

Carrboro Town Commons to host local artists' fair

BY MATT LECLERCQ
STAFF WRITER

Local artists have called Carrboro the "Paris of the Piedmont," but the lack of a Louvre has made it hard for artists to reach the public.

But Monnda Welch said all that would change when her organization, Grass Roots Arts Inc., stages the first arts-and-crafts market at the Carrboro Town Commons on Sunday. Grass Roots Arts is a nonprofit organization founded in 1995 to promote local artists.

From painters to potters, jewelers to tie-dyers, 38 local artists will display their wares from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in what will become a regular monthly event. Welch said the market should

attract art-lovers and, most importantly, potential buyers.

"It's a wonderful way for folks just starting out with their art and also for established artists," said Welch, who spent the past three years putting the idea for an arts market together.

"It's really expensive to travel to shows, and it takes a long time to refine art to make it sellable and so that the community will like it," she said.

Welch said she founded Grass Roots Arts to provide a forum for the active but unrecognized artistic community.

"I started it to give the local artist in the area a way to present art to the people who live here," she said. "We already have a vibrant art community, but people don't know it's here," she said.

"This brings people together, supports the local artist and gives the community the involvement with arts that it wouldn't have without this,"

MONNDA WELCH
Founder of Grass Roots Arts Inc.

Several artists who will participate in the market held a similar opinion, saying it was sometimes hard to find outlets for their work.

Painter and sculptor Joe Gardner, who has lived in Chapel Hill for three years, said he preferred dealing directly

with the public.

"There are fairly few venues to show here," said Gardner, who makes "arts for the dark" — copper city skyline sculptures with twinkling, colored lights.

"I lived in Mexico for 15 years, and I would sell at weekly markets where I would do my best business," he said. "You avoid the middle-man."

Chapel Hill resident Vicki Rhine, an artist who makes wreaths and folk-art figures out of freeze-dried flowers, said buyers would pay less money for art when it was bought directly at a market.

"I always did well at the Apple Chill," she said. "But I think the market idea is terrific because there are a lot of artists who don't know where to go with their art."

Wood-crafter John Ducker of Hurdle Mills said Sunday's market was one of the few outlets he had for his tables and cutting boards.

"I really enjoy getting out there and talking to people," Ducker said. "It's nice to have them 'ooh' and 'ahh' over my tables even if they don't buy."

Welch said the art market, like Carrboro's Farmers Market, would benefit the town as much as the merchants.

"This brings people together, supports the local artist and gives the community the involvement with arts that it wouldn't have without this," she said.

To sell at the market, artists must live within 50 miles of Carrboro, pay an annual fee and be selected by Grass Roots Arts, Welch said.

Companies plan to offer space travel

■ The cost of a space vacation hovers around the \$100,000 mark.

BY KIMBERLY GRABINER
STAFF WRITER

As technology brings the wave of the future, weightlessness will become a reality. For two to three minutes in space, people can have the experience of a lifetime.

A competition is underway among businesses to see who will be the first to send people into space. Two companies, Incredible Adventures Inc. and Space Voyages, have set Dec. 1, 2001, as the date for their first departures.

"One of the only destinations remained unexplored by civilians is space," said Greg Claxton, director of sales at Incredible Adventures.

Both Incredible Adventures and Space Voyages plan to use the same formula for their experiments.

The construction of space cruisers has already begun, with each cruiser made to hold up to six individuals. Two pilots will be present, one as a commander and another as a gymnastics leader during weightlessness who will point out highlights throughout the trip.

Each individual will wear a flight suit that includes padding and will receive headgear containing virtual reality goggles. A camera in the headgear will allow each person to have a personal tape of his or her experience.

To prepare for this voyage, passengers will participate in a seven-day program. "It is kind of an abridged version of what astronauts go through," said Chris Ostendorf, manager of public relations and marketing at Space Voyages. Lectures, films and simulator sessions are among the programs the orientation will include.

The entire journey, during which the plane reaches a height of 62 miles above Earth, will take about 2 1/2 hours. "You get out of your seat and experience weightlessness," Ostendorf said.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience costs \$98,000 per person. Individuals might also choose the optional cancellation protection plan that tacks on a non-refundable \$4,000 to the price that allows a person to receive his or her money back within 48 hours.

People with the net worth of \$1 million and up are looking into taking this flight, Claxton said. Doctors, lawyers and businesses have expressed interest. "I think what you are going to see in the next couple of years are the rich folks and adventure-seekers," said Eric Stallmer, executive director at Space Transportation Association.

The same people who were the first to go out and buy CD players are basically the same people who will pay right now for this trip, he said.

Thirty passengers have already put down Space Voyages' \$5,000 deposit, Ostendorf said. NASA will not take part in the program, but it did participate in a study with the Space Transportation Association.

The two organizations have studied civilian space travel in the future, covering issues such as technical and safety issues. "It was endorsing the idea," Stallmer said.

Some risk is involved sending civilians into space, Stallmer added. "I think it is why they are doing it — because a risk is involved."

FDA approves stronger low-calorie sweetener

■ The additive, sucralose, is a derivative of sugar that is 600 times sweeter.

BY JESSICA LUGINBUHL
STAFF WRITER

A new product approved Thursday by the Food and Drug Administration might offer consumers the greatest sugar high yet.

The additive, called sucralose or "splenda," is a derivative of sugar but 600 times sweeter.

"This substance was discovered in 1976 by our partner Tate & Lyle based in the U.K.," said Leslie Steiner, director of International Marketing for Johnson & Johnson. "Canada was the first country to use it in 1991. Australia and Mexico were next, and it eventually was used in 27 countries."

It took the United States seven years longer than Canada to allow sucralose into the market.

"The FDA was given the petition 11 years ago in 1987," said Arthur Whitmore, the spokesman for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the FDA. "We performed 110 toxicity studies on animals and humans. There was no carcinogenicity or reproductive effect, and it is fine for diabetes."

Sucralose is the only low-calorie sweetener made from real sugar.

Researchers changed the sugar molecules to intensify the sweetness. With this change in molecules, the body fails to recognize the substance, and it simply passes directly through the body.

Because it is 600 times sweeter, a little bit of sucralose goes a long way. Johnson & Johnson added dextrin and dextrose to create bulk to the strong substance and only a few extra calories.

Sucralose can replace sugar in many different types of processed foods, like gum and cookies. Unlike other low-calorie sweeteners, sucralose is easier to use in high-temperature cooking and has a longer shelf life.

"At very high doses of sucralose, feeding studies showed that rats lost weight," Whitmore said. "But further studies showed that at less higher doses, but higher than those that humans would ever get, it showed no effect."

Sucralose could cause serious cost competition among the other artificial sweeteners, such as Nutrasweet and Sweet 'N Low. A spokeswoman from Sweet 'N Low refused to comment on whether the product would suffer because of the new competition.

Not everyone believes Sucralose is such a splendid idea.

"I'm personally a proponent of natural substances," said Kylin Lee a freshman from Winston-Salem. "I think in the long run natural substances are better for your body rather than something that is engineered."

Lab! aims for strike with comedy

BY JIM MARTIN
ARTS & DIVERSIONS EDITOR

One of the last shows of the year for the Lab! Theatre will take on one of the hottest, most heartfelt topics ever imagined for today's college students — bowling.

Well, bowling might not be thought of as one of the most influential events of someone's life at UNC, but the characters and actors of "More Fun Than Bowling" would beg to differ. And they use the element of uproarious comedy to do so.

Written by Stephen Dietz, the play recounts the tumultuous lives of the Tomlinson family that works at the Dust Bowl, a bowling alley set in the Midwest.

Their lives, and all the events therein, are related in some hilariously convoluted way to the bowling alley.

Father and daughter, Jake and Molly, have been through a lot together. When it comes to married life, Jake has been throwing gutterballs. Both of his wives

have lost their lives in strange incidents involving bowling, which is where the play gets its name. Could death really be more fun than bowling?

Director Guy Olivieri, a junior dramatic art major from Carrboro, said the show could be tremendously funny but that it also had deeper elements which were true to life that any audience member could relate with.

"The first couple times I ran through the script I couldn't stop laughing," Olivieri said. "But when you get past all the humor, there is a lot of family conflict."

Olivieri said the play was perfect for the "black box" layout of the Lab! Theatre's performance area in the basement of Graham Memorial Hall. The ability of the performance area to drastically change makes it the perfect venue for this nonchronological play.

Assistant director Melanie Ragan, a sophomore dramatic art major from Greensboro, agreed but added that the play would grab the audience.

"It will definitely touch you," Ragan said. "No one will feel empty when they leave."

For Olivieri, "More Fun than Bowling" marks the first time he has ever directed, though he has acted in numerous plays for Lab! and for other

"The first couple times I ran through the script I couldn't stop laughing. But when you get past all the humor, there is a lot of family conflict."

GUY OLIVIERI
Director

campus groups like the UNC Pauper Players.

Olivieri said it was his past experience as an actor — something he said he would still pursue heavily — that prepared him for the tough task of directing a show.

"For me (past acting experience) has helped solidifying my acting methods," he said. "Directing is probably 10 times more creative than acting."

The strong cast, his faith in the quality of the script, its author and a little something extra he calls "perfect Southern charm" are all qualities that Olivieri said would make the show take off for every audience member in the usually packed "black box" of the Lab! Theatre's stage.

"This show called out to me that it had to be done."

FOOD FROM PAGE 3

"Burgundy a la Carte — Culinary Traditions and Tradents," a cultural and historical treatment of the cuisine of three leading French chefs.

Since so much of the class material, as well as his research, takes place in France, Ferguson has arranged for the fall 1997 class to take a fully financed summer trip to France, a weeklong extension of the class. A grant from the Arts and Sciences Foundation is financing the trip.

"There are certain courses that make more sense when in the immediate culture," he said. "I think this is one of them."

Ferguson said the trip was a field test to decide if it should become a regular part of the class.

Ferguson already has the trip planned to the last detail. He and the 15 women class members will fly to Paris the day after graduation and spend seven days touring the Burgundy province, including Vezaly, Tournus, Dijon and Roanne.

The group will tour chateaus, vineyards, monasteries and cheese and chocolate factories.

The students said they were shocked when Ferguson announced they were going to France.

"This is the most wonderful opportunity that has ever come out of one of my classes at UNC," said Kristin Lyman, a sophomore from Boca Raton, Fla.

Sophomore Lindsay Mack of Lenoir said the trip would be her first to Europe.

"I never expected anything of this sort when I signed up for the course," she said. "It's the best class I have ever taken."

The class also takes a much smaller field trip during the semester to appreciate North Carolina's regional cuisine. Ferguson takes the students to the Weaver Street Market and on a tour of a goat farm in Chatham County.

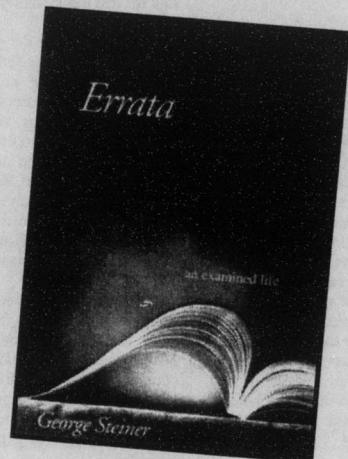
"In an area with regional cuisine like this one, it is simply tragic not to learn about available resources and exploit them," Ferguson said.

Ferguson will offer "Eats 101" again in the upcoming fall semester and possibly in the spring. The 15-student seminar has a waiting list of 28 people.

Ferguson said one thing that made his class distinctive was his student-focused teaching philosophy, inspired by former UNC-system president Bill Friday.

"I feel like Dean Smith," he said. "My role is to sit on the bench and call the plays. The students are the real players in this class."

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