said, "Pull up to one of those drive-in bays so you don't have to get out of the car." "Oh, sure," I replied with confidence. Still laughing, Sandy handed me the check. I took and set it under the plastic tube.

Then I made another cryptic comment. "Our first stop and you can still see the roof of our house!" said I.

AGAIN, WE were all cracking up with laughter.

I pushed the button and swoosh! Then a very sober-faced woman from the distant window asked: "What can I do for you?"

"I want to cash that check," I answered, matter-of-factly.

"There's nothing in the tube, sir," she yelled back at me.

Now, suddenly, no one in the car was laughing.

"In the tube?" I asked, my mind racing back to my action. "I put it



artifacts  
David  
Messing

under the tube," I confessed, almost unashamed. In whisper-like tones, I said into the microphone, "M'm, I put it under the tube, not in the tube." Then in unison, everyone in the car — and in the bank — yelled "UNDER THE TUBE!"

What happened next was almost pitiful. As the bank manager unbolted the sheet metal, I confessed I had never seen one of those pneumatic wonders.

"You see, sir, we were just leaving for Florida," I said, as he crawled into the box. "I'm so sorry, I... I... oh, thank you!" We all clinked as he emerged — with dirt on his

sleeves — holding the retrieved check.

I can still hear it, complete with echo, as the little gray-haired woman at the window, intoned in a deep, loud voice: "Now, put IT in the tube!"

THE FIRST time you try something is usually the worst time you'll ever have. Art materials are no exception to that rather negative rule. You have to be patient with yourself, be free enough to experiment, be bold enough to go for it, and be precise enough to use it well. So often customers and even my own art teachers will say something like,

"I don't like scratch board."

I will then ask if they've tried the heavy-weight or pre-circled or textured scratchboard. And always, no matter who I talk to without exception, I find they never truly gave a medium enough time nor experimentation to back up their negative statement.

With some exceptions for beginner's luck, the "first is the worst" rule applies to most media.

Even if your first venture into a new medium is a success, it will probably be inferior to your third, fourth and fifth work in that medium. That is, if your subjects are of equal criticalness and lend themselves to the medium. For example, pen and ink isn't the easiest way to do large scenery pictures. Or your first attempt at watercolor is not the time to try a portrait.

Big scenery pictures are easier with pastels or pastels and portraits are easier with pencils or pastels. So what you

choose to draw or paint is just as important as what material you choose to draw or paint it with.

People often ask me, "What is your favorite media?" A few years ago I would have said, watercolor and pen and ink. But now that I love every media about the same. Again, it all depends on the subject. The ultimate goal for an artist is to handle any media that best suits the subject. And likewise, be able to draw or paint any subject. This freedom is well worth the years or effort it requires. When you multiply the number of subjects by the number of media, you can easily see why you never tire from artwork.

So even if you at your first attempt, stay with it. As a matter of fact, I can now use most every media bank facility with ease — with, in fact, great success.

David Messing has been an art teacher for over 10 years. In addition, he is the owner of the Art Store & More in Livonia.

## briefly speaking

### SCANDINAVIAN HERITAGE OPEN HOUSE

The VASA Order of America, a fraternal Order concerned with the preservation of the Scandinavian heritage, will host an open house for all individuals of Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish or Icelandic heritage and their families, 2:30-4:30 p.m. in the Novi Community Center, 45175 10 Mile Road.

## Share your festival memories with us

Meadow Brook Music Festival celebrates its 25th season this year. The occasion will be commemorated by a special section to be included in the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers on Thursday, June 2.

Through pictures and stories, the section will chart the festival's growth. It will feature interviews with folks who were in on the planning during the early stages, as well as profiles of the stalwart corps of present-day volunteers who work diligently to keep the festival the top-notch event that it is.

But in planning the section, it's probably also true that there are hundreds of faithful concertgoers who have memories of their own

Entertainment will include a color slide presentation, "A Look at Sweden." Refreshments will be served. There is no admission charge. For more information, call 348-5593 or 348-3053.

### COBBLESTONE FARM CRAFTS

Historic Cobblestone Farm, 2781 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, will be

the scene of an arts and crafts fair from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 4, and Sunday, June 5. Sixty artisans from the midwest area will exhibit a wide range of arts and crafts in the juried show.

Family entertainment will highlight the fair both days 1-4 p.m. Saturday has a country folk theme with the Cobblestone Fair County Dancers performing with live music. Sunday afternoon will feature stylized jazz by Continuum. Food will be available from various food trucks. The restored 19th century farmhouse will be offered from noon to 5 p.m. for a nominal charge. There is no admission charge for the fair itself.

### MI-DSTATES CERAMIC

Dean Rockwell, author, lecturer and ceramic collector, will be guest speaker at the meeting at 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 18, of the Mid-States Ceramic Study Group in Lovett Hall, Greenfield Village, Dearborn.

His topic will be "The Flowers That Bloom in the Spring." He will show a variety of English, Continental and American ceramics decorated and enamelled by hand with spring flowers.

The public is invited.

### SEWING SEMINAR

Schoolcraft College's Continuing Education Services will host the 7th annual sewing seminar from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, May 14. For

they might like to share about why the music festival is so special to them.

We would like to include some of those special moments in the section. We are inviting readers to write and tell us about those memorable times. If your letter is selected, you will receive a pair of tickets to one of the Meadow Brook concerts.

It's Meadow Brook's "Silver Summer," but it's your golden opportunity to tell us just what the festival means to you.

Send your comments to: Meadow Brook Memories, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

a brochure describing the 40 separate workshops offered throughout the day, call 591-6400, Ext. 409. Registrations are currently being accepted. Workshop fee is \$30, with an optional luncheon at \$7. The seminar is open to the public.

### MAZURKA DANCERS

The Mazurka Dance Society is presenting its 23rd annual show on two consecutive days, May 20 and 21 p.m. Saturday, May 21 and 7 p.m. Sunday, May 22 at the O'Leary Performing Arts Center, Garden City. The show will feature 100 dancers appearing in costumes in a fast-paced musical review.

Admission is \$3.50 for adults and \$1 for children under 12.

### VINTAGE ARTISTS

"Vintage Artists of Michigan," an exhibition of older Michigan artists, sponsored by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging and the Michigan Council for the Arts, will be held at Madonna College, Livonia through May 29.

The free exhibit is in the Exhibit Gallery, Library Wing. Hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays and 1-4 p.m. weekends.

### QUILT SHOW

Trinity Piecemakers and Trinity United Methodist Church of Allen Park will hold a quilt and craft show at the church, 9077 Allen Road, Allen

Park, Friday, May 13, and Saturday, May 14. Show hours are 1-8 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Donation is \$1. Quilt appraisals will be offered on Friday by Birmingham quilter Merry Silber. There will be no charge for verbal appraisal, but a \$5 charge for a written appraisal.

### DOLLS EXHIBIT

16 Hands Gallery of Contemporary Crafts will host an exhibit of dolls, featuring four contemporary doll artists: Barbara C. Basler, Diane Harper, Stewart Wilson and Georgia Landau. The exhibit continues through June 25.

Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 1-8 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday. The gallery is in downtown Ann Arbor at 116 W. Washington in the Earle Building, and across from the Old German restaurant.

### ISRAELI ART

"Three Generations of Israeli Art" will be on exhibit at Gallery Yakir, 2908a Inkster, Southfield. Show hours are noon to 5 p.m. or by appointment. For more information, call 313-242-4280.

### FORD TRIBUTE

The International Opera Theatre will present a concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, May 22 commemorating the 125th birthday anniversary of pioneer automaker Henry Ford and paying tribute to the Ford Dynasty.

The concert, in the Henry Ford Centennial Library, will focus on Ford, the agriculturist, the nature lover, the businessman and the music lover. Tickets are \$10 and will include a chance in a benefit drawing for a getaway weekend for two at the Hyatt-Regency-Dearborn. For more information, call Dino Valve, 525-5255.

### MICHIGAN FINE ARTS COMPETITION

The seventh annual Michigan Fine Arts Competition continues at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association through May 14.

### GLASS EXHIBITION

Jean Sosin, noted glass collector, is the curator for the exhibition "Glass: Sculpture and Mixed Media" now in the main gallery of the Detroit Artists Market. In selecting work to be exhibited, Sosin has stressed works in which glass has been extended beyond the concepts of decoration.

Among the 34 artists represented in the show are Herb Babcock, head of the glass department at the Center for Creative Studies; Richard Ritter and Sidney Cash, glass artists who helped develop the glass movement in Detroit and have since moved to other cities; Barbara Wallace and Albert Young.

The Artists Market is at 1452 Randolph in downtown Detroit's Harmonie Park, one block southeast of the Broadway station of the Detroit People Mover.

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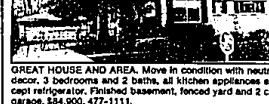
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