

# CREATIVE LIVING

D

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1993

## Saarinen House holds on to art

■ "If these walls could talk . . ." The Saarinen House at the Cranbrook Academy of Art will talk to visitors in a special way, thanks to a project that restored the original beauty of the structure and preserved it as a museum.

By MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

The Adventure of Saarinen House combines mystery, science, history and even romance. That's not the name of a book or movie. The "adventure" is the restoration of the house at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills. It will become a house museum, open to visitors but not to be lived in or altered again. That way, the public will be able to enjoy a giant, joyous work of art.

### Special site

"This now will become part of our national heritage," said current Cranbrook Academy of Art president Roy Slade, who sparked the restoration project. "The word 'orchestration' is the word I use a great deal (describing the house) — the orchestration of furnishings, fabrics, color, light fixtures.

Even the windows become part of the overall design.

"Three things make it absolutely unique: (Saarinen's) genius as a designer, the fact that his whole family worked with him on this, and his ability as a colorist sets him apart from any other architect that I know."

Plans are for Saarinen House to be officially dedicated June 15, 1993, by the ambassador of Finland to the United States, and to be open to the public in May 1994.

The house is along Academy Way near the Lone Pine Road entrance to the academy. Once inside the house, a visitor is treated to a visual symphony of meticulous details, subtle or dramatic colors, and rooms that flow together while maintaining their individual personalities.

Saarienen believed that architecture encompasses all aspects of design, said Greg Wittkopp, curator of collections at Cranbrook.

"When he was in Helsinki he did city planning," said Wittkopp, who researched and supervised the restoration. "He was designing entirely new cities; on another level he was designing silverware. Everything from the macro to the micro he was interested in."

### Background

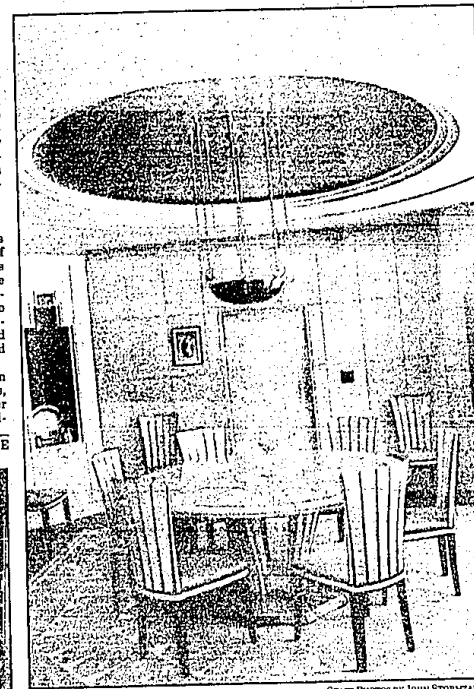
From 1951 on, Saarinen House was the home of subsequent presidents of the academy who made various changes at the residence. When Slade came to the academy in 1977, he intended to make one of the rooms into his studio. This room had been Saarienen's private architectural studio and also used for academy gatherings and parties.

Over the years, partitions had been added to divide it into smaller rooms, and a flat, false ceiling put in to cover the barrel vault ceiling. When the di-

See HOUSE, 6E



From the past: This circa 1940 photo from the Cranbrook Academy of Art shows Loja Saarinen (right) and Lilian Swann Saarinen, Eero Saarinen's first wife, in the book room.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JOHN STORZGAARD

Dazzling dining: The Saarinen House dining room featured a gold dome that cast a glow on those seated beneath it.



MARY KLEMIC

## Artist follows nature when painting scenes

Howard Nordlund is back. The Bloomfield Hills resident, known nationally as the painter of the Great Lakes and the Great Forests, moved to Hilton Head 5 1/2 years ago. He moved back here in September. Now his first major exhibit since leaving for Hilton Head continues through April 19 at Galerie Internationale, 4368 Telegraph in Bloomfield Hills (call 644-5370).

The Galerie Internationale show is a retrospective of paintings, collages and graphics from 1966 to 1993. Many of them are of nature — a rolling wave spraying against a rock; a peaceful, tree-lined path. Reality and fantasy are frequently parts of the same scene.

Nordlund often includes parts of the earth into his paintings. Crystals and corals are among the natural elements that subtly but significantly adorn the texture of the works.

"There's more to paint with than pigments alone," said Nordlund, a former Southfield resident.

Somehow Nordlund is able to capture the glow of the sun in his landscapes. Sections of his canvas radiate such light that the viewer almost expects it to feel warm.

Even simple things take on a special elegance in Nordlund's paintings. A worn bucket carries its own dignity. Flowers are natural scepters presented by the earth.

"You wouldn't wear the same outfit every day" is how Nordlund explains his different styles. The artist is glad to be back in the area. He extends a hearty invitation to visit the Galerie Internationale exhibit.

"The low country did not make my creative juices flow."

### Shadows and light

Corinne Silver Ragheb of Bloomfield Hills is showing her art in Wayne State University's Master of Fine Arts and Graduate Thesis Exhibitions continuing to April 3 at the Community Arts Gallery, Cass at Kirby in Detroit.

Ragheb has a master of fine arts degree in printmaking and an undergraduate degree in sculpture and prints from the Center for Creative Studies.

Her works on display often capture fantasy, sometimes in stark black and white, sometimes with shades of gray, sometimes with vibrant color.

Many images suggest imps or creatures from another world. They frolic, dance or peer from trees. Others resemble human beings, whirling in kilts or playing bagpipes. One scene, "Enchanted Landscape," presents a pastel world in pinks, greens and blues.

### Stage struck

Joyce Morehouse remembers seeing her parents on stage in a community theater production when she was 3 years old.

She was thrilled by the whole thing. Her fascination with the stage started then and continued through high school, college and community theater in New York (where she and her husband, Dutton, met in a local theater group), New Hampshire, Illinois and Michigan.

In her most recent role, for the next two weeks Morehouse will play Nurse Ratched in the St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" on Lone Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills.

"I love it. I've always loved it," the Bingham Farms resident said of her theater work.

She compares acting to other artistic media. Like an artist paints or sculpts to convey an idea, she conveys an idea through a character.

"You do for a time forget your own self and convey ideas, art, beauty through a medium."

"I sort of lose myself in the character for a while."

Morehouse is director of the Cranbrook Theatre School, a member of the English faculty and director of the forensics team at Cranbrook Kingswood Upper School, and secretary of the vestry at Christ Church Cranbrook.

"I have the best of all possible worlds," as she can take part in one of her loves, acting, just for the enjoyment of it and then take part in another love, teaching.

Morehouse assisted in directing "You Can't Take It With You." She enjoyed directing, but acting is special.

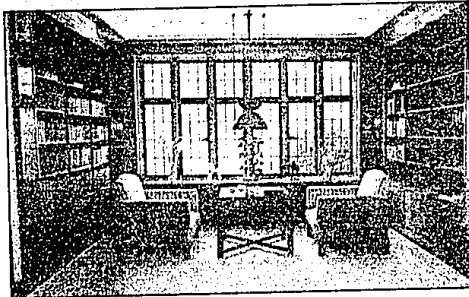
"I love to perform. Most performers like to do some directing. I never want to stop having the chance to perform."

Morehouse looks for humor in many of her characters. Much of Nurse Ratched's humor comes out in her battles with McMurphy.

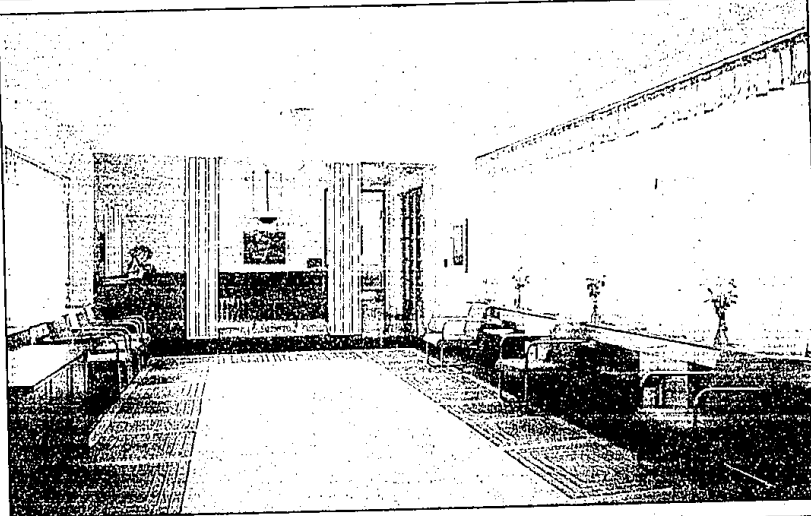
"She is just so manipulative," Morehouse said of Nurse Ratched.

"I just decide what that character would do if not working. I imagine her going home, no close friends."

Mary Klemic is editor of the Oakland County Creative Living section. You may call her at 644-1100, Ext. 245.



Exquisite environment: The room at right was Cranbrook architect Elio Saarinen's studio and also an academy gathering place. The renovation project restored the barrel vault ceiling and painted fluted columns. The book room (above), off the living room, features the original books from when the Saarinen family lived in the house.



Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eclectic Newspapers, 605 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

For information and reviews of musical performances, please turn to the Entertainment section.

■ ANIMATED EVENT  
Circle Gallery, in the Somerset Collection at

## Art Beat

2801 W. Big Beaver Road in Troy, notes the beginning of spring with an "Animation Celebration" 1-4 p.m. Saturday, March 27. Visitors may view original production art and limited edition cels featuring their favorite animation characters, including Betty Boop, Garfield, Bugs Bun-

ny, "Peanuts," the Bernstein Bears, the Pink Panther and Mickey Mouse. At 1:30 p.m., a brief presentation will introduce the joys of collecting animation art. For more information, call the gallery at 649-1779.

### ORIENTAL ART

The Michigan Oriental Art Society will present a video on "The Silk Road" at its meeting, which is open to the public, 1:30 p.m. Sunday, March 28, at the Troy Public Library, 510 W. Big Beaver Road.