

Joint from page C1

1950s. On Saturday, the museum opened two exhibits that evoke memories of the former black Detroit communities along with an installation that reflects the celebratory spirit of an after-hours speakery in rural North Carolina.

Together, "Detroit's Black Bottom & Paradise Valley: Help Us Collect Your Past" is the first exhibit curated by the staff since the new museum opened in spring 1997.

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The first of the two-part exhibit includes the display of about 1,500 photographs of Paradise Alley and Black Bottom, an area once located between Lafayette and Grand avenues. Many of the photos are from the personal collection of a local real estate appraiser who found the pictures at flea markets and estate sales.

The museum is encouraging anyone who has photos, memorabilia or a story about Paradise Alley and Black Bottom to come forth and have their memories included in their expanding archive.

In the few days prior to opening, the curatorial staff already had received nearly 100 calls from people interested in recording their oral stories of growing up in Black Bottom, a name given to the area because of the rich black soil.

"The history of this nation is kept in attics and basements," said Camp. "There are so many Detroit stories that need to be



Thriving business: The staff and delivery truck of Bee Dew Cosmetic Co. at East Forest and Hastings in Detroit.

In 2000, the museum will incorporate the additional information into an exhibit, which is expected to tour the country.

In recent history, the former location of Paradise Valley was only remarkable because of the profound neglect and crumbling buildings on the site.

But to many in the African American community, the mere mention of the area that stretched a block east of Woodward to what is now 1375 still brings proud memories of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Cab Calloway and Ella Fitzgerald coming to town to play their juke jumpin' jazz in smoky nightclubs teeming with people, black and white.

"The 'Black Renaissance' was going on in every major U.S. city, but Harlem and Detroit had the most excitement," said Organ.

"We should remember that Paradise Valley was one of the few places in the country where blacks and whites were coming together because of the entertainment."

Lured by automotive jobs and the promise of escaping Jim Crow laws, thousands of blacks migrated from the south to

Detroit. The black population increased rapidly from 6,000 in 1910 to 300,000 20 years later.

Ironically, the decline of Paradise Valley and Black Bottom is usually traced to urban renewal (which some blacks labeled "Negro removal"), and the integration of blacks into formerly all-white areas of Detroit.

With widespread integration came the bitter sweet reality of a lessening of the close-knit community, once held together by common racial heritage. According to Organ, there were more black-owned businesses in Paradise Valley than exist today.

"We wanted to preserve the legacy of this area," said Organ, who noted that Black Bottom was the home of former Detroit mayor Coleman Young, Joe Louis and former Secretary of State Richard Austin, along with many of the city's first generation of black lawyers, professors and physicians.

"This isn't the traditional way to develop an exhibition," said Organ.

"But we saw the opportunity to help the community involved. We want to be the gathering place for history of our area."

By day, Willie Little's father's

grocery store was the place to find staples, produce and pickled pig's feet.

But when the sun went down, the store became the socializing center for blacks living in the rural area of Washington, North Carolina.

In a series of eight vignettes using 10 life-size mannequins, Little's sculptural installation, "Juke Joint," tells the story of the personalities and spirit of this father's juke joint. A place of wild dancing, 60 cent cups of gin, an occasional fist fight that, he said, was similar to Harpo's Place, the liquor house in "The Color Purple."

"It's an immersion experience," said Organ. "Visitors will literally walk into the juke joint. We live in fast-paced times. It's important to slow down, to imagine what it's like to go back in time."

Little's characters invoke the adult idiosyncrasies as seen from a child's perspective, including a man with a golf-sized gouter suffering from "womit cough" and a woman with a laugh that sounds like grinding gears.

"We want people to feel like their in the moment, to see the texture of the life of juke joints," said Little.

As American culture continues to become more homogenized, Little contends sculptural reenactments preserve the tenor and essence of the past.

"Some people never admitted that these juke joints existed," said Little. "This kind of validates that they did."

"I'm sharing a part of my life that doesn't exist anymore. It seems preposterous. I come from a history of storytellers."

Peace from page C1

Young at heart? Undoubtedly. But naive? In war, innocence is among the initial casualties.

Rhymes and realities

In the days before "Peace Through Humor" opened in early July, Kushner was in town to work with local students attending day camps at the JCC.

Basically, the campers were given the same assignment to use words and images to express their feelings of war and peace.

In contrast to the colleges and incoming Israeli students, the young campers offered dreamy visions of nursery rhymes.

"For students living in Israel, the issues of peace and war ring more immediate," said Beth Greenapple, director of Judah

enrichment at the Jewish Community Center.

"For our kids, peace is a concept they've heard about, but it's largely theoretical. For the Israeli students, their brothers, cousins and fathers have been involved in the military. Violence has touched everyone in the country."

The stark contrast between the artwork of Israeli and local students reveals the serene life of suburbia, said Sylvia Nelson, director of the Janice Charnch Epstein Gallery.

With the Maccabi Games - an athletic competition among 6,000 Jewish children from around the world - to be held at the JCC campus Sunday-Sunday, Aug. 16-23, Nelson thought

"Peace Through Humor" offered an artful complement to appreciate a child's fledgling philosophical perspective.

"Dealing with conflict is scary for children anywhere," said Nelson. "The Israeli children simply have to live with it each day, whereas many of our kids get their ideas from what they see on TV and in movies."

The strength of "Peace Through Humor," according to Nelson, is its ability to deflate the tension of religious zealots and lighten the political rhetoric about what will be required for Arabs and Jews to live peacefully in one of the world's most hostile areas.

Rolling wae

In a word, the exhibit is about

trust. Not exactly an easy word for Arabs or Jews, especially since many families in the Middle East have their own tragic stories about the deaths of loved ones at the hands of terrorists in a military skirmish.

Yet for terminal optimists, "Peace Through Humor" offers hope, albeit a politically innocent vision.

Despite the endless conflict and bloodshed in the Middle East, the exhibit doesn't lose sight of the simple reality: Peace is possible for anyone willing to listen.

And the sound in "Peace Through Humor" resonates like a rolling wave. But what other sound would you expect from the mouths of babes?

Inventor from page C1

Invitational Art Exhibit is considered the pre-eminent auto art show, along with the Pebble Beach Invitational.

Like a luxury car loaded with options, however, collectors were surprised at the sticker price for original paintings and sculptures of automobiles.

Initially, the artists had to overcome the perception that they were merely making pictures of cars, said Hale.

Although that perception has changed, Hale said that many collectors still haven't accepted the automobile as a legitimate subject for fine artists.

Granted, many of the automobile artists have illustration and design experience working in the auto industry. But that shouldn't dismiss their work as less than interpretive, said Hale.

"The automobile is all about a captivating experience," he said.

"What other piece of art do you get into, literally.

As car designs become more homogenized, there's a growing interest in finding a "personality" in an automobile, said Hale. "I'm a believer that it takes passion and emotion to create a product or a painting."

These days, however, in the rush to get automobiles to the marketplace, Hale contends,

something is lost. Design takes a back seat to marketing. Computer efficiency is considered more important than an interpretative drawing of a stylist.

In essence, the path from the heart is bypassed.

"But through it all, Tom Hale's love affair has never subsided. He simply considers his passion for automobiles as an expression of freedom.

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There is an error on the front cover of the Sears insert in today's newspaper.

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61	Peace, Fox, Pig, Sheep, White
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67	Circle, Sausage, Mountain
68-69	1000-1100 17 McDonalds, Seal, Bubbles, Chop, Genna, Grand, Harry
70	1100-1200 Coral, Snow, Statue, 1150 Maple
71	1200 Piggy, Lark, 1250 Liberty
72	1300-1400 1500-1600 1650-1750
73	1800-1900 1950-2000 2050-2150
74	2200-2300 2350-2450 2500-2600
75	2650-2750 2800-2900 2950-3000
76	3050-3150 3200-3300 3350-3450
77	3500-3600 3650-3750 3800-3900
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Correction Notice

In our July 26 insert, we featured the White Westinghouse WAC08267A air conditioner as being available.

Due to the unseasonably hot weather, supplies of this air conditioner may be limited.

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'Art With a View' seeks special artists

Louise Bego is encouraging artists with disabilities to enter Very Special Arts Michigan's first "Art with a View." Bego, a Birmingham resident who grew up in Westland, is one of the artists volunteering to serve on a steering committee to produce the exhibition of works by professional artists with disabilities. She suffered a closed head injury in an accident in 1973.

Bego had no interest in art until her mother brought a paint-by-number set to the hospital. Depressed and crying a good deal of the time, Bego refused over and over to pick up a paint brush, but her mother never gave up. Today, Bego's thrown away the numbers, and paints energetic, vibrantly colored original works in styles ranging from Abstract Expressionism to Fauvism.

Since studying painting at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center, Bego has exhibited at The Community House in Birmingham and in the Michigan Fine Arts show at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center. In the last two years, three of her paintings have been published by Alynn and Bacon Publishing. Two made the covers of textbooks and one introduced a chapter in a textbook. Now, she's helping other artists with disabilities to show their work professionally.

"If you know your work is good, you want other people to see it," said Bego, who lived in Livonia for several years. "I like competition too. I was just so proud to have my art hang. A lot of people don't have closed head injuries and do nothing with their life."

So far, Very Special Arts Michigan has identified about 35 artists with disabilities and knows there are more talented people out there. It's hoping to reach those artists before the entry deadline Saturday, Aug. 1. Redford sculptor Sergio De Giusti will judge the competition. Artists must submit slides or photographs of the two- and three dimensional art works, a biography/resume, and application form. If artists need assistance producing the slides or photos of their work, Very Special Arts Michigan is there to help, said Susan Minard, coordinator of artist services. Artists must be 18 years or older, be a Michigan resident, and have a disability, which meets Americans With Disabilities Act guidelines. All art must be for sale.

"We don't want it to be about disabled art, but, (about art, and) oh by the way, there's a disability," said Minard. "Most people don't realize it, but there's such a diversity of art created by people with disabilities with rich life experiences to share."

In the past, Very Special Arts Michigan has spotlighted emerging artists in a touring exhibit. The most recent was during a festival hosted by the Southeast Region Committee in May at Wonderland Mall in Livonia.

"What we want to emphasize throughout, this is a professional exhibit," said Minard. "We want someone who does art profes-

Art With A View

What: Very Special Arts Michigan is calling for entries from disabled artists for a touring exhibition juried by Redford sculptor Sergio De Giusti. Artists must submit slides or photographs of work, a biography/resume, and application form.

When: Deadline is Saturday, Aug. 1, call (248) 423-1080 for an application form.

sionally, but not necessarily someone who earns a living from their art. They have a high level of skill, or a highly developed style."

The exhibit will become an annual one. In addition, Very Special Arts Michigan plans to expand its services to assist artists with disabilities. Eventually, there will be an artists registry, help with writing grants, and a forum for artists to come together and share their experiences.

"For any of us, art communicates our own version of the world," said Minard. "The emphasis of the art show is really on what artists with disabilities can do. They're seen as their abilities. There are people out there who are creating art work, powerful work. It's important for people viewing the art works to have them expand their perceptions about artists with disabilities."

Giving back

Richard Perez, like Bego, is serving on the steering committee for "Art with a View." A disabled Vietnam vet, Perez began studying art at a parochial school in Adrian. The nuns used to exhibit his work and encouraged him to continue in art. After returning from service, he studied at San Francisco Art Academy and San Jose State University before going on to become an illustrator/graphic artist for Apple Computer and several department stores in Los Angeles. Perez has exhibited on a national scale and most recently at the Creative Arts Center in Pontiac and the Woodland Inter-art Trading Center and Gallery in Redford Township.

Perez joined the steering committee because he wants to give back to the art community and society and frequently works with disadvantaged youth painting murals in Southwest Detroit.

"For me, I want to show the mainstream art world and society that disabled people are capable of creating quality art," said Perez, an Ann Arbor resident. "It's good for the disabled community to show we have the same goals and we can be productive. People have the perception that when you're disabled, you're not functional."

Very Special Arts Michigan is an affiliate of Very Special Arts, an international organization founded in 1974 by Jean Kennedy Smith, in conjunction with the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, to enrich the lives of disabled people by encouraging creativity. Very Special Arts Michigan and the Southeast Region Committee support and fund programs in dance, drama, music, and visual arts for persons with disabilities. Very Special Arts Michigan executive director Lora Frankel said until now artists with disabilities have been reluctant to come forward to show their work.