

Books from page B1

favorite bookstores told her about how he once set out to "live on the street, but found it so hard that he had to get a job."

That line set Rubin in pursuit of a story. She invited the store clerk to lunch.

As a result of conversations with the clerk, Rubin penned "Howie the Bum," one of the short stories in her recent collection.

But the road from epiphany to finished story, for Rubin, can hardly be called facile.

"Writing is about heart, and knowing storytelling as a craft is how you get to heart," she said. It's a tireless process.

Rubin rewrites endlessly, then cuts, cuts, cuts until all that remains is the essential spine of the story.

In between, however, it's not unusual for her to put aside a story. A 100-page story sat in a drawer for a decade before Rubin said she resurrected it because "I finally knew what it's about."

And an expansive draft of a novel — which measures in pages about three-feet high — is all finished, according to Rubin; except, of course, it just needs new words, she said.

As her finest short stories demonstrate, understatement is Rubin's finest literary tool.

A sense of play
A regular lecturer at local writing conferences, Rubin also

'Writing is about heart, and knowing storytelling as a craft is how you get to heart.'

Gay Rubin
On a Good Day

teaches creative writing at the University of Michigan, where she earned a master's in fine arts.

In the spring of 1997, Rubin translated her love of books into a cable show, "Writers' Roundtable," which aired in the Birmingham-Bloomfield area. The show, which ran for four months, featured discussions with writers, including Charles Baxter and Judith Guest.

For a gregarious person who is relegated to the sedentary writer's life, Rubin sees the irony as a lesson for her own life and for her readers.

"I want people to see ironies and paradoxes in my stories that teach them something about life," she said. "But I want to write about serious things in a way that's playful."

True to her credo, Rubin already has a working title for her next collection of stories. She refers to her new work as "How to be a bitch."

"It's autobiographical," she

laughed. "I used to be a nice person. There's already one story, it's called, 'How to out-bitch the bitches.'"

Of course, Rubin laughs. Then, she wonders whether she should have said what she did. When she's told that it's a "provocative title," she's apparently convinced to stick with her quote.

But before Rubin continues to work on her next collection of stories, she'll travel to promote her new book, and meet many of the readers who she keeps in mind as she writes.

While it may all seem like Ruby, there's no mistaking Rubin's sense of urgency.

"Let me know what you think of my book," she said. Then, she quickly adds: "Only tell me if you love it. If you don't, I'm unavailable."

Don't believe it. Rubin is just past the pages in her book. Readers will find her eye-to-eye. Heart-to-heart.

ART BEAT

Send items for consideration in Art Beat to Frank Provenzano, (248) 901-2557. Or write to him at the Birmingham Eccentric Newspaper, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009.

SOUTHFIELD'S CALENDAR AVAILABLE

The city of Southfield's annual calendar, "The Tapestry of Southfield," depicts the vast multicultural spirit of the community.

The 1999 calendar showcases distinctive features of the city's African American, Armenian, Chaldean, Jewish and Russian cultures.

Residents of Southfield are mailed the calendars. Anyone interested in purchasing the 1999 edition should call (248) 354-4854.

RESERVE YOUR VIEW

The Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center will host a tour of Florence, Siena and Rome, from April 22 to May 2.

Joining the tour will be renowned photographer Bathazar Korab, who is currently working on a photography book of Roman rooftops.

The tour of Italy will be led by art historian Deborah Kawsky and BBAC's Executive Director Janet Torino.

Participants will visit the

Uffizi, Sistine Chapel, Davanzati Palace in Florence and the Villa Farnesina in Rome.

Estimate tour price of \$3,079 is based on double occupancy. It includes airfare, hotels, admissions, transfers, and most meals. A \$500 deposit is required to reserve space. Deadline for final payment is Jan. 22.

Winter classes on Italian art and architecture will be offered at the BBAC.

For more information, call (248) 644-0866.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS AT BBAC

Nine new trustees have been elected to the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center.

New appointees include:

■ Ferdinand Hampson, president of Habitat Galleries in Pontiac

■ Debbie Jerome, assistant director of human resources for Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset

■ Kimberly Johnson of Kimberly Group

■ Lynn Liddle, vice president of corporate communications and investor relations, Valassis Communications, Livonia

■ Bill Murcko, owner/president of Communication Associates

■ Cheryl Noonan, art educator and artist

■ Steven Pope, publisher,

Observer & Eccentric Newspapers Inc.

■ Julie Richardson-Pate, art educator and artist

■ Linda Truxell, attorney

OAKLAND COUNTY ARTISTS

RESERVE GRANTS

ArtServe Michigan named five Oakland County artists as recipients for their annual Creative Artist Grant.

The artists include:

■ Sheila Landis of Rochester Hills to create a series of jazz works based on audience suggestions.

■ Robert Schofman of West Bloomfield to create a large diptych oil painting entitled, "Utopia."

■ Barbara Selinger of Farmington Hills to create and produce "Virtual Voices," a multimedia dance integrating live dance with projected video and still photography.

■ Russell Thayer of Lathrup Village to create a body of sculpture based on rural imagery in the Saginaw River Valley.

■ Mark Gottlieb of Royal Oak for the composition of a song cycle for chamber orchestra, traditional Latin American instruments and soloists.

ArtServe Michigan supports and advocates for the arts and cultural education in Michigan.



PHOTO BY BATHAZAR KORAB

Tour Italy: The BBAC will host a tour of Florence, Siena and Rome, from April 22 to May 2. For information, call (248) 644-0866.

Conversations from page B1

over time."

And there's plenty of layers in "Shakespeare in Love."

Shakespeare's shadows

Taking liberties with history and Shakespearean scholarship, the movie offers an inventive

story-behind-the-story of Shakespeare's great romantic tragedy "Romeo and Juliet."

While there are many references to other plays in Shakespeare's body of work, and an impressive range of acting talent, the truly remarkable feature of the film is Shakespeare's mastery of language and ability to transfer passion into stunning descriptive phrases.

In the age of tabloids, sitcoms and pulp fiction triteness, few writers can even pass through Shakespeare's long shadow.

Of course, Shakespeare lived amid a time when words were akin to the realism of photography and the magic of film.

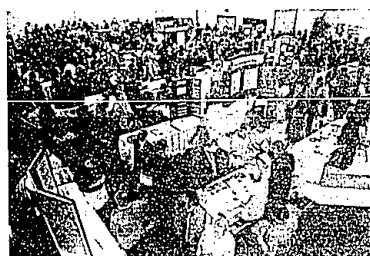
Hopefully, "Shakespeare in Love" will be a bridge for readers to explore the playwright's larger body of work, including "Hamlet," "Othello," "The Tempest," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Twelfth Night," "Henry V," and "Julius Caesar."

After all, in our age of terminal reruns, perhaps rereading and rewatching Shakespeare's works is the best we can hope for.

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Job Fair
Laurel Manor in Livonia
Wednesday, March 24, 1999
11:00 a.m.—7 p.m.



Observer & Eccentric and HomeTown Newspapers Job Fair, September 1998

★ "Great Job! Well organized!"—Kohl's Department Store

★ "We received 400 resumes; thought it was great."—Employment Connections Personnel

★ "Very organized and professional!"—Parisian Department Store

★ "The advertising was wonderful, we were very pleased with the turn-out."—Performance Personnel

These are just a few of the positive comments we received following our first Job Fair in September '98.

This March, you will have an opportunity to participate in our second, which promises to be even better.

This general job fair is open to all professions and occupations. So, if you wish to add or replace with competent personnel, our Job Fair is the place to be on March 24, 1999.

Commit now! Space is limited—Don't miss this chance to find the help you've been searching for!

To reserve your space, call 734-953-2070.

Your participation is only \$625 and includes:

• An 8-foot skirted table and chairs (no booths, please)

• Box lunches for two (2) staffers

• Inclusion in all fair advertising and editorial in

The Observer & Eccentric and HomeTown Newspapers

• Inclusion on our Web Sites promoting the Fair

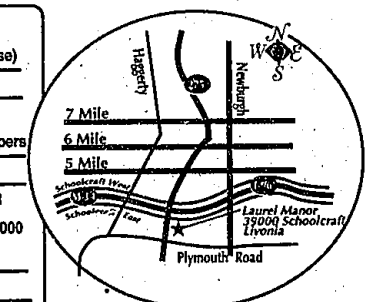
• A QUARTER PAGE AD IN OUR OFFICIAL JOB FAIR

SUPPLEMENT with distribution to more than 255,000

households (see specifications on the reverse)

• Radio promotion of the Job Fair

• An excellent opportunity to meet prospective employees



Interaction from page B1

The 20th century galleries are much like a work of art in progress. The education department is creating more interpretive labels, but also developing new tools for interpreting art. Currently in the works is a curiosity cabinet for the pop art galleries. The hands-on activity will help viewers experience a variety of pop art. Brochures are also being written that concentrate on a single piece of art.

"Mary Ann was excited about this being a laboratory," said Jones. "We learn so much from what we've done. I haven't seen anything like this in other museums. It's very special."

Disassembled 18 months ago to make way for the "Splendors of Ancient Egypt" exhibition, the modern and contemporary art galleries lead viewers through a gamut of styles from Abstract Expressionism to Picasso and Cubism, Matisse and the School of Paris, Minimalism, and Abstraction after 1950. Among the newer works is Martin Puryear's wire mesh and tar sculpture. The 1997 work, acquired two months ago, is at once delicate and sturdy.

"We never had the opportunity to take everything out and put everything in again," said Wilkinson. "We wanted to make the collection understandable and approachable. We realized early on that we couldn't do it chronologically so we've grouped art works in clusters. The hard part to doing this was not putting out everything I wanted to."

Visitors will find Kandinsky's art incorporated with art by Adolph Gottlieb and Detroit artist Ed Rago. More than ever, Michigan-made art can be seen in the galleries. Ellen Phelan, Ann Mikolowski and Brenda Goodman are a few of the locals being shown. Tyree Guyton's "Cage" Brain" from 1990 is created from rope, a bird cage and other found objects. The last contemporary art gallery deals with narrative painting. Here, visitors are treated to works by Mike

Kelley, who grew up in Michigan and now lives in California, and Peter Williams, an instructor at Wayne State University.

"It's a good way to learn about artists in the state," said Wilkinson. "This gallery will change often as people will understand how deep our collection is. The contemporary gallery shows the return to figurative painting that happened in the late 1980s. A video kiosk will eventually feature performing artists. That's why people have to keep coming back."

Passion for Glass

The exhibition, "A Passion for Glass: The Aviva and Jack A. Robinson Studio Glass Collection," is one of the highlights of the 20th century galleries. It continues through Sunday, Feb. 14 in the large scale, well-lit showcases. William Morris, Dale Chihuly and Ginny Ruffner are among the contemporary studio glass artists in the collection. The Robinsons donated to the museum in 1996.

"The Robinsons gave a donation to transform the gallery into a space where you can display decorative arts," said Wilkinson. "We've never had that before. Decorative arts will end up in this gallery once the Robinsons glass collection exhibit closes."

Wilkinson plans to rotate work in the 20th century galleries in six months. Warhol portraits on loan to the Kalamazoo Museum will be displayed upon their return. A special project space will host installations, art and video such as Bill Viola's "Nine Attempts to Achieve Immortality" created in 1996.

"It's more of a work in progress," said Wilkinson. "Seeing where it works, what doesn't work. Now that galleries have been reinstated we can go back and fine tune. We can start thinking about acquisitions and bringing in exhibits such as Ben Shahn in July."