

# CREATIVE LIVING

D

## GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

## Hit the heights with sunflower contest

**S**unflowers! They make tall exclamation points in gardens and add a ray of sunshine even on cloudy days. There are many varieties of these flowers, some with the traditional yellow rays, while others have been bred for color — banded gold, orange, burgundy, bronze and white.

Many varieties of annual sunflowers are suitable for our gardens. This year, the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers are having a contest to see who can grow the tallest sunflower plant from seed. So get out your catalogs and peruse the seed packets in the stores so that you can join in the fun.

### Background

Sunflowers originated in South America and the American Southwest. The Incas used them extensively and put their likeness on their art. They were used by American Indians as food, as dye plants and in poultices. Colonists learned from the Indians and also found other uses for this plant — food for cattle, a coffee substitute and "tobacco." The oil was used in cooking, soap and candlemaking.

Today, sunflower oil is used as a cooking oil and in industry. The seeds are eaten raw or roasted by humans, and used in birdseed and poultry mixtures. Some cultures still use them as our forefathers did.

As Europeans came to America, they took the seeds back to their countries where they were cultivated with much success. As a result, many new cultivars were developed. Plants originally from America were hybridized so well in the Soviet Union that even today, these same cultivars are grown here for commercial purposes.

There was a sort of one-upmanship about growing sunflowers in Europe. Gerard reported growing one 14 feet tall. It was reported that one in the Royal Garden in Madrid reached 24 feet. The Italians boasted that one in Padua topped out at 40 feet. So our contest can be a little continuation of something that happened long ago.

Sunflowers are in the Compositae family (includes daisy, chamomile, dandelion), and the best-known genus is *Helianthus* (from the Greek *helios* for sun, and *anthos* for flower), which contains 150 species. Some of the annual species that can range from five to 15 feet in height are Mammoth Russian, Full Sun, Giant Grey Stripe, Sunbeam, Mammoth, Russian Giant, Inca Jewels, Evening Star and Evening Sun.

Although the rays provide the beauty to these flowers, the achenes (the parts in the center) contain the little seeds that are so loved. The entire flower is called the head.

See FIGLEY, 7E



MARTY FIGLEY

Hitting heights: B.F. Landuyt of Beverly Hills grew a 6-1/2 foot tall sunflower.

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Creative Living next week:

- A visit to an exhibit of Israeli dance photographs by A. Himmelreich at the Pierce Street Gallery in Birmingham.
- Mary Klemic's Perspectives column.
- Exhibitions, art gallery event listings.

# Masterpieces have comic touch

■ Farmington resident William Jones has created a line of caricatures of jobs and hobbies. The works, available at Craft Village in Rochester, can be personalized.

BY MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER



Doodling on the job might be frowned upon, but doodling about a job can bring smiles of delight.

The latter kind of doodling has become a successful sideline for William Jones, a Farmington resident since 1988. Jones is the creator of "Create Your Own Masterpiece!", a line of cartoon caricatures of occupations and hobbies.

The pen and ink watercolors, measuring 6-1/2 by 4-1/4 inches within a broad matte frame, feature a character surrounded by books, objects, charts and other items that take a humorous look at a job or interest.

"It's really relaxing for me," said Jones, a marketer for the Ford Motor Co. Customer Service Division.

A computer programmer sits at a terminal with a screen reading "Beam me up Scotty"; books on a shelf nearby include the titles "Computer Care and Feeding" and "Learn Big Words." A "Sports Nut" is next to three TV sets, each turned on to a different sport, and a tiny satellite dish. A sign on a business person's desk reads "Future VP On Board," and a file drawer is labeled "Paper Clips."

A baby's bookshelf has the work, "How to Train Your Parents."

"It's nice to see the reaction," said Terry Fletcher, owner of Craft Village at 418 Main in Rochester, where the pieces are sold. "There are a lot of giggles when people see them. It's nice that he can personalize them to what the customer wants."

Each picture has six areas where it can be personalized: a banner at the top, where a name, title or nickname can be written; a list of things to do; a dialogue balloon; and three books.

"It struck me that the thing that people really like is the personalization," Jones said.

Other "signatures" of "Create Your Own Masterpiece!" are the parrot, rabbit and mice in the picture that share such thoughts as "Polly wants to go on spring break" (for the college student), "I love the change in seasons — baseball, football, hockey, basketball" (for the sports nut), and "Which way is the executive suite?" (for the business person).

"Polly is the alter ego . . . the kind



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMIEUX

Making masterpieces: Farmington resident William Jones sketches his caricatures of jobs and hobbies, working out of his kitchen. The ideas come from his own imagination, brainstorming with his wife and comments from friends and customers.

of things you'd like to say to the boss but never do."

The pieces are a combination of the artist's observations, brainstorming with wife Shelly, and suggestions from others. For example, Jones doesn't golf, so he showed a sketch about the sport to golfers for their comments. People notice such details as the kind of vehicle drawn in the picture for a car enthusiast.

Help also comes from the stamped postcard enclosed with the picture. On the card, customers are asked to rate their satisfaction with the piece, suggest other subjects and make comments. Jones has a response rate of about 30 percent from the postcards.

"I've had people of all ages (buy them)," he said of the pictures. Jones described his working process as "not real high tech." Sitting at his kitchen table, he first pencils the sketch, then inks it in. A first drawing could take him eight to 10 hours, while the final master sketch for the printer could take 20 hours.

See MASTERPIECE, 5E



Comic look: The colorful "Create Your Own Masterpiece!" pictures can be personalized. They are available at Craft Village in Rochester.

## Presentation offers image itinerary to Far East

BY MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

A treat for the ears as well as for the eyes awaits visitors to Musical Photo Paintings, a special event at a Bloomfield Hills lakefront home 3:30-5:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 6.



Vernick

The event features video imagery from Japan, Thailand and Hong Kong set to music. Also included are images called "Impressions of Spring" accompanied by excerpts from Puccini's "Madame Butterfly."

Musical Photo Paintings is being presented by the Inner Circle is the Lyric Chamber Ensemble in conjunction with the music/video production's founder and director, Richard Vernick of Bloomfield Hills. It is being hosted by Sondra Berlin.

Vernick has produced more than 70 shows, including presentations accompanied by the Detroit, Birmingham-Bloomfield, Rochester, West Bloomfield, Pontiac-Oakland and Grosse Pointe symphony orchestras. He describes the productions as an art form that reaches out to convey innermost feelings.

"It's a marriage of art images and music set to create a dimensional experience," Vernick said.

"I'm trying to capture this and share it. This is what a poet would do, or a painter."

"You just pick up such enthusiasm (about Vernick's shows)," said Marilyn Habsburg of West Bloomfield, one of the LCE Special Event Committee members. "They're called breathtaking, dazzling, touching."

### Art form

The automated slide show on a

large screen presents a series of nature, city and country scenes that dissolve smoothly as the program runs. Sometimes part of one scene lingers in the next. The music sets moods.

In the "Impressions of Spring" portion, strings play a delicate melody in a misty scene of a forest. In another picture showing blooms, horns play as if proclaiming the beauty. A yellow flower, shown in closeup, looks like the sun.

### Orient expression

For the sequence on Japan, traditional Japanese music accompanies pictures of temples and people in costume. Japanese rock music accompanies the neon-filled pictures of the modern, downtown Ginza district.

"I tried to show the beauty and the contrast between the old Japan and the new, dynamic Japan," Vernick said.

The Hong Kong sequence will show "the meeting of East and West, the rich and the poor."

"When you approach Hong Kong you see the glitter of the new buildings . . . and you could walk a few blocks and feel as if you had gone back in time, almost as if they built a set for a movie."

In Thailand "the people were so wonderful, very warm. It's a relatively poor country but (has) spectacular scenery."

"They're all Asian countries but each unique from the other."

Completing the Feb. 6 program's Far Eastern visual and musical experience is a banquet of Oriental hors d'oeuvres provided by HDS Services of Farmington Hills, Mon Jin Lau of Troy and Thai House Restaurant of Roseville. LCE board member There-

See PRESENTATION, 7E

Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 305 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or fax them by calling 644-1314.

### PIANO DAY

Saturday, Feb. 6, Oakland University in Rochester will present a Piano Enrichment Day, of fered to students in grades 7-12 and their teachers and parents. A competitive recital 1 p.m. that day in Verner Racal Hall on campus is open to the public. For more information, call Andrea Moon at 646-9748.

### SABBATICAL

1994 marks the 30th year of the Rubiner Gal-

## Art Beat

lery, 7001 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 430A, in West Bloomfield. To celebrate this milestone, gallery owners Allen and Carole Rubiner have decided to take a sabbatical, "spending the time in search of fresh ideas and directions," and return to the gallery world in a new location.

The gallery will officially close as of Jan. 31. The Rubiners will have a warehouse where they will maintain a selection of choice pieces from the gallery inventory and will show them by appointment. They will also be available for corporate and residential art consulting, visiting homes or offices to make suggestions and recom-

mendations for appropriate art work. They can be reached at 810-544-2888, which is also their fax number.

### NEW SOURCE

A new information source has been designed for the arts and crafts industry. The Arts and Crafts Register is a directory that brings together hundreds of 1994 arts and crafts shows, festivals and other events in Michigan. It contains useful location information for the artisan or crafts-person as well as the general public.

The Arts and Crafts Register is available throughout the year. It sells for \$9.99 plus sales tax and \$2.25 shipping and handling. To order, write to The Arts and Crafts Register, P.O. Drawer 1016, Novi 48376-1016, or call 313-927-8745, fax 810-354-5155.