

A tasty subject: wildlife by Thom

By PATRICIA BEACH SMITH

"One vanishing species stalking another" is how wildlife artist Robert Thom described a safari he recently subjected himself to in order to obtain necessary data for one of his latest art endeavors.

The contrasts encountered on that safari still seem to amaze Thom. "During the day we risked our lives bounding around in a Land Rover, chasing giant animals, fighting off the tsetse flies and avoiding snakes and crocodile while fording swollen rivers," Thom said.

At night, he said, the highly civilized English life took over and lavish game dinners were served by waiters in tents. Tea was always served in the afternoon, too.

"IN THE CAMPS, men toiled all day to prepare the day's meals. Bread was baked fresh daily and animals brought back from the hunt

were skinned, cleaned, dressed and prepared for dinner," he said.

His own hunting was confined to camera and sketch pad, recording minute details of animals he saw and their environments, to be used in his authenticated, world record big game animal lithograph series.

The first exhibition of the original paintings from which the lithographs are made, opened Sunday at The Robert Thom Gallery in Birmingham.

The finished product can't possibly tell everything about Thom's adventures. The paintings and companion lithographs show fairly benevolent and passive life studies of magnificent animals, who in reality were shot as world record takes.

"KILLING THEM is a senseless thing, I think, but I have to admit that there is something primeval which takes over when you're out there tracking them and going in for the take," Thom said.

"I hunted when I was young but stopped shortly after I started because it was abhorrent to me. I always liked skeet shooting better, anyway."

However, he philosophizes in saying that the plight of the remaining wild life will never be remedied as long as the hunters and anti-hunters continue to waste their energies fighting each other.

He hopes his art series on the endangered animals will help create a middle talking ground and possibly build new sensitivity to the animals.

THE SAFARI and last year's extensive trip to America's west have yielded more than artistic material for Thom. He could get fat from the rest of his material—recipes garnered from African cooks and big game hunters and their wives.

His kit bag full of recipes includes goodies like roast impala leg, jellied elephant trunk and sassy or kudu steaks.

He explained that most African game meat tends to be dry and needs larding—with small onions, fat or fat bacon.

He collected 153 recipes on the safari alone. He plans to produce a big game cookbook with Douglas E. Miller, his partner in the Wilderness World Limited endeavor.

"ALSO MAKING the safari easy to take were the three wines served at dinner," he said.

Gourmand Thom suggested that South African white wines were not as good as the reds and the roses, but they were nonetheless good.

Just in case you happen to get a hold of some warhog, impala, sassy or zebra, consider the following modes of preparation.

JELLIED ELEPHANT TRUNK

Put portion of trunk in large kettle of scalding water, parboil 45 minutes. Remove and cool in cold water. Remove skin and hairs and wash thoroughly.

Put trunk back in fresh water with onion, a little garlic and pickling spices. Boil gently until tender. Cool overnight in same juice.

In the morning take the meat out, remove any cartilage, and slice meat thinly. Pack in jars covering with the juice. This jells and when chilled can be sliced for serving cold. The meat may be also pickled in vinegar if desired.

SAND GROUSE PIE (or guinea fowl may be substituted)



Warhog pie served to Thom in the bush

Several sand grouse (or 1 guinea fowl)
1/2 cup raisins
2/3 cup sugar
1/2 tsp nutmeg
1/2 tsp cinnamon
4/5 apples
Flour to thicken
Pastry for topping

Cook sand grouse until tender. A pressure cooker may be used to hasten this process. Remove meat from bones and cut into pieces. Salt meat lightly. Add remaining ingredients and put in a casserole. Make a regular pie crust and put on just like a pie. Bake at 350 degrees until done. You will love this pie.

IMPALA CURRY

Cut impala steaks into 1" cubes and fry in butter with onions. When browned, add 1/2 tsp of curry, 1/2 tsp of hot chutney, 1 tsp of vinegar and simmer for 10 minutes. Sprinkle 1 tsp of flour to gravy. Thin sparingly with water. Serve over rice. Side dish — Raisins and chopped onions. Chutney

BUFFALO TAIL

Chopped onions, fried in butter until brown, put in sections of tail and fry until brown. Salt and pepper, add 1 tsp of Bovril or marinade. 1 quart of water 2 to 3 hours or 5 hours (depending on how old the animal is). Put peeled potatoes in for 20 minutes. Make thin paste of flour and thicken gravy.

"Killing them is a senseless thing, but I have to admit that there is something primeval which takes over when you're out there tracking them and going in for the take."
--artist Robert Thom



Bread is baked daily in camp, buried in a steel box and covered with coals



Studio life is calm compared to gathering info for an elephant painting (Photographed by Kathy Willens)

Where There's Life

Malls & Main Street

(See Children's Choice also)

Through Feb. 24—"Book Fair," special exhibit of the many science books available at gift shop of Cranbrook Institute of Science, 500 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills.

Through Feb. 26—Display of Crafts made from old sweaters as featured in book by Eileen Upton and Sharon Upton, at Farmington Community Library's Farmington Hills Branch, 32737 W. Twelve Mile Road.

Through Feb. 28—Linda Smith, pastels and charcoal, at Troy Public Library, 510 W. Big Beaver Road.

Through February—Planetarium Demonstrations, topic "Around the World in 80 Minutes," view of night skies as seen from the equator and North Pole, at Cranbrook Institute of Science, 500 Lone

Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills. At 4 p.m. Wednesdays, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; and 2, 3 and 4 p.m. Sundays. Admission charge.

Through March 1—Southwestern Michigan Scholastic Art Awards co-sponsored by Tel-Twelve Mall, displays award winners' projects. Works are by students in grades seven through twelve throughout Southeastern Michigan. At mall, Telegraph and 12 Mile roads, Southfield.

Through March 2—Drawings by Contemporary American Artists, at Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, 500 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills. Admission charge.

Feb. 23—Celebrity Sundays tour of 100-room Tudor mansion, Meadow Brook Hall, on campus of Oakland University, Rochester. Jimmy Laune, host of WJR's "Afternoon Music Hall," and his wife, fashion

model Brigitte, greet guests from 1 to 5 p.m. Admission priced for adults, children and senior citizens.

Feb. 25—Art Auction sponsored by Green School PTA at 7:30 p.m. at the West Bloomfield High School auditorium, Orchard Lake Road. Paintings, lithographs and sculptures provided by Gallery Art Center. Admission charge. Tickets at the door.

Feb. 26, 27—"Accent with Accessories," first in series of Fashion and Glamour "Encounters," at 2 p.m. Feb. 26 and 7 p.m. Feb. 27 at Somerset Mall, Coolidge and Big Beaver. Troy.

Feb. 27—Free Adult Organ Lessons every Thursday at 7 p.m. in boutique section of Orchard Mall, Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield.

Feb. 28, 29, March 1, 2—Detroit Folkdance Club hosts International Dance Workshop from 8 p.m. Feb. 28 through 3:30 p.m. March 2, with New York dance authority Mary Ann Herman; fee for individual sessions or weekend package. Party Feb. 28 with music by Ossie Cavada and Kolo Quartet; ethnic costumes welcome. At Brookside School, Cranbrook

Institute, Bloomfield Hills. Admission charge.

March 1—Singles Saturdays, Ricky Dove will bring you up to date in modern and Latin American dances with a bit of nostalgia thrown in, at Farmington Community Center, 24765 Farmington Road. Designed for single adults only. Admission charge.

March 1—Ski Bus to Mount Brighton (when skiing conditions are favorable). Call Farmington Community Center of office for cost and details of program.

Through March—Continuing exhibition, "Ray Harm: An American Wildlife Artist," a memorial exhibit to former Institute of Science naturalist Walter P. Nickell. Free with admission to Cranbrook Institute of Science, 500 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills.

Through March—Planetarium topic, "Spring, Easter and the Moon," an explanation of the vernal equinox. Demonstrations at 4 p.m. Wednesdays; 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; and 2, 3 and 4 p.m. Sundays at Cranbrook Institute of Science, 500 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills. Admission charge.

CHILDREN'S CHOICE

Feb. 28—"Adventures in Enrichment," science, music and gym classes for 3, 4, 5 and 6 year olds on Fridays from 9 to 11:10 a.m. at the McKinley Child Development Center, 18330 George Washington, Southfield.

March 1—Saturday Cinema, "Count of Monte Cristo: Magoo," from 2 to 2:30 p.m. at Troy Public Library, 500 W. Big Beaver Road. Free tickets should be picked up ahead of time at the library.

March 1—Excerpts from "Alice in Wonderland" and other Disney favorites, presented by Grosse Pointe War Memorial Children's Theatre, at 1 and 3 p.m. at Farmington Community Center, 24765 Farmington Road. Admission charge.

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