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SUBURBAN LIFE

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SOCIAL EYES

DENISE LUCAS

Bill Blass charms fashion show-goers

To enlighten Social Eyes with information on upcoming events involving Greater West Bloomfield/Lakes, Farmington and Southfield area residents, call 442-2339 or mail information to Denise Lucas at The Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

Well, wasn't Bill Blass the epitome of charm, wit and congeniality at the Meadow Brook Festival Women's Committee of Oakland University annual luncheon and fashion Friday in Rochester.

Everything I said about bad-boy Billy at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra Hall Show of 1990, I take back.

Blass, who has been know to be a bit haughty, captured the audience's attention with a warm friendly smile, his dry sense of humor and a most outstanding fall collection.

Could it be that the celebrated American designer has entered a new decade (turning the big "7-0" on July 22) or is the Cancer-Leo talent just mellowing like fine wine? Whatever, the man with more than 40 licensees, even surprised Saks personnel and made a special appearance after the show at the Designers Salon of Saks Fifth Avenue-Troy.

"This collection is very wearable," reported Cheryl Hall, regional fashion director of Saks Fifth Avenue.

"Designers are listening to what women want to wear," says Bill Blass, "and they prefer short to long."

See SOCIAL EYES, 3C

At Camp Somerset: *A squatting Katie MacDonald, 5, of Sterling Heights watches Adrian Lark fold napkins.*

STAFF PHOTO BY JIM HIMES

Attentive camper: *Lisa Pohl, 9, takes in all she can about table settings, napkin-folding, telephone manners and rules of etiquette at Camp Somerset, in Somerset Collection, Troy.*

Young campers study etiquette

■ Camp Somerset in Troy is a "day camp" with a difference. Kids don't go there to learn about the great outdoors but to sharpen their knowledge of etiquette and table manners, as well as grooming and dressing.

BY SHARON DARGAY
STAFF WRITER

On a Saturday in late July, a blazing sun and hot, dry air send youngsters to swimming pools, parks and playgrounds throughout Oakland County.

The weather — near perfect for camping — is a welcome relief after a month-long streak of unseasonable temperatures and rain.

But at one Troy camp, youngsters have traded the stunning summer climate for a windowless meeting room. About two dozen of them sit cross-legged and elbow-to-elbow at the feet of Adrian Lark, listening intently as she reviews essential camp equipment:

"The big fork is for main dishes. The small fork is for salad, appetizers and desserts," Lark says, extolling the uses of formal place settings. "There is a third kind of fork. It's real little. Does anyone know what it's used for? Anyone? Alex, what about you?"

"Uh, isn't it used for lobster?"

See CAMP, 2C

Family surrounds itself with the sound of music

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A squealing child and a ringing telephone fits right in with the blare of a French horn and the da-dum of the string bass. Call it part of the Hutchinson family symphony.

Music is a way of life for Marshall "Larry" Hutchinson and wife, Connie Klausmeier Hutchinson, who are both professional musicians and raising a family. He plays string bass for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra; she's the second horn in the Toledo Symphony Orchestra.

Aside from the DSO and TSO, they manage to find harmony in their Farmington Hills home raising a family and being involved in civic and charitable works when not practicing their art.

"You have to have someone who understands," said Connie, who met her husband while they were teaching at Western Michigan University. "When he practices until one o'clock in the morning, I don't say anything. It gives us a common bond."

Not to say there haven't been a few discordant notes along the way. A three-month strike by the DSO nearly two years ago came when Connie was pregnant with their second child.

Then when their second child, Ashley, now 17 months old, did arrive, her timing was a little off. Since the arrival was too quick to make it to the hospital in time, Larry had to deliver the infant in the family's home.

Otherwise, music has been the major labor of love. Both perform more than 200 shows a year, leading to a rather hectic schedule.

For Larry, the week goes something like this: Monday, day off; Tuesday rehearsals in the morning; Wednesday, two rehearsals; Thursday, a rehearsal in the morning and concert in the evening; Friday, usually a rehearsal and a concert; Saturday, a concert in the evening; and Sunday a concert in the afternoon.

■ 'When he practices until one o'clock in the morning, I don't say anything. It gives us a common bond.'

Connie Klausmeier Hutchinson

All of which leads to a tag-team approach to watching the children. He'll duck into his room to refine his string bass playing for an hour while Connie watches the children. Then she'll head into a separate room to practice the French horn.

A baby sitter often keeps an eye on the kids while the couple practices.

"What people don't realize is it's new music every week," Connie said. "Sometimes we'll do two or three different programs in a week."

Outside their respective orchestras, there's enough to keep the pair busy as well. Connie performs in the orchestra pit for such Broadway shows as 'Les Miserables' when they come to Detroit.

Both work for "Habitat for Humanity" through their church, Salem United Church of Christ. Volunteers in the program help rehabilitate homes for low-income families.

Larry Hutchinson is involved in several string workshops — most notably the prestigious American String Workshop. He also works with musicians at North Farmington High School.

When the Chippewa School District was in danger of losing its elementary music program, Larry wrote a letter to the superintendent stressing the importance of the art to the overall educational experience. He also had 98 members of the DSO sign the document.

The district's millage passed and the program was reinstated. Such efforts are part of ongoing effort on the Hutchinsons and others to keep the arts alive in times of rampant cuts in public money.

"In schools, often it's the music programs that are cut," Larry said. "It's important the people understand the power and the discipline of music . . . There's something very real in the impact it can have on a life."

He uses his own life as an example.

A self-described mediocre student in high school, Larry discovered the wonders of music. He played in a jazz trio and then graduated to classical music. He used the discipline and confidence to apply himself in school.

Not surprisingly, the Hutchinsons are using the sound of music to educate their own children. Their son, Christopher, 4, learned the family telephone number to a musical tune and plays an imaginary piano when the family has the "Nutcracker" on the stereo.

"It gives us a common bond," Connie said. "We play together at church and at our son's nursery recently. It's a family thing."

SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Family harmony: *Marshall (Larry) Hutchinson has a sound philosophy as a professional musician raising a family.*

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