

SUBURBAN LIFE

C

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1993

THE SCENE



GRETCHEN HITCH

Afternoon cruise aboard float boat

To leave a message for Gretchen Hitch from a Touch-Tone phone, call 953-2047, Ext. 1895. Material for The Scene may be mailed to Hitch at 646 Kimberly, Birmingham 48009, or you may call her at 646-5277.

Dick and Marian Cote invited friends for a lazy-hazy perfect summer afternoon Aug. 21, cruising in the Cotes' float boat around beautiful Lake Angelus.

During cocktails on the bluff overlooking the lake, guests viewed and exchanged photos from the famous October 1992 Greek wedding trip for 50 friends and relatives of Susie Vestevich Crocker and her husband, Patrick.

The guests had been in the Greek tour and attended the Greek wedding in Athens, but they never tire of going over the fabulous experience in ancient history.

At the Saturday event were Al and Evelyn Choleut, Bruce and Sue Wilson with their daughter, Wendy, and the hosts' daughters, Kathy and Liz, with Liz's husband Jim as bartender. Also present were Peter and Anno Vestevich, parents and planners of the trip, and their son Bill, Jim and Carolyn Dritsas, George and Chris Strumbo, and Dr. Robert Vestevich, Peter's brother who has moved to our area from San Diego.

Cow Party

On the same summer Saturday, the fifth annual Cow Party was held at the Bloomfield Hills home of Marguerite Hague.

As Hague explains it, she started collecting cows somewhere along the line while she collected bricks and artifacts from old Detroit buildings being torn down. The junk and artifacts collector found old relief, carved stone cows from the Fair Creamery near Elmwood Cemetery years ago and began collecting cows.

The Hague doorman is a cow, planters are cows, fireplace andirons are cows, a wood bench has a carved cow on the bench's back. It's cows, cows everywhere.

A friend came to the Cow Party with a huge sheet cake decorated with a "Welcome Friends" design frosted with a Holstein cow. Most of the guests came bearing cow-themed gifts in one form or another for Hague's fast-growing collection.

A few of the folk at the party were Jack and Ann Helganz, Gerri King, Edith Boyer, Gwenn Dennis, Jerry Halloran, and Sam and Shirley Lelles. Her son, Jon, and his wife, Vicki, were on hand with their daughters, Emily, 6, and Valerie, 2. Hague sons Tim and Philip were hosts, as was Jon.

Smash hit

Earlier this summer in Grand Circus Park, on the Detroit spotlight tour, all eyes were on the groundbreaking for the Detroit Opera House beginning with demolition of the Roberts Furs Building.

Hundreds watched as Dr. Don Austin collected on an auction item purchased at the MOT Opera Ball — striking the first blow in demolition. Dr. David DiChiera watched proudly, along with MOT board chairman Bob Dewar. Austin was in hard hat, white workman's suit and escorted by Pavarotti look-alike from West Bloomfield Vito Giola.

See THE SCENE, 3C



GRETCHEN HITCH

Family recalls: At a Lake Angelus party hosted by Dick and Marian Cote, the Vestevich family poses with Peter (front), newlyweds Susie and Peter Crocker, and (in rear) Anne Vestevich.



GUY WARREN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Partners in clowning: Marcia Stoll as Florall (left) and Judy Basso as Lardee look forward to doing a "Musicanza" with proceeds going to the ARC of Oakland County and the Michigan Federation of Music Clubs' Oakland County Music Festival.

Funny faces

2 area women love to clown around



BY VALERIE OLANDER
STAFF WRITER

While Thudd (Eugenia Huntoon of Bloomfield Township) plucks away at the piano, playing the snappy upbeat music to "You're the Cream in my Coffee," Florall and Lardee, a female clown duo from West Bloomfield, make their entrance from the back of the room, pleasantly shaking hands and giving hugs along the way.

The music may be a familiar favorite, but the lyrics are quite original. "You are spicy spaghetti. A mean and lean cuisine, too," a pleasantly plump Lardee sings to her

slender clown friend, Florall, on center stage. Florall joins in with a punchy dance step and the verse, "You are butter and honey. A hot fudge sundae for two."

Every show begins in the same zany fashion, including the next production in which the clown duo will appear — "A Musicanza," slated for Sept. 18 and 19, at the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Bloomfield Hills. All proceeds will benefit the Oakland County Music Festival, a program for children with special needs sponsored by the Arc of Oakland County and the Michigan Federation Music Club.

The two women, Florall (Marcia Stoll) and Lardee (Judy Basso) are

both about to celebrate their 60th birthdays. They have been clowning around in metropolitan Detroit for nearly a decade, performing at schools, retirement homes, hospitals and other functions. Five other women assist with the comedy routines, writing lyrics, creating the choreography and designing costumes and props.

Interestingly enough, all but one of the seven women are grandmothers. And two are great-grandmothers.

Talking to the starring clowns, one can easily assume the two have been longtime friends, as they each have a habit of finishing the other's sentences and, predictably, rolling humorous anecdotes off the other's lips.

Like Laurel and Hardy, the famous comedy team of the 1930s, the taller female clown, Florall, is the prim and proper one. The other character, Lardee, is dim-witted, hard

of hearing and appears to like food. Of course, Basso has to stuff her clown outfit appropriately to fill the role.

"I always liked Laurel and Hardy. . . ." Stoll began. Basso politely interrupted. "They started out in silent films, though. . . ." Stoll finished. "Of course, we're certainly not silent."

Act One

The two had always talked about putting together a clown act. They talked enough about it that when Basso's daughter, a theater major from Northwestern University, received a phone call from a friend, Birmingham's Community House activities director Katie Proctor, asking if she knew any clowns to perform at an upcoming event, she responded, "Well, maybe." The clown duo has been together ever since.

See CLOWNS, 2C

Hearts go out with dolls for Bosnia's kids

BY VALERIE OLANDER
STAFF WRITER

When Kathleen Sheridan's cousin returned from war-torn Bosnia with heart-wrenching stories of the refugees and the helpless children living in the midst of the unrest between the Serbs, Croatians and Muslims, the Troy mother of three asked, "What can I do?"

"Jeanne said the children have nothing. They play with stones," Sheridan said.

It wasn't until a few weeks later when Sheridan was walking through Hudson's Northland in Southfield that it all came to her. It was as if the small six-inch rag dolls were staring back at her from the large bin.

"(The dolls) were small. The perfect size for Jeanne to bring with her. You can't just send a big package because of the black market," she said.

So Sheridan bought 75 of the dolls, each in ethnic dress representing different countries such as Japan, India, Spain and the United States. She gave the dolls to her cousin, a nurse from the Milwaukee County Medical Complex in Wisconsin, who had originally gone to Bosnia to bring the people medical supplies.

While in Bosnia for the third time, Jeanne McCue handed out the dolls to children she came across — those injured and lying in hospital beds, some orphaned as a result of the war and living in shelters set up by UNICEF, and others who wandered the tattered streets.



Dolls for Bosnia: Troy resident Kathleen Sheridan is seeking donations to help send 4,000 small rag dolls to the refugee children in Bosnia.

See DOLLS, 2C