

ARTISTIC IMPRESSIONS



LINDA CHOMIN

Help brighten the holidays for the needy

Over the last 11 years that I've worked as an arts reporter for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, I've met many wonderful people who've touched my life. In addition to the artists, musicians and members of community theaters, orchestras and arts councils, chairpersons for annual fund-raisers, including a mask auction for COTS homeless shelter in Detroit and a Web site auction of photographs for the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, taught me that we all need help in to help the hungry and homeless survive.

I've discovered in talking to non-profits such as COTS and the Capuchins that donations are down. No one wants to come out and say that it's due to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, subsequent war in Afghanistan and the recession, but they suspect many individuals and corporations are cutting back and cautiously taking a wait-and-see position.

That's and especially for the children who look forward to receiving a toy for Christmas. Brother Vincent Reyes, pastoral director of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, is doing everything he can to see the children get their wish. He began the Visions of the Sacred Web site auction of photographs by photojournalists from around the world last year. It helps raise money to feed more than 2,000 people a day but now he needs everyone's help to make a child smile. Of course, all of us will be able to help with everyday needs in January when the Web site will once again offer photographs to the highest bidder.

"We need toys and gift certificates for supermarkets," said Brother Reyes. "We have families who come in and need formula or diapers. To donate or for more information about the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, call (313) 579-2100, ext. 203.

COTS

Like Reyes, Beth McKeown is worried about providing enough toys for the Santa Shop at COTS (Coalition on Temporary Shelter). More than 30 children reside in the main shelter on Peterboro and Woodward just a little ways down from the Detroit Institute of Arts.

"We have the Santa Shop so parents at COTS can go in and shop for a child," said McKeown. "We allow them to take two toys and an outfit. We need clothing items for children from infants to 14-year-olds. It's the one time of the year we ask for help."

COTS helps 400 people a day by providing not only shelter and food for residents but classes in computers, parenting, budgeting and recovering from debt. Right now, they especially need disposable diapers, tube socks and underwear for adults in their transitional program which permits residents to stay for up to 24-months while looking or training for a job, or going to school for a GED. That's why their annual MaskorAide auction is so important. Last year, artists from all over Oakland and Wayne counties created masks for the auction which will be held Saturday, March 9 at the Detroit Yacht Club. Tickets are \$125. For more information about the event or COTS, call (313) 831-3777.

"We help homeless help themselves. Our role is to get them stabilized and on their feet," said McKeown. "We've recently been turning as many as 60 people away every night. There are 5,300 homeless in the city of Detroit, only 2,000 shelter beds so we do what we can to find them some place to go when we don't have room."

And when no one has room, the Ja'Noah house helps. Run by Audrey and Carl Mattson out of their Livonia home, the nonprofit urgently needs warm winter clothing, especially socks and gloves, for the men on the streets of Detroit. If you can help, call (734) 622-8077.

"You hold their hands and they're like ice," said Audrey Mattson. "We started Ja'Noah House 12-years ago during the recession and we just keep on because of the need. We also help families in the Brightmoor and Nor-

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Potters travel different roads

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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It seemed only natural that when Debbie Liberman, Nancy Chevalier-Guido, Margaret Nowak, and Donna Williams decided to exhibit their clay together, they would create a joint work celebrating their love of the medium. As you enter the gallery, the focal point of *Four Women, Four Directions in Clay* draws viewers to its earthen-color and size. Composed of four sections, the sculpture represents elements necessary to making pottery - earth, wind, fire, and water. Individual artist styles contrast yet commune with one another. Three of the potters specialize in tiles so there are plenty of flat surfaces in the work greeting visitors to the Fine Arts Gallery at the Livonia Civic Center Library. Each concentrates on different imagery. Two of the artists, Liberman and Chevalier-Guido, also bring their definitive work to Powabie Pottery's Antique & Contemporary Art Tile Fair Sunday, March 10, at St. George's Cultural Center in Bloomfield Hills. Call (313) 822-0954 for details.

Four directions in clay

Sponsored by the Livonia Arts Commission, *Four Women, Four Directions in Clay* illustrates differences in the artists working in tile, sculpture and vessel formats.

"We all fit into the different elements," said Liberman, a Southfield resident whose work frequently focuses on nature. "I was reading about water and the effects of the moon on water. My part of the joint piece is about the movement of

water, the mosaic is a waterfall. I've never done a sculptural piece. I enjoyed working it out, the design and glaze to get the colors but I like staying with the tile aspect of clay."

Four Women, Four Directions in Clay

When: Through Thursday, Dec. 27. Hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, until 5 p.m. Friday-Saturday, and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. Where: Fine Arts Gallery on the second floor of the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile, east of Farmington Road. For information, call Livonia's community resources department at (734) 466-2538

Liberman usually incorporates beads and wire into the baskets she crafts at the Village Potters Guild in Plymouth. That's where the concept for the Livonia exhibit was born. All four potters were members at the Guild when Nowak approached them about the exhibit 18 months ago. She'd been part of a similar project while working on her master's degree in art therapy from Wayne State University.

"I went to the Guild and asked who's interested," said Nowak, a Canton resident who until recently lived in Livonia. "Even though we didn't do the clay together it got us communicating. Each kept her own style. For mine I did quite a bit of research looking at symbolism around fire and goddesses, the divine feminine

spirit. Thousands of years ago all religions were matriarchal. We've lost that connection to the divine feminine."

Wind of creativity

Carved in bas relief, Nowak's figurative Guardians of the Fire flicker like so many flames while Chevalier-Guido captures the wind of creativity by portraying a god with abstracted wings and feathers.

"For me the piece was real educational," said Chevalier-Guido whose decorative tile work can be found in kitchens in Birmingham. The Livonia potter will offer her architectural-theme tiles at the Powabie fair March 10 in Bloomfield Hills. "It was inspiring."

Williams couldn't agree more. The Plymouth potter mixed 25 percent paper in with the clay she used to create her statement about Mother Earth. The terraced mountains of China inspired a major portion of the work.

"Doing this piece pushed me further than I would have pushed myself," said Williams. "I experimented with oxides for glazes and surface texture. I asked myself what the earth means to me. I feel we're connected to the earth, the permanence of it and impermanence. But I like people to come up with their own ideas. A youngster was here and he imagined being an ant and crawling in and out of there."

Four Women, Four Directions in Clay affects each viewer differently as it mirrors four artists who've taken different paths in creating the vessels, tiles and sculpture.



STAFF PHOTO BY JIM JACOBFIELD

Collaboration:
Nancy Chevalier-Guido (left),
Donna Williams,
Margaret Nowak
and Debbie Liberman
created this
joint sculpture
based on the four
elements necessary
to work in clay.

MUSIC



Live a capella: elmoTHUMM sings oldies music on their new CD.

Golden oldies move singers as well as crowd

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Adam Westmoreland isn't about to quit his day job at Interior Dynamics in Troy even though elmoTHUMM is taking off. The a capella group already has more than 40 dates booked for 2002. That's quite a feat for a group of guys who got together only a year ago because they love to sing.

Westmoreland and Greg Vaden originally met while performing with the vocal ensemble at Milford High School in the early 1980s but each went their separate ways musically until a year ago. That's when they decided to regroup for a performance at Arts, Eats & Beats in Pontiac on Labor Day weekend. The crowd loved their version of golden oldies from Motown and later hits like Still the One. Before long the

quintet found itself recording its concerts and releasing its first CD — *elmoTHUMM Live!*

"I love it," said Westmoreland of Oxford. "We're starting to make money but we're putting it back into the group. The CD started out as a demo that we could hand to people hiring us so they know what we sound like."

Once they do, elmoTHUMM is invited to perform again and again. After singing at the Bologna Festival in Yale, they were asked to entertain the crowd waiting for the small town's Christmas parade to begin. But crowds aren't the only ones who appreciate their musicianship. In March, the group won third place in the Harmony Sweepstakes, a capella competition for groups from the Midwest region.

"People are always looking for something a little bit different."

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