

Cultural Centre Art Gallery a hive of activity

I remember as if it was yesterday the first art exhibition that opened the Gallery of our new Halton Hills Cultural Centre here in Georgetown in October of 1981. It was a solo exhibition by the venerable Marjorie Nazer. She exhibited paintings, large and small, as well as embroideries and tapestries.

On the west wall of the gallery, beside the huge Barber window, some of her charcoal designs for the colored glass windows in Toronto's Holy Rosary Church were pinned up. The church in which, only a few months later, her funeral service took place. On the evening her exhibition opened, Marjorie was so exuberant and alive that nobody could have guessed her age.

Ten years later, we are celebrating and remembering the opening of our Cultural Centre once more. Many special events are planned to take place in different parts of the Centre, and one of these is an art exhibition at the Gallery. What kind of an exhibition will this be?

Earlier this year the commit-

tee in charge of the 10th anniversary celebrations asked me to put together an exhibition of all the artists that had solo-exhibitions at the Cultural Centre Gallery since 1981. Each was supposed to have one art work in the exhibition. I was able to contact most of them, but some had moved away and could not be found.

To give the exhibition a greater scope, I selected some works from artists who had two- and three-person shows at the Centre. The result is an exhibition of 36 art works by 36 artists, that will open one week from today, on October 2, at 7 p.m.

Peter Pomeroy, who was the Mayor of Halton Hills 10 years ago, and Russ Miller, who is the Mayor of Halton Hills now, will both be at the Centre, I hear, to open the exhibition officially at 8 p.m., and, of course, the 36 artists, or most of them, will be there too, wildly applauded. I hope, by a large and appreciative audience.

If you are in the habit of going to the Gallery at the Cultural Centre to see the art exhibitions



Ideas and The Arts
by John Sommer

there, you will have fond memories of the place. I certainly have. Let me recall some of the highlights that could have easily drawn large crowds in much more renowned public galleries than ours.

In 1982 we had an impressive Retrospective of paintings of the local painter Frank C. Black, covering 70 years of his life.

In 1984 the Gallery was host to the early paintings of Robert Bateman, one of the finest wildlife painters in the world today. The exhibition showed his more than 20-year-long appren-

ticeship, so to say, before he became the master he is now. Everybody who came to the opening of this exhibition will never forget it. It was the largest crowd we ever had at an art opening in this town, and Robert, generously, took these art lovers from one painting to the next, on an abridged tour of his life. It was almost 11:30 p.m. when we finally left the Centre.

In 1986 it was Ken Dandy's turn to exhibit his meticulous graphic work; in 1987 Jack Reid exhibited his masterly watercolors, and in 1988 Barbara Howard filled the Gallery with her luminous canvasses. A year later, in 1989, Robert Bateman's teacher, the painter and illustrator, John A. Hall, had a Retrospective here that attracted visitors from far away. In 1990 the Rockwood sculptor Andreas Dreiners exhibited his delightful iron wall pieces in our Gallery; and this past summer we could enjoy the double show Harald J. Newman and Tony Meers, the former a landscape painter with ties to Georgetown, and the latter a native son who became a successful commercial artist in

Toronto.

All these artists and many more are represented in the exhibition that opens on Oct. 2, and continues to the end of November.

Is art a luxury or is it a daily need, like bread, a necessity we shun at our own peril? Politicians are quick to cut support to the arts in hard times, hoping to gain the votes of the yahoos that way. It is a great fallacy to think that a recession can be overcome by starving the soul.

The artist, who never asks where his reward may be, but generously follows his creative impulse, is a better example to emulate than the tight reckoning of the accountant. Our community is the better because of its artists and its cultural institutions. We cannot live by bread alone.

Ten years after the opening of our Cultural Centre we have to ask the question: Are our leaders husbanding and enlarging our cultural institutions, or do they only pay lip service to culture as a kind of window dressing, hiding darker and more rapacious emotions?

More about that next week.

Aspiring poets to be recognized

Poems are now being accepted for entry in Sparrowgrass Poetry Forum's new "Awards of Poetic Excellence" poetry contest. Cash prizes totalling \$1,000 will be awarded, including a \$500 grand prize. The contest is free to enter.

Poets may enter one poem only, 20 lines or less, on any subject, in any style. Contest closes November 30, 1991, but poets are encouraged to send their work as soon as possible, since poems entered in the contest also will be considered for publication in the

Summer 1992 edition of Poetic Voices of America, a hardcover anthology. Anthology purchase may be required to ensure publication, but is not required to enter or win the contest. Prize winners will be notified by January 31, 1991.

If you are a new or emerging

poet, we especially want to see your work," says Jerome P. Welch, Publisher. "We are looking for sincerity and originality in a wide variety of styles and themes."

Poem should be sent to Sparrowgrass Poetry Forum, Inc., Dept. LC, 203 Diamond St., Sistersville, WV 26175.

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