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Life & Leisure

This Weekend

Doesn't it seem like there are "fast" months and "slow" months? Intellectually, we know they're all the same, give or take a day, or a couple of days in February's case. But while some months seem to whiz by, others seem to take forever to get through.

It's still early, but, so far, November feels like a fast month. Maybe because everything is getting so busy.

Take this week, for example.

Three stages, three ages

There are three generations of theater going on Downriver this weekend.

On the grownup level, Southgate Community Players are opening their production of the musical "Anything Goes" at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday and again Nov. 18 and 19 in the Davidson Middle School auditorium, 13940 Leroy, Southgate. Tickets are \$14 for adults, \$12 for seniors and students. Call 1-734-282-4727.

In the teen category, the Allen Park High School Drama Club will present the comedy "The Man Who Came to Dinner" at 7 p.m. tomorrow, Friday and Saturday at the Allen Park High School gymnasium/cafeteria, 18401 Champaign. Tickets are \$5 and will be available at the door or in advance by calling 1-313-928-4719.

Meanwhile, about 90 young actors are among the cast in Downriver Youth Performing Arts Center's "Beauty and the Beast," to be presented at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2:30 p.m. Sunday at Flat Rock High School auditorium, 28100 Aspen. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for students and seniors. Tickets can be ordered online at www.dypac.com.

Who goes there?

Join an interpreter at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Oakwoods Metropark Nature Center to take "An Evening Owl Prowl" searching for owls. There is a \$3 fee per person.

At 2 p.m. Sunday, the Nature Center will have "Feed the Birds This Winter," showing how to lend a hand with your feathered friends through the next few months. There is a \$4 fee.

Advance registration is required for both programs. Call 1-734-782-3956.

Harvest of art

The Downriver Arts and Crafts Guild, Art Ambience, Acanthus Art Society and the Grosse Ile Alliance for the Arts present the Fall Festival of the Arts at the Trenton Village Theatre, 2447 W. Jefferson, Trenton.

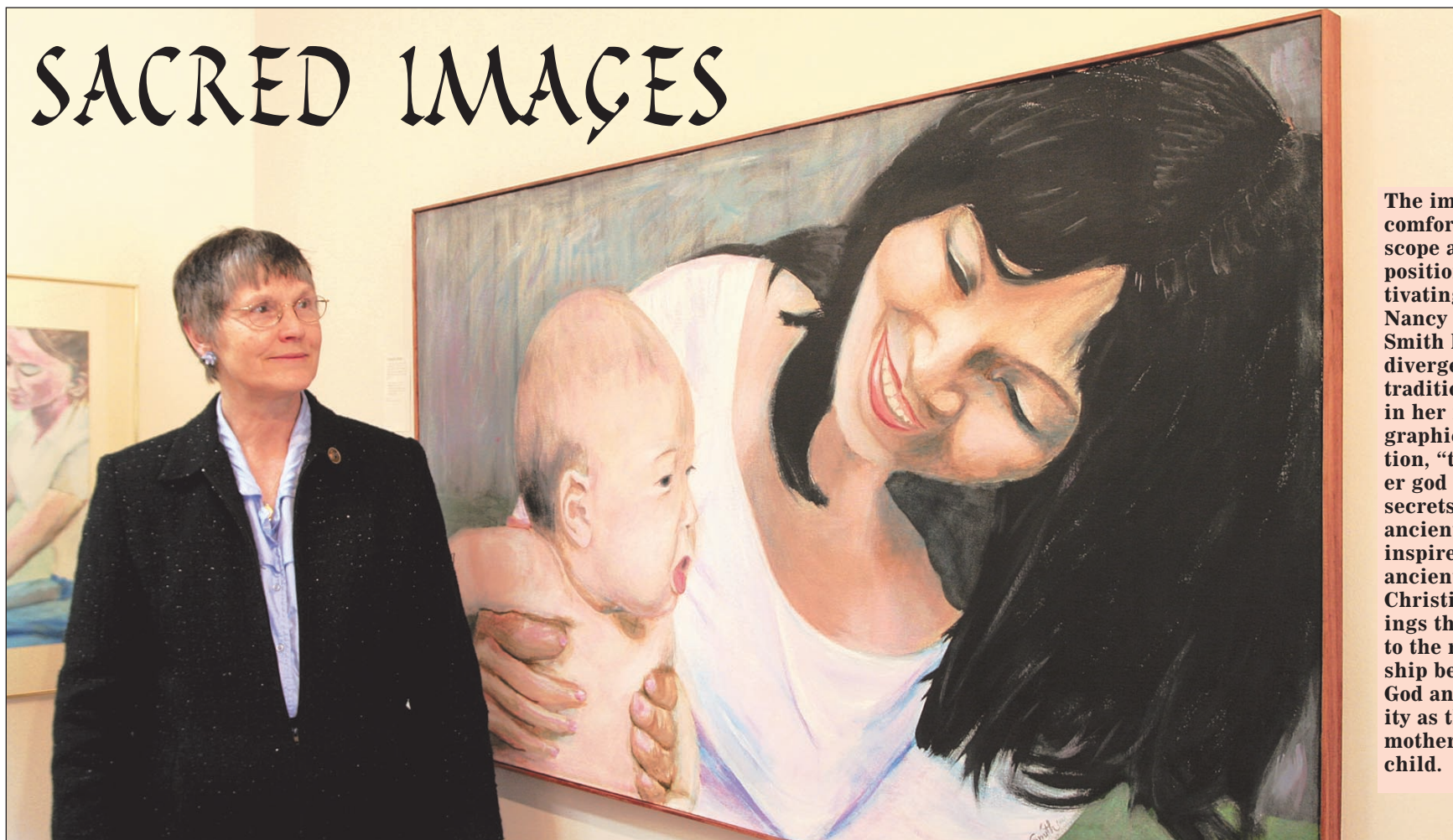
The show opens with a reception and awards ceremony from 6 to 9 p.m. tomorrow, and continues from 2 to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday and from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free.

Finally ...

The Midwest Faceters Guild hosts its annual Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show and Sale Friday through Sunday at the Taylor Sportsplex, 13333 Telegraph Road, with demonstrations, gift ideas and a children's area where they will get to handle the stones and make a bracelet.

Admission is \$3. For more information on the show or faceting clubs, call 1-313-291-0913.

SACRED IMAGES



The imagery is comforting; the scope and composition are captivating. Sister Nancy Lee Smith has diverged from traditional style in her iconographic exhibition, "the mother god and other secrets of the ancient father," inspired by ancient Christian writings that refer to the relationship between God and humanity as that of a mother and child.



Photos by E. L. Conley

Just as in traditional iconography, there is purpose in Smith composition. In this example, the mother is wearing a loose garment, similar to flowing robes usually associated with holy figures, while the child looks out to the viewer to create a sense of connection.

Iconographer goes to Christianity's roots to challenge old ideas

BY KLINT LOWRY

THE NEWS-HERALD

They are comforting, peaceful religious images capable of shaking the core of one's beliefs.

They are quiet portraits of maternal love that demand attention and require interpretation.

A new collection of paintings currently on exhibit in the Downriver Council for the Arts' Skylight Gallery challenges the traditional images associated with Christianity by going back to the earliest Christian teachings.

Without the name of the exhibition — "mother god and the secrets of the ancient fathers" — as a clue, a viewer might not even realize Sister Nancy Lee Smith's collection of paintings depicting contemporary young mothers and their infants are interpretive iconographic images that stem from early Scripture.

"This is right from the church's own ministerial structural sacred history," Smith said at the opening reception Oct. 29. "This is the teaching authority of the church."

Smith, an Immaculate Heart of Mary nun, has been an iconographer for 11 years. Most of her work is not only traditional, it is reminiscent of Middle Ages iconography, where realism was

less important that the message within the image.

This new collection is a complete departure from that style. Instead of flat, ancient, halo-bearing robed figures, this collection is done in a style just short of photorealism, in soft colors and strokes, and on a scale large enough that the images don't wait to be seen. They burst out at the viewer.

"I could have made it more abstract, and I could have made it more removed," Smith said, "but I wanted two things. I wanted it in your face. It's not something you can walk by. You have to stop and you are engaged."

"It's an intimate engagement. That's what I wanted. And I wanted contemporary, real, earthy women."

The paintings all depict modern-day mothers with their infants — playing with them, teaching them, breastfeeding them. While that is the literal composition, the portraits also represent the relationship between God and humanity, with the mother representing God and the infant representing the human race.

"Between the mother and the

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Now you see it TV and movie effects expert comes home to show how it is done

BY DONNA ABRAMCZYK

THE NEWS-HERALD

Since their inception in the late 19th century, motion pictures have brought visual fantasy and illusion into our lives.

It hasn't always been easy for the filmmakers to do this, and today, we look at those early efforts at special effects with a critical eye.

With their stilted motions, some, such as the first "King Kong" and the famed "Godzilla" series, give us a good laugh, while others, such as "Gone With the Wind," are remarkable early attempts at fooling our eyes.

Today, it's an entirely different story. The age of computer design imaging allows filmmakers to dupe the most

sophisticated moviegoers with their wizardry.

On a recent visit home, Timothy Brandt, a Woodhaven High School and 2002 University of Michigan graduate, stopped by St. Cyprian Catholic School in Riverview to talk about his job at Sony Pictures Imageworks in Hollywood.

"I come back every October for a U-M football game," the 26-year-old told the fifth- through eighth graders. "And, my two nieces who go to school here, have been asking me to come to their school."

Brandt, whose degree is in computer engineering, is a visual effects technical director, a term, he said, that is a pretty general

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Photo by John Simon

Tim Brandt, a visual effects technical director at Sony Pictures Imageworks, uses a demonstration DVD to show students at St. Cyprian School in Riverview how computer design imaging works.