

Don your mask, it's Mardi Gras time

BY MARY DUDNLEY
CORRESPONDENT

Forget about traveling to New Orleans to celebrate Mardi Gras, the day before Ash Wednesday. Stay home and party.

From jump blues and boogie-woogie favorites to best costume contests and luscious Louisiana-style cuisine, there's something for everyone.

So, don your finery of gold, purple and green, the official Mardi Gras colors. Layer bright and brilliant beads over your head, hide behind a mask and join other revelers for the gala event.

Here's a sampling of what's happening:

- **The De La Salle Collegiate Music Boosters and French Club** host their annual Mardi Gras Party 7-10 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22, 14600 Common Road, Warren. Tickets \$12 per person, includes dancing, refreshments, appetizers and entertainment. Call (586) 778-2207, Ext. 228.
- **Dine and dance 8 p.m.**

to 1 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 22, at Sacred Heart Church, 1000 Elliot, off I-75, Mack Exit, Detroit. Proceeds will be used for a parish school and clinic in Haiti. Cost is \$20 per person. Silent auction, door prizes and 50/50 raffle, call (313) 392-0189.

- **Eastern Michigan University** will rock Friday, February 28 at the 10th annual Mardi Gras Party sponsored by radio station WEMU. "The real highlight (of the party) is that we bring a band from New Orleans," said Mary Motherwell, marketing and development director of WEMU. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. at the EMU Convocation Center on Hewitt Road in Ypsilanti. The cost, which includes a Louisiana-style buffet dinner, is \$40/person or \$280 for a table of eight. Cash bar. Tickets must be purchased by 3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27. Call (734) 487-2282 or online at: www.wemu.org.
- **The celebration at Fishbone's**, 400 Monroe St. in Detroit begins 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 4. The \$10 admission includes appetizers, live music and a chance to win \$1,000. Need more info? Call (313) 965-4600.

- **Create a festive, fun costume and head to Fishbone's** Tuesday, March 4. A standard menu, with drink and dinner specials, will be offered 11 a.m. to midnight. Prizes for best costumes will be awarded. The restaurant is at 2924+ Northwestern Highway in Southfield. Call (248) 351-2925.
- **Live music and a Louisiana-style buffet** will be available Tuesday, March 4 at Zydeco Restaurant, 314 S. Main, Ann Arbor. From 6-11 p.m. customers will savor prime rib, Cajun deep-fried turkey, peel-n-eat shrimp, blackened catfish, jambalaya, etouffee, desserts and lots more. Cost \$39.95/person, call (734) 995-3600 for reservations.

Mary Dudley is a Livonia resident and writes about food and travel for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. You can reach her at Moni@eol.com.

Choir and puppeteers join forces to slay reluctant dragon

Using sounds and symbols of timeless beauty, Rackham Symphony Choir builds bridges of understanding between people and faiths in two unique productions.

Rackham Symphony Choir presents *The Reluctant Dragon*, with text by Kenneth Graham and music by John Rutter, Friday, Feb. 28, at Milford High School Center for the Performing Arts.

A second performance will be staged Sunday, March 2, at Congregation Beth Ahm, 5075 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield.

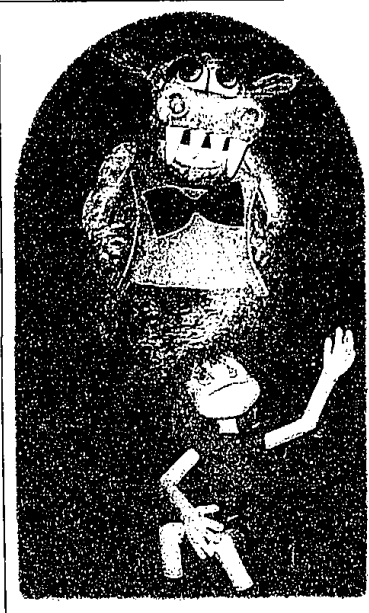
Entertainment by the Dubois Youth Klezmer Band follows the performance.

The Reluctant Dragon is based on a story published in 1898 by English writer Kenneth Grahame, author of *The Wind in the Willows*. Composer John Rutter set the story to music in 1983. The tale centers on a young boy who befriends a dragon that enjoys poetry and daydreaming. When villagers discover the dragon, they become frightened and immediately plan its demise. Through friendship and the kind intervention of St. George, the dragon is spared.

Actor Fred Buchalter, who has appeared in Michigan Opera Theatre productions *Turandot* and *Forgy and Bess*, is the narrator for RSC's *Reluctant Dragon*. Reprising their roles from last season's production are Susan Lowrie as The Boy, Chris Vaught as St. George, and Lawrence Stolsberg as the Dragon. RSC's Artistic Director/Musical Director Suzanne Mallare Acton conducts. Life-sized puppets, created by Detroit's PuppetArt for Rackham Symphony Choir, animate the tale to provide a unique and special experience for children.

Since the organization's founding in 1949, the Rackham Symphony Choir has provided talented vocalists from the metropolitan Detroit area with the opportunity to experience and perform choral music of the highest artistic excellence. Led by Acton, the chorus has expanded its rich tradition of musical performance. Acton also serves as assistant music director and chorus master for Michigan Opera Theatre.

The Rackham Symphony Choir receives financial support through membership dues, private foundation grants, performance fees, individual donations, corporate sponsorships, program advertisements, and



Life-sized puppets, created by Detroit's PuppetArt for Rackham Symphony Choir, help tell the story of "The Reluctant Dragon."

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON

Rackham Symphony Choir presents the tale by Kenneth Grahame with music by John Rutter, 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28, at Milford High School Center for the Performing Arts, 2380 Milford Road, Highland. Tickets \$5, call (248) 889-8660.

A second performance will be staged 1:30 p.m. Sunday, March 2 at Congregation Beth Ahm, 5075 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Funded by the Walter Litt Family Jewish Music Fund, patrons are asked to bring a good will offering. The show benefits The One Family Fund. All proceeds are directed to families in Israel who have suffered as a result of suicide bombers. Call (313) 272-0334.

concert ticket sales. Support is also given by the Michigan Council for the Arts and the Detroit Cultural Commission. Organizations and people who are interested in supporting RSC or in membership, call (313) 272-0334 or visit the Web site at www.RackhamChoir.org.

New Shanghai Circus comes to town

You won't see Bozo the Clown or bears wearing tutus at this circus.

The New Shanghai Circus tastefully mixes graceful elegance and acrobatic adventure into one sophisticated event that leaves audiences wondering: "How can the human body do that?"

The Incredible! Acrobats of China performed by the New Shanghai Circus is coming to the Millennium Centre in Southfield, 15600 J.L. Hudson Drive, on Sunday.

The jugglers who throw breakable dishes and harmful objects, acrobats who look as if they can fly, and contortionists are practicing a 2,500-year-old Chinese artform. Expect to see death-defying acts by performers wearing boldly colored, beaded costumes. The show featuring 20 entertainers from the People's Republic of China, is fast-paced with a touch of humor for children. The acrobats, dramatic music, and creative high-tech lighting should satisfy adults.

The New Shanghai Circus was founded in 1984. Think of a smaller version of *Cirque Du Soleil* with a more upbeat pace.

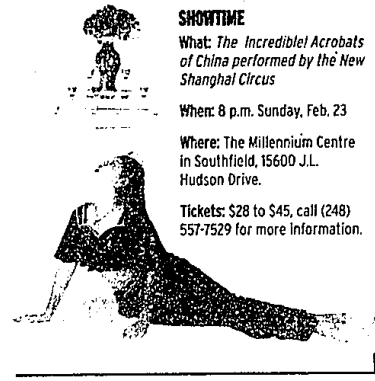
The circus, presented by International Special Attractions, began when Michael Wilson, vice president and director, visited China with his father in the 1980s. Wilson's dad was in the entertainment production business. Together they saw their first Chinese acrobatic show. Four years later, the performances were brought by Wilson to the states and the New Shanghai Circus was formed.

In 1989, his show was the first ever to show Chinese acrobats on Broadway. The show was a sell-out and since then the circus has toured the world.

Chinese acrobatics were developed in Chinese villages and inspired by the harvest. People flaunted their skills during the harvest by performing daring feats with household and farm items like climbing to the top of a stack of chairs and spinning plates on the end of long bamboo sticks.

Confucius' father was an acrobat who is said to have lifted 1,000 pound city gates to let an army storm through.

— Compiled by Lana Mini



SHOWTIME
What: *The Incredible! Acrobats of China performed by the New Shanghai Circus*
When: 8 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 23
Where: The Millennium Centre in Southfield, 15600 J.L. Hudson Drive.
Tickets: \$28 to \$45, call (248) 557-7529 for more information.

THE ULTIMATE CHICK-FLICK FOR GUYS.
Unpredictably romantic, delightfully funny and fun all the way.
David Russell, CBS-TV

Kate Hudson Matthew McConaughey

HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

NowShowing.com

NOW SHOWING!

AMC FORUM 30
AMC WOODLAND 20
IMAGINE MOVIE
SUNSHINE
STAR CANTON 8
STAR DENVER 30
STAR FARMINGDALE 20
STAR FORT MYERS 20
STAR WEST VALLEY 20

GODS AND GENERALS is not only the finest movie ever made about the Civil War, it is also the best American History Action Picture.

The nation's heart was touched by

GODS AND GENERALS

An adaptation of the Old West from the Director of "Dances with Wolves"

STARTS FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21st AT THESE THEATRES!

AMC FORUM 30 AMC LYONIA 20 AMC LUREL PARK
BIRMINGHAM 8 IMAGINE MOVIE MIR SOUTHGATE 20
DOWNSIDE SHOWCASE STAR FAIRFAX 21
STAR CANTON 8 STAR STARBUCKS
STAR DENVER 30 STAR SOUTHFIELD LA COMMERCE 20

WINNER GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS BEST PICTURE!
BEST ACTRESS Nicole Kidman

THE HOURS

TheHoursMovie.com

PG-13

AMC FORUM 30 NOW SHOWING! AMC LYONIA 20
BIRMINGHAM 8 STAR CANTON 8 STAR DENVER 30 STAR SOUTHFIELD LA COMMERCE 20

All-New & Baloo Too!

Disney's **THE JUNGLE BOOK 2**

disney.com/junglebook2

Get 2 FREE tickets to THE JUNGLE BOOK 2 compliments of Disney store with any purchase of \$50 or more!

AMC FORUM 30 AMC LUREL PARK AMC LYONIA 20 CANTON 8
EMAGINE MOVIE AMC SOUTHGATE 20 PROXENIX 20 SHOWCASE BIRMINGHAM
SHOWCASE FORT MYERS STAR FARMINGDALE STAR LUREL PARK STAR SOUTHWEST VALLEY
STAR SOUTHFIELD STAR STARBUCKS STAR WEST VALLEY STAR WEST VALLEY
STAR TAYLOR LA COMMERCE 20 JEWETT WEST BAYVIEW LYONIA PULLMAN 12

NO PAGES OR DISCOUNT COUPONS ACCEPTED
CALL THEATRES OR CHECK MOVIE GUIDE FOR SHOWTIMES