

## Winter brings Santa, crafts, music to the Detroit Zoo

The Detroit Zoo kicks off its annual Wild Winter program this weekend with a visit from Santa Claus.

He'll be on hand for photos every Sunday through Dec. 11 and will greet youngsters and their families at a Santa Breakfast, Dec. 14 and 21.

Santa breakfasts run from 8:30-10:30 a.m. and include pancakes, sausage, Danishes, coffee, hot chocolate and juice. No high chairs or booster seats are available. The breakfast is served family-style at tables that accommodate several guests.

Youngsters can meet Santa and will receive a gift. Members pay \$25 for adults and \$20 for children, age 12 and under. Non-members pay \$35 for adults and \$30 for children. Reservations are available through the Detroit Zoological Society at (248) 541-5717.

Wild Winter runs every weekend through February 2003 at the zoo, located at Woodward and the I-696 service drive in Royal Oak.

It consists of activities, such as ice carving, decorated holiday trees, musical performances and children's entertainment. Most activities will be held indoors, at the zoo's Wildlife Interpretive Gallery.

Some musicals and performers stroll the grounds.

Winter is a great time to view the zoo's snow monkeys sunning in their outdoor hot tub. Or to see the arctic fox, with its white winter coat.

The brightly colored red pandas look striking against the snow and Wolverines have been known to make "snow angels."

No winter visit would be complete without a stop at the penguin habitat or the Arctic Ring of Life, which allows visitors to watch polar bears and seals from inside a 70-foot-long clear tunnel. Zoo admission is \$8 for adults, age 13 and over; \$6 for senior citizens, ages 62 and over and students, ages 2-12; children under age 2 are admitted free. The zoo is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

### WILD WINTER

#### December Activities

■ **Santa breakfast** - Enjoy a pancake breakfast with Santa, along with a holiday gift, 8:30-10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 14 and 21, in the Wildlife Interpretive Gallery. Reservations at (248) 541-5717.

■ **Santa photos** - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8, 15 and 22, in the Wildlife Interpretive Gallery. \$5 for members; \$7 for nonmembers.

■ **Holiday card craft** - Make a holiday card for a special friend or family member, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8, 15 and 22, in the Wildlife Interpretive Gallery.

■ **Mosaic Youth Theatre** - Presents *OO Paw* in the Wildlife Interpretive Gallery Theatre. Time to be arranged.

■ **Ice carving demonstration** by Henry Ford Community College Ice Carving Club, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 4, 2003, in front of the zoo.

■ **Keeper talks** - Every Sunday in January. Information will be available on the zoo Web site at [www.detroitzoo.org](http://www.detroitzoo.org).

■ **Gemini** - The duo sings about everyday experiences of childhood and growing up, noon and 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11, 2003, in the Wildlife Interpretive Gallery.

## Visiting Mr. Green will make you laugh, cry

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI  
CORRESPONDENT

Arthur Beer won't become the grumpy and lonely Mr. Green, but he will feel his pain and shed his tears.

"When I'm on stage, I'm not him. I'm not me. I am something in between," said the University of Detroit-Mercy theater professor. "You play with a split focus. The tears are there when I need them."

Tears — and laughter — definitely fill the humorous *Visiting Mr. Green*, presented by the Jewish Ensemble Theatre in West Bloomfield. The play opens at 7:30 p.m. today, Sunday, Dec. 8 at the Aaron DeRoy Theatre, 6600 Maple.

The award-winning Beer takes on the role of Mr. Green, a recently widowed 86-year-old Jewish man, who is quite accidentally and reluctantly befriended by a young, up-and-coming New York American Express executive.

As penalty for hitting Mr. Green in a car accident, the executive, Ross Gardiner, played by Timothy McKernan of Livonia, must perform community service — visiting Mr. Green for six months.

"The first act is warm and funny," Beer said.

"In the second act, the scenes are touching and bring out basic human emotions."

The two-man play, performed in two 45-minute acts, takes the odd couple from their reluctant meeting through the struggles of a burgeoning friendship and finally, to kinship.

"They are two very unlikely people to be together," said the play's director, Yolanda Fleischer, an associate professor of theater at the University of Detroit-Mercy.

"The two seem like oil and



Arthur Beer (left) and Timothy McKernan perform in *Visiting Mr. Green* at the Jewish Ensemble Theatre in West Bloomfield.

water at first. But through each other they learn to love again. Lots of secrets come out and they help each other come back to the world."

Missing here are a few morsels of information — they're a secret — that bring out the lost souls in the two characters and prompt their relationship.

"They bond. The fact is they need each other," Beer says.

"They are of different generations. They are different people."

Evelyn Orbach, artistic director and friend of Beer's, asked him last spring to take the role. "That was a blessing for Fleischer, who is able once again to work with her academic colleague."

McKernan, who was unavailable for comment, is Fleischer's former student.

"It is like old home week here. We all agreed that Tim was the right person. He is a really wonderful person."

Audiences will get the chance to listen in on the odd couple's intriguing, funny and heartwrenching conversations that prompt revelation and friendship through Jan. 5, 2003. Showtime is at 7:30 p.m.

### Visiting Mr. Green

What: Jewish Ensemble Theatre presents a poignant and funny play with a two-member cast  
When: 7:30 p.m.  
Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, and 8 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sunday matinees; through Jan. 5, 2003.

Where: The Aaron DeRoy Theatre, 6600 Maple, West Bloomfield

Tickets: \$18-\$50. (248) 788-2900

associate director of the university's theater.

"On the other hand, you are also sharing the credits with everyone. Theater is pretty much my life."

A two-man show — especially in a smaller venue — provides instant feedback from the audience," Beer added.

There is no doubt when the audience is laughing and when it doesn't think a line is funny. "You must always work with the audience," Beer added.

JET Theatre, a Michigan nonprofit corporation, is a professional theater company.

It receives grants and support from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Dorfman Foundation, MASCO, The Detroit Jewish News, and the General Motors Corp.

JET's 2002-2003 season includes the following performances: *Denial* and *The Chosen*, as well as *Guest Artist Series*, *Mystery of Creativity*, *Shylock*, and *HeartBEAT*.

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