

# SUBURBAN LIFE

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THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1993

## SOCIAL EYES



DENISE LUCAS

## Partygoers enjoy psychic readings

Denise Lucas' column *Social Eyes* alternates with Gretchen Hitch's column *The Scene*. You can mail information to Lucas at *The Eccentric*, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or leave a message for her, on a Touch-Tone phone, by calling 963-2047, Ext. 1868. You also may write her at P.O. Box 252042, Franklin 48025, or call 443-2339.

Live jazz, magicians and two psychic readers entertained the Michigan Cancer Foundation's Circle of Fellows at a Mardi Gras celebration at the home of barrister Susan and sports medicine doctor Jerry Ciallo of Bloomfield Hills.

The host committee included many enchanting and spellbinding couples. Medicine man Don Austin and Dale Austin, and Diamond Doug and Sydel Schubot. Sydel was seeing gold when the magician Ron Aldrich magically made three swimming goldfish appear in Sydel's drink. Interior design wizard D.J. and Barbara Kennedy heard lots of oohs and ahhs from the guests as they toured the Ciallo estate completely decorated by the designer in polo green, claret and ivory. Pistons giant Bill Laimbeer and wife Chris arrived, appearing somewhat forelorn after the Saturday night two-point loss.

Most eligible bachelor Dr. Mark Burstein of West Bloomfield was told by psychic Robert Thibideau that he will find happiness, marriage and money in 1994.

Other guests included Lill and Howard Camden, Judie and Roger Sherman, Heidi and Michael Stein, Gary and Liz Mitchell and Bob Schwere of the Michigan Cancer Foundation, who was rounding up volunteers for the April 17 "Race for the Cure."

Finals of the International Cultural Festival at the Ritz Carlton in Dearborn was a multi-national benefit Sunday for Detroit's International Institute.

Co-chairwomen of the global soiree were two of the Detroit-area's most successful and cosmopolitan women — Tana Elder, president and owner of Troy Ford, and Helen Petruskas, vice-president environmental and safety engineering, Ford Motor Co.

Planning the intercontinental gala were Teryl Asher, Nicholas Bocharas, Gust Feles, Pat Hardy, Barbara Rom, Nimrod Rosenblatt, Stephen Economy, Rigmor Cuelakan, Roland Hwang, Joanne Leonard, Lorraine Schultz, Rosemary Bannon and the institute's president, attorney Daniel Stella.

Also supporting the benefit were new German consul Marianne Wannow, Mexican consul Carlos Cuadrillo, Armand and Eleanor Gebert, Joyce Hurst, Varda Rosenthal, Linda DeVillier, Betty Bright, and Lydia and Walter Tormyn.

### A night for debutantes

Seventeenth century Polish court pages and honor guards, along with costumed trumpeters, heralded the presentation of Bal Polonais debutantes.

Dr. Zofia Drozdowska-Kafarski, founder and queen of Bal Polonais, immersed herself in this evening of mirth and celebration that benefits Polish cultural causes.

The 1993 debutantes were Jennifer Lee Cregar, daughter of Richard and Cherrill Cregar; Laurie Ann Hrydzusko, daughter of Stanley and Sylvia Hrydzusko; Karen Moe-Lyn Maurer, daughter of Terry and Mary Ann Maurer; Andrea (Miss Teenage Michigan) Mazlars, daughter of Anna Jankowski; Iwonne Jennifer Sworski, daughter of Danuta Sworski-Matras and George Sworski; and Mary Margaret Wetzel, daughter of John J. II and Martha Jane Wetzel.

More than 200 guests attended the royal evening that included the stately Grande Polonais dance and the Debutantes Waltz.

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DENISE LUCAS

Ship Ahoy mates: Lou (left) and Mary Margaret Bosco and Ed Moeller, with Sister Regina, gather at "An Enchanted Evening at Sea," auction for Mercy High School.



STAFF PHOTOS BY STEPHEN CANTRELL

Roaring '20s: Birmingham Village Players' members JoAnn Britton (left), Jim Masters, Ann Bell-Weisman, Bob Hagemeyer and Donna Masters are among the flappers and beaux who will cavort at this year's Theatre Arts Ball at The Community House. They are backdropped by one of the murals Fred Farrar sketched on the playhouse walls back in the '30s.

## 'Twenty Three Skiddoo!'

## Theatre Arts Ball recalls Jazz Age



BY ETHEL SIMMONS  
STAFF WRITER

It's more than a catchphrase when the Birmingham Village Players presents its fourth annual Theatre Arts Ball on Saturday, April 24, with the theme "Twenty Three Skiddoo!"

Back in the Roaring Twenties — in 1923, to be exact — the village players was born, and in 1993, its 70th year will be marked with a party at The Community House in Birmingham. Coincidentally, The Community House started that same year, and it's where the players first presented productions before moving into the present-day playhouse at 752 Chestnut at Hunter.

Ever-expanding, the 300-member community theater group has been updating and enlarging its playhouse for the last few years. The players is

in the midst of a three-phase renovation project, for which the annual balls raise funds.

"We hope to raise around \$20,000 for the renovation fund," said Donna Masters, chairman of fund-raising for the players, as well as co-chairwoman of the ball along with Shirley Mann. "The ball is black-tie optional, and costumes are optional too, but all the committee members plan to attend in '20s looks. Some of the committee will be wearing costumes from the players collection, lovingly tended by longtime wardrobe mistress Margaret Remondino, and others are making their own costumes."

A large turn-out at The Community House is expected by players membership. The ball is open to the public, however, and anyone who wants to support the players can share in

the evening's festivities, for \$76 a person.

### Wear '20s garb

"Hopefully, people will shake out their raccoon coats and pinnates and show up there (at The Community House)," Masters said. She is looking forward to partying in her '20s costume, and is trying to find a raccoon coat for husband Jim to wear.

At the ball, guests will dance to the music provided by Bloomfield Hills resident Eric Freudigman and his trio. The Ruth Shalin room, next to the auditorium hall room will be turned into a "blind pig," where flappers and their beaux will drink "bathtub gin" — actually wine, soda pop or water. Hors d'oeuvres and desserts also are planned.

Masters said Keystone Cops will be on hand to keep everything in order. The hunt is on for an authentic pad-dy wagon that may be put into use, as a gag to handle unruly partygoers.

Two of the players choreographers, Martha Lamb and Patty Ward, will give Charleston lessons at the ball,

and help judge a Charleston dancing contest that should be the bees' knees.

Guys and gals will be able to buy pennants at the ball, and for the women, there also will be "headache bands" bedecked with sequins, feathers and jewels, for sale. "We will probably make them. They're easy to make. We made them for the show 'Chicago,'" Masters said.

### Gifts from merchants

A silent auction, with gifts donated by area merchants, will be held that night, with proceeds also going to the renovation fund.

Honorary co-chairwoman and co-chairman of the ball are Debbie and Richard Astreine, who will receive the Super Star Award from players. The Astreines, of Astreine's Fine Jewelry, have been supporters of the theater group. They are the first nonmembers to receive the annual award. Elaine and Harris Machue and Ed and Jean Deer were honored as Super Stars in previous years.

See PLAYERS, 2C

## Murals capture village players' early years

BY ETHEL SIMMONS  
STAFF WRITER

When theatergoers attend performances at the Birmingham Village Players, one of the things that catches their eye, even before the show, begins, is the colorful murals along the auditorium walls.

"The murals originally were chalk and temporarily for a Valentine's Day party in 1933," said players member Donna Masters. "Later, they were made permanent with paint. Throughout the years — the poor old building leaks — they had to be retouched. In a couple of years, when we redo the auditorium, they will be restored and made beautiful again."

The art-deco murals were created by Birmingham architect Fred Farrar, who sketched theater members engaged in various activities putting a show together. The murals complement the original playhouse designed by local architect Wallace Frost in 1926.

Performances by the players were first given at The Community House in a building donated by St. James Church. Players started meeting there the same year. The Community House was organized, and the theater group presented "The Makers of Dreams" as its opening attraction.

Masters said she found a copy of the script for the show, when rummaging through the present players building and dried out the wet pages. The script was later "rediscovered" by players member Jim Balmer, who arranged to have it framed, she said. It now looks impressive, hanging on the wall of the Green Room where players gather.

Part of the current renovation project was to move the Green Room from downstairs to new, larger quarters upstairs. Balmer also designed the room's fireplace, which has a painting of logs, instead of the real thing, inside the fireplace. On the fireplace mantle is a Segorpeople artwork, photo cutouts of all the cast members in the players production of "Anne of a Thousand Days."

Players member Doug Farrah, who made the fireplace "logs," also donated original sketches of many of the playbill covers he creates for each production. The cover shows actors who appeared in

that show, and these are framed and hung in the Green Room.

First effort in the playhouse renovation project was the Stagehouse, which has been completed. The next work phase includes the Green Room and the Costume Room, as well as the Lobby, with the Auditorium scheduled for the future.

Total cost of renovation is expected to exceed \$500,000. So far, \$160,000 has been raised through membership pledges and fund-raising events.

At the players recent 70th annual birthday birthday, members donated more than \$700 to purchase things for the playhouse. Players also brought items such as tissues and clothes hangers. "It's a tradition for the birthday party to give gifts for the theater," Masters said.

Although the players is actually a private theater club, its membership is open to anyone who is interested in joining. There is an initiation fee and an annual membership fee. "Anyone who wants to be involved in amateur theater, call us," Masters said. "New members are the lifeblood of any organization."

Besides its season's schedule of plays for the public and activities for members, the theater

group is involved in community outreach. "We've always done community work," Masters said. By invitation, senior citizens in area nursing homes and other facilities, or teen-agers from local high schools, are invited to attend without charge the preview night of each production.

Since last year, members have entertained at senior citizen facilities. Any group who would like the players to visit and present a 45-minute program with music and costumes should call JoAnn Sellers at 433-3073.

"Also, for children from preschool to high school, we offer tours during the day and refreshments. There's time on stage for them to dress up in costumes and make-up," Masters said. Last year the players gave tours to more than a half-dozen children's groups. To make arrangements, call Donna Masters at 643-8984.

Another aspect of players life is the rutters group, who meet at the theater every Tuesday and Thursday morning to remodel sets, do housekeeping and other chores. Afterward, they gather for lunch. "They used to be actors and wanted to donate their time," Masters said.

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What it takes: Art deco murals show members of Birmingham Village Players behind the scenes of a production. (Left) The play reading committee selects the scripts. (Right) Building and painting are part of the set construction.