

## ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

### Gala signals final curtain, ensures new act

This is it — the final curtain for the Farmington Players Barn and its members couldn't be happier. This summer the old structure will be torn down to make way for a new theater. But first, the Players will hold one last performance of *Kiss Me, Kate* during a June 3 gala to raise money to pay for the new theater. As the actors take their final bows, a few tears are sure to be shed. But the show must go.

"The Players are known for their food and parties," said Cynthia Tupper, president of the Farmington Players. "No one's going to walk away hungry. We're going to have food from Marco's in Farmington, Tom's Oyster Bar in Southfield and 15 other restaurants. There'll also be a silent auction of jewelry, golf packages and barn memorabilia plus a live auction."

The Players hope to match the \$30,000 their first event raised two years ago. In addition to that gala, which was coordinated with a performance of

**Kiss Me, Kate**  
What: The Farmington Players present the musical comedy during a special gala to celebrate 48 years of community theater and the last show at the barn.  
When: Begins 6 p.m. Saturday, June 3 with hors d'oeuvres and a silent auction followed by *Kiss Me, Kate* at 8 p.m.  
Where: Farmington Players Barn, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, west of Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills.  
Tickets: \$100, proceeds go toward the construction of a new theater. Call (248) 553-2955

will be located on the old barn site on 12 Mile Road west of Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills. It is scheduled to be completed in time for the opening of the 2001-2002 season.

"It's still going to look like a barn," said Tupper. "We wanted to keep the image. It's our history. That's who we are. The new barn is going to ensure the future of the Players. We've been around nearly 50 years. With a new theater — we could do so much more with children's theater and youth programs."

This is the second time around for Phil Hadley. A member of the Players since 1978, he remembers when the idea for a new performing arts space was proposed 15 years ago. At that time, the Players came to the conclusion that a new facility was the only solution to their tight quarters, both on and off stage. The comfort of patrons was also a concern. The present heating/cooling system left the audience freezing in winter, and sweating through the warmer months.

"The project's been fascinating," said Hadley, manager of the new barn. "We'd talked about improving the facility for years but realized the roof doesn't allow us to add on. With the new theater we'll be able to expand seating from 170 to 240 with reconditioned seats from the Americana West Theater in West Bloomfield. The stage will be about 15 percent larger allowing room for flexible staging and enough space offstage for actors waiting to come on. And it will be entirely barrier free which makes it flexible for anyone to use."

"Flexibility is what the new theater is all about. Hadley, Tupper and the rest of the Players plan to make the new theater available to the community. In addition to presenting their 2001-2002 season of productions, they're inviting businesses and organizations to use the space for meetings, recitals or whatever. Sounds like a great reason to come out and support the Players."

Please see EXPRESSIONS, C3



Plymouth potter: Kathy Sandberg is an old hand at throwing clay. She is one of 150 ceramists and glass artists exhibiting work in the Royal Oak Clay & Glass Show.

## Earthy delights Artists reflect on beauty of glass and clay

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER  
lchomin@oe.homecom.net

Glass is still new to Deb Eliassen. But in the short time since the Farmington Hills artist began working with the material, she's developed a love for its ability to reach out and grab the viewer.

For Eliassen there's no greater satisfaction than having someone admire her blown glass and want to cup it in their hands. She knows exactly how they feel.

The minute Eliassen walked into a class at internationally-known glass artist Albert Young's Michigan Hot Glass Workshop 2 1/2 years ago, she knew there was no turning back from the magic of this dazzling beauty. A novice at creating art, Eliassen had been an equity analyst working in the field of finance until she took that first glass class through the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center.

"When I turned 30, I flipped out because I wanted to create something," said Eliassen. "As soon as I stepped into the studio, I knew this was it. It's 2,200°F when it comes out of the furnace and is glowing orange. I find it so interesting that you can take this molten blob and turn it into anything."

Eliassen continues to apprentice with Young at

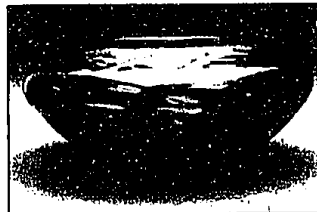


PHOTO BY LINDA CHOMIN

**Hot glass:** Deb Eliassen, a Farmington Hills artist, created this glass vessel in earth tones.

the Michigan Hot Glass Workshop, formerly located in Pontiac. She's in the process of opening Deb Eliassen Glassworks, a studio and gallery, alongside Young's Workshop in the Russell Industrial Center in Detroit. There she'll continue to blow glass into various forms. Her latest works — small,

lidded vessels created with the colors of earth — will be on display at the sixth annual Royal Oak Clay & Glass Show Saturday-Sunday, June 10-11. Eliassen is one of 150 artists exhibiting in the show sponsored by the Downtown Royal Oak Association of merchants.

"There's a little bit of mystery when you put a lid on a vessel," said Eliassen, who also exhibits at Art in the Park in Plymouth July 14-16 and Art on the Green in Franklin Sept. 4. "If I use bold color, I just let it peek out a little."

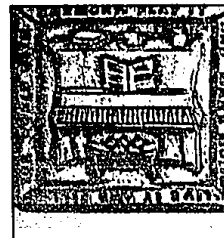
### Spellbound

Eliassen never forgot the first time she saw glass being blown. It was 20 years ago at Greenfield Village when she was 11. Little did she know then that in 1998-99 she would work there as an assistant to a glass blower making 19th century reproductions.

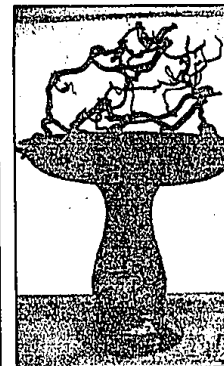
"I was enthralled by it, mesmerized," said Eliassen.

Anne Kuffler thinks most people have a similar reaction to not only glass but clay as well. Kuffler is chairwoman of the Royal Oak Clay & Glass Show and owner of the Arianna Gallery in Royal Oak. This is the first year the show will be juried. Judges

Please see CLAY, C2



Decorative tile: Sara Frank of West Bloomfield created this six-inch stoneware, "Piano."

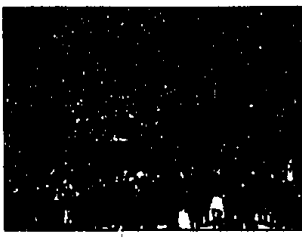


Garden art: One of Kathy Sandberg's most popular sellers is this bird bath.

### The Royal Oak Clay & Glass Art Show

When: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, June 10 and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, June 11  
Where: Washington Avenue, between Fourth and Lincoln, Royal Oak. For more information, call (248) 547-4000.

## OPERA



Omnipresent: The chorus of *Peter Grimes* serves the role of the nosy neighbor who lives to gossip and judge.

## Singers take on foreboding 'Peter Grimes'

BY ALICE REKIN  
STAFF WRITER  
arekin@oe.homecom.net

*Peter Grimes*, Benjamin Britten's 20th-century opera, has all the ingredients that make a great opera. The recipe includes a deeply tragic story, a remarkable musical score, love, death, sexual insinuations, more death and psychological turmoil.

Yet few opera devotees would count the English opera, which opens at the Detroit Opera House on Saturday, among their favorites.

Nor would they likely be found humming — or singing — the tale of a fishing village under their breath.

Unless, of course, you're part of the chorus. Peggy O'Shaughnessy said she's been living with the score since January when rehearsals began for the 70-plus member chorus which includes members of the

What: Michigan Opera Theatre presents *Peter Grimes*, an opera sung in English by Benjamin Britten  
When: 8 p.m. June 3, 7, 9 & 10; 2 p.m. June 4 & 11  
Where: Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit  
Tickets: \$18-\$98. Call (313) 237-7464 or (248) 645-6666

Rackham Choir and several vocal exchange students from Palermo.

"The harmonies and timing were very challenging to learn," said O'Shaughnessy, a Troy resident, a Troy resident.

"I find myself singing it everywhere. It's both disturbing and wonderful."

Jay Smith, a Clarkston resident who teaches music at Harlan Elementary School in Birmingham, said he's

Please see OPERA, C2