

CONVERSATIONS



FRANK PROVENZANO

## Fine artist's close encounters are heavenly

In the land where capitalism is king, and wisdom is measured by the rate-of-return on a diverse stock portfolio, who'd think that anyone was paying attention to those ethereal, winged guardian spirits commonly referred to as angels?

Materialism the rage? Think again. Nearly three-quarters of Americans believe in angels. Most only quietly confess to close encounters of the heavenly kind. (And no, there aren't reports of Della Reese anywhere to be found.)

"People are looking for something beyond materialism," said Ron Pavsner, a fine artist from Birmingham who specializes in transferring the



STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZOLINSKY  
From within: Ron Pavsner next to one of his angelic images.

Images of angels from the fertile well of his unconscious to the tangible world of ink and paper.

"There's a cyclical period of materialism followed by a period when people are searching for a deeper meaning," said Pavsner.

"Now, we're in a period when people are looking for spirituality."

And apparently, many people are looking for Pavsner's angelic imagery as an entry into another world.

### Need for spirituality

Over the past year, Pavsner's prints and sculptures have been available at Angel Treasure stores across the country.

Three years ago, Pavsner retired after 27 years of teaching at Adams Elementary and Junior High schools.

In August, his framed prints hung along the walls at The Community House of Birmingham.

And in the upcoming weeks, Pavsner's work will be exhibited at Our Town Art Exhibit, Mind, Body and Spirit Festival in Rochester, and Borders Books.

Based on the immediate and overwhelming response to the DIA's "The Invisible Made Visible: Angels from the Vatican," the subject of angels certainly has popular appeal.

In these secular times, said Pavsner, the popularity of angels is a way for many people to reconcile their need for spirituality without sounding like religious zealots.

### Art isn't easy

"My work is intense," said Pavsner. "It's the opposite of 'mild art' or wall decorations."

Warm and fuzzy isn't quite what most people feel when they study Pavsner's surrealistic images of angels.

On the contrary, there's a striking sense of isolation, loneliness and foreboding.

"Art isn't meant to be easy," said Pavsner. "You've got to walk through the feeling of loneliness. The ultimate goal is for art to be transcendent."

Arguably, few other subjects inspire the feeling of transcendence than angels.

And for Pavsner, heavenly bodies seem to have left their footprints in the hazy fields of slumber.

### A little help

"Before I awake I see the images," said Pavsner, who opens his eyes and finds a nearby pencil and paper, then sketches a preliminary drawing. From there, he uses an oil pencil

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## Inaugural festival nourishes Pontiac's cultural rebirth



Festival braintrust: 'Arts, Beats & Eats' has evolved from a taste fest to a full-fledged festival. Event organizers include Steve Weikal, (left to right), Lisa Konikow, Jonathan Witz and Chuck Uzela.

BY FRANK PROVENZANO  
STAFF WRITER

What was in the food at Colangelo's in Pontiac last December when Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson strolled in for dinner is worth investigating.

Perhaps years from now when "Arts, Beats & Eats" — held for the first time this Labor Day weekend — is mentioned in the same breath as the Chicago Taste Fest and Denver's Cherry Creek Art Festival, the story will have become a full-blown legend.

According to the emerging folklore, the idea for "Arts, Beats & Eats" was initially broached as Patterson and restaurant owner Ernie Colangelo discussed a proposed taste festival that would feature the growing number of restaurants in Oakland County.

In only a few months, the idea admittedly borrowed from the annual Detroit Taste Fest evolved into a multi-faceted arts, culinary and musical extravaganza.

"The idea just kept getting bigger," said Steve Weikal, director of Oakland

# Arts, Beats & Eats

County Arts, Culture and Film. "It had to be insanely big to get people's attention."

On Labor Day weekend, the festival will stop evolving long enough to spotlight 130 artists from around the U.S., more than 30 local restaurants, and nearly 60 local and national musical acts.

The much-anticipated celebration is widely considered as the long-sought catalyst to transform downtown Pontiac, said Chuck Uzela, president of the Pontiac Downtown Business Association.

"In the short-term, it's a

the culture of the county and thrown our resources behind it," said Weikal.

However, those "resources" haven't translated into public funding. Projected revenues of \$500,000 for the festival will be derived solely from corporate sponsors.

More specifically, Patterson's support has translated into a ride on his political carousel.

While some may contend that the lack of public seed money might jeopardize long-term plans, event producer Jonathan Witz said the timing and wide support of the festival guarantees corporate sponsors for years ahead.

"This will not look like any other festival. Each component of the festival can stand alone," said Witz, former event producer for Clubland in downtown Detroit.

"People need to see Pontiac as a destination point." About 60,000 people per day are expected for the four-day festival, said Witz.

The key measure of success

is the vision of what represents

lot of work, but when people come they'll find out what's been going on in Pontiac," said Uzela of Bloomfield Hills, who opened a downtown gallery two years ago.

"Our downtown is a microcosm of the festival," he said. "We have a great downtown. We're not trying to build one."

### '90s-style fest

Essentially "Arts, Beats & Eats" is the definitive '90s-style festival — eclectic in taste and driven from the grassroots.

"We've taken a broad

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What: "Arts, Beats & Eats," featuring 120 fine artists, 35 local restaurants and 60 local and national musical acts. When: Labor Day Weekend, Friday-Monday, Sept. 4-7. Where: Downtown Pontiac, along Michigan Street. Admission: Free, call (248) 584-4177, or artsbeats-eats.com on the web for more information.

Proceeds benefit Lighthouse of Oakland County, Pontiac Rescue Mission, Dittrich Foundation, Funclub Foundation for the Arts, Rainbow Connection, Boys and Girls Club of N. Oakland County, Haven, and Chrysler Oakland Arts Fund.



Grassroots eclecticism: The first annual "Arts, Beats & Eats" features 130 fine artists from around the country. The show features a range of media and styles, including Jack Brumbaugh's drawings and Jeanne Nash's fiber works.

## ARTS FESTIVAL

# Art show draws community together

BY LINDA ANN CIOMIN  
STAFF WRITER

Sog Linda Pritchard looks forward to Art on the Green every Labor Day as a way of reconnecting with the community. Hosted by the Franklin Arts Council,

### Art on the Green

What: The Franklin Arts Council's 18th annual art fair featuring 78 artists and live entertainment by one-man band Renée Kaufmann and guitarist Sean Blockman and John Arnold (tatin, folk, blues). Proceeds benefit Very Special Arts Michigan, Birmingham Groves High School art programs, and children's art activities for Franklin's "Holy Day" in December. When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Sept. 7. Admission is free.

Where: Franklin Village Green, (west of Franklin Road between 13 and 14 Mile Roads). For information, call (248) 644-5832, ext. 449. Local artists exhibiting: Carol Bonaroff, clay, Elena Annoutou, painting, Emi Watta, Japanese brushpainting, and Sue Walton, fiber, Bloomfield Hills; R.E. Salyer, Troy; Marcy and Michael Feldman, West Bloomfield; Celia Black, Farmington; Marla Howard, Royal Oak; Susan Papayan Cobb, fiber, Barbara Abel, photography, Bruce McGill, pastels, and Kathy Phillips, watercolor, West Bloomfield; Celia Black, Farmington; David Tyndal, painting, Beverly Hills; Cynthia Frost, mixed media, Waterford; and Sara Hicks, floor canvases, Pontiac.

the 18th annual arts and crafts show features 78 painters, sculptors, photographers and clay, glass, fiber, and wood artists.

"Art on the Green is a day of reunion in the community as people come back from wherever their summer has taken them," said Pritchard, a former chairman. "Art on the Green celebrates art and life. It's a day for community and to pick up something beautiful for the home."

Art on the Green chairwoman Peggy Kerr is proud that show proceeds benefit community programs such as the Very Special Arts Michigan touring art exhibit. In the past, the arts council has used show profits to help support Michigan Opera Theatre programs for children, and to bring the Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra into Pontiac Schools.

This year's recipients of both fees will be Very Special Arts Michigan, Birmingham Groves High School art programs, and children's art activities for Franklin's "Holy Day" in December. "There's no charge to get in, but artist fees help fund community art

programs," said Kerr, Franklin Arts Council president. "Very Special Arts provides arts programs for children and adults with disabilities. As an added attraction we'll have a tent full of art by these children and adults."

"The money makes a difference in a small kind of way," added Pritchard. For George Landino's students at



Soaring stars: George Landino will create whimsical folk art, including these popular kissing figures.

Birmingham Groves High School, the money made a big difference.

"If it wasn't for the arts council giving us money we wouldn't have been able to award scholarships to outstanding students," said Landino. "They gave us money for years. It was because of the arts council, the art programs at Birmingham Groves have flourished."

At Art on the Green Landino will exhibit the whimsical wood folk sculpture



Gold and silver: Charlotte Quinn designs contemporary fine jewelry on the cutting edge.

## Students jam with pros at Montreux

BY DOUG JOHNSON  
STAFF WRITER

Education has always been a component of the Ford Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival taking place Friday-Monday, Sept. 4-7, at Hart Plaza, Detroit.

In addition to performing, college and high school jazz musicians spend time with professional musicians. Matt Michaels of Southfield, director of Jazz Studies and an associate professor at Wayne State University, said high school and college students "love to share the stage with professionals." He compares it to athletics. Any student of golf would love to play on the pro tour. Same with musicians — they love to jam with the pros.

Educational programs include performances by the high schools and college bands, seven workshops on jazz improvisation at the Pepsi Jam Academy and a chance for students to meet and talk to performers.

### Meet the Artist

"Meet the Artist" sessions involve singer Dennis Rowland, Detroit bop veterans Louis Hayes and Curtis Fuller, and the grandson of Duke Ellington, Paul, current leader of the Duke Ellington Orchestra.

"Jazz is just a great training ground for any type of music career," said Michaels. "You are really playing contemporary music... today's music."

Most of the WSU jazz ensemble students "come from the suburbs" according to Michaels who plays with a quartet every Thursday at Botford Inn in Farmington Hills.

Michaels' 19-piece jazz band will play for one hour on the Main Stage on Labor Day. He plans on using a lot of student versions of jazz pieces in the show. "Many of the arrangements are very good," he said.

Jack Pierson, retired Dearborn Public Schools teacher and resident of Livonia until recently, emphasizes that the students not only get the opportunity to play to an audience, but also to participate in the clinics and "talk to the artist" sessions.

Pierson is executive secretary to the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association, and takes pride in the high school and college participation at Montreux.

"The 'meet the artists' sessions are especially important. They give the students a chance to meet with the professionals, ask them about the life of a musician, how they got started." The improv sessions also play a valuable role.

"It used to be kids could learn at improv sessions...they are just not as available as they once were," said Pierson. "At one time they can exchange ideas with other students."

The seven clinic/workshops/improv sessions are scheduled either right before or right after the high school bands to facilitate student participation.

### Big band

Pierson added that band directors feel the clinics are "very beneficial" to the students. Directors also get to see and hear the latest at the festival.

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