

Greater Detroit's Original Cultural Events Weekly, Thursday, November 2, 2017

DOWNTOWN MONITOR

Campus Martius Lights Up the Season



The ice skating rink at Campus Martius Park in Downtown Detroit is opening for a special preview to the public on Friday, November 10 through Sunday, November 12, before the rink's official opening, following the *Detroit Tree Lighting Ceremony* on Friday, November 17.

The rink at Campus Martius Park is larger than the internationally renowned rink at Rockefeller Center in New York City and features surround-sound music and color-changing lighting.

The rink hours and prices for this special engagement are as follows: Friday: 5 p.m. to midnight, Saturday: 10 a.m. to midnight, and Sunday, 12 noon to 8 p.m. Adults are \$8, Children 12 and younger are \$7, and Seniors 59 and older are \$7. Skate rental for all is \$4.

On Friday, November 17, for the 14th consecutive year, the Downtown Detroit Partnership presents one of the city's most anticipated holiday celebrations - the annual *Detroit Tree Lighting Ceremony*. Sponsored by DTE Energy Foundation, the event features a Michigan-grown, 60 foot tall Norwegian Spruce wrapped in more than 19,000 multi-colored lights and ornaments. The event begins at 5 p.m. and is free to the public.

U.S. Olympic medalist and four-time U.S. Figure Skating Champion Jeremy Abbott will headline a *holiday ice show*. Detroit favorites Jessica Her-

nandez & the Deltas, KEM, and *Detroit's Queen of Blues* Thornetta Davis will also perform.

Said Robert Gregory, of the Downtown Detroit Partnership, "Spectacular city views plus award-winning, home grown entertainment is sure to leave a lasting impression with all attendees."

Festivities will begin at 5 p.m. The Salvation Army giant *Red Kettle* will be lit at 6:30 p.m. and will include a musical performance by Motown artist KEM to begin the organization's \$1 million fundraising campaign.

Other activities include carriage rides along Woodward, Salvation Army Family Fun Tent, photos with Santa, free hot chocolate, and much more.

Detroit's Christmas Tree will be lit just before 8 p.m. The official *Rink Opening Party* starts at 9 p.m. with a live concert from Jessica Hernandez & the Deltas. Channel 955 will stage a live music mix from 10 p.m. to midnight. New this year for the anticipated crowd of 40,000 plus, there's a larger main stage on Monroe, and a state-of-the-art sound system and LED video wall..

For more information, see campusmartiuspark.org. Campus Martius is located at the intersection of Woodward and Michigan Aves. in Downtown Detroit.

SHOWINGS

Folk Art from Oaxaca: Eight Artists, Eight Voices



The James Pearson Duffy Department of Art and Art History, Elaine L. Jacob Gallery, Wayne State University (WSU), Detroit, will present *Folk Art from Oaxaca: Eight Artists, Eight Voices*, curated by Alejandra Munuzuri, now through December 15.

Artists featured include: Mario Castellanos and Reina Ramirez (pictured, above), Giovanni Melchor, Tribus Mixes, Fernando Peguero and Leticia Blan-

co and Manuel Reyes and Maricela Gomez. Special programming will include a lecture by curator Alejandra Munuzuri, Thursday, November 9, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Purdy-Kresge Library Auditorium and a demonstration/workshop instructed by featured artist Mario Castellanos, Saturday, November 11, 1-5 p.m. at the Elaine L. Jacob Gallery. Participants will include youth from

Southwest Detroit recreation centers who also participate in the department's summer Mobile Arts Workshop program. Exhibition hours are Tuesdays-Thursdays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Fridays, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

For more information call (313) 577-2424 or see art.wayne.edu. The Elaine L. Jacob Gallery is located at 480 W Hancock, on the WSU campus, in Detroit's Cultural District.

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CITY SCENE

ARISE Detroit's Neighborhoods Day

Laydell Harper



Detroit neighborhoods have become the topic of discussion in city government and business circles. City residents have persistently expressed concern about the emphasis on the revitalization of Downtown while the outlining neighborhoods continue to deteriorate. It has become virtually impossible for any political candidate or community leader to hold a meeting without the subject of neighborhood deterioration becoming the focus.

In a recent mayoral debate between Mike Duggan and Coleman A. Young II, neighborhoods became a heated part of the debate. Luther Keith, the founder and Executive Director of Arise Detroit, the annual Neighborhoods Day event, is serious about improving Detroit neighborhoods. Neighborhoods Day is not a one-day event once a year for Keith; it's every day. This is a year-round commitment that he continues to keep in the forefront of the minds of Detroit residents, businesses and local developers.

On Saturday, November 4, the 8th annual *ARISE Detroit! Neighborhood Rising Summit* will host a blue ribbon panel of developers and community leaders to discuss how to promote neighborhood development at the Downtown campus of Wayne County Community College, located at 1001 W. Fort St., in Detroit.

"It's not often that residents get to interact directly with the people who are developing the city," said Keith. "This is an opportunity for developers to explain what they are developing in Detroit and how they make their decisions. It is also a unique opportunity for residents to share their views with developers on the needs of their neighborhoods."

The development discussion panel will be 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. and will feature: Peter Cummings, executive chairman of The Platform, which is the lead developer on the massive Fitzgerald revitalization

project in northwest Detroit; Marvin Beatty, vice president of Greektown Casino and a partner in Magic Plus, which is developing the former Michigan State Fairgrounds; Douglass Diggs, CEO of The Diggs Group, which helped construct the new Little Caesars Arena; Pam Martin Turner, executive director of Vanguard CDC, which is developing housing in Detroit's North End; Anika Goss-Foster, executive director of Detroit Future City, and Jeff Jones from Doing Developing Differently in Detroit.

James Feagin, a Detroit developer, will deliver the morning keynote address that will focus on inclusive and ethical development in Detroit neighborhoods. Mark S. Lee, president and CEO of The LEE Group and host of "Small Talk with Mark S. Lee" on WXYT 1270-AM will moderate the session.

Neighborhoods Day offers a variety of information to help make your neighborhood better, and it's free and all under one roof. The summit will offer 12 workshops and more than 50

community leaders to offer expertise in neighborhood transformation.

Workshops include: Connecting neighborhood entrepreneurs to funding sources and promoting neighborhood entrepreneurship; Home buying through the Detroit Land Bank and other programs; Fighting crime and curtailing blight; Using community collaborations to procure volunteers and sponsors for community projects; Finding jobs and overcoming barriers to employment; Finding funding and strategic planning support for neighborhood projects; Pathways to create strong community leaders; Millennial leadership, focusing on what the millennial generation is doing to help neighborhoods.

The Summit is supported by The Kresge Foundation, DTE Energy Foundation and Detroit Future City. The event is free and takes place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. A continental breakfast and lunch will be served. Registration for the Summit is still open at arisedetroit.org.

For info call (313) 921-1955.



Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society (FHWGS)—the first genealogical society in Michigan dedicated to the research and preservation of African-American history—will present *The Underground Rail Road in Michigan* on Saturday, November 4, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Main Library's Old Fine Arts Room.

The Underground Rail Road in Michigan will be explored by presenter Omer Jean Winborn and a panel of FHWGS members, discussing how their own ancestors contributed to the UGRR in this state.

Meetings are free and open to the public and limited parking is available in the Library's Putnam St. lot. Attendees should enter the Main Library at the Cass Ave. entrance. For more info, see fhwgs.org. The Main Library is located at 5201 Woodward Ave., in Detroit's Cultural Center.

November Wrecks Remembered at Dossin



The 18th Annual *Lost Mariners Remembrance* will take place at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum on Belle Isle, Friday, November 10, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

When the tug Admiral and its consort tanker-barge Cleveco left Toledo on December 1, 1942, there were no indications of the horrific snow storm that would hit Lake Erie. The barge carried 18 men and a million gallons of crude oil critical to World War II production. The tug carried 14 men.

Early the next morning, the Admiral and its men disappeared in a sudden catastrophe. The barge drifted for another day as the storm gained in ferocity. The Coast Guard and nearby merchant vessels mounted a desperate search to find the Cleveco, until eventually radio telephone transmissions from the barge ceased. The brave men of both vessels will be honored in this presentation by Kevin Magee, co-founder of Cleveland Underwater Explorers (CLUE).

A lantern vigil at the Edmund Fitzgerald (image, above) anchor begins the night, followed by a performance by Lee Murdock, Great Lakes balladeer, and an Honor Guard escort of the memorial wreath to the Detroit River for receipt by the Honor Flotilla of Great Lakes vessels.

Admission is \$5 for members, \$10 for guests, and

\$25 for families of up to six. Seating is limited, and advance registration is required, as this event is expected to sell out.

Call (313) 833-1801 for more information or to register by phone. Tickets are not expected to be available at the door, but the public is welcome to watch the flotilla from the river bank adjacent to the museum at no charge.

On Saturday, November 11, the Dossin's *Fall Film Series* presents *The Fitzgerald Tragedy* from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Twenty years of documentary filmmaking and exclusive interviews with people closest to the disaster are presented in *The Fitzgerald Tragedy*—an historical narrative as told by those closest to the most famous ore carrier to ever sail the Great Lakes.

Ship captains and crew members, Coast Guard personnel, lighthouse keepers, commercial fishermen, maritime historians, authors, divers and other maritime experts all give their theories and opinions as to what caused the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald's demise on Lake Superior. The film runs 60 minutes. Admission is free for all.

The Dossin Great Lakes Museum is located on Detroit's island park, Belle Isle, at the junction of Mt. Elliott and E. Jefferson Avenue.



SYMPHONIC NEWS

Ruth's Music Notes

Ruth Crystal-Zaromp

Kathleen Battle (pictured) is returning to Michigan Opera Theatre on Sunday, November 5, at 4 p.m., with a special program titled *Something To Sing About*. She writes to us that "the very gifted and versatile Joel Martin" will be pianist.

Something To Sing About relates to experiences shared with my beloved Mother and Father, and is a way of honoring them in the spirit of gratitude, celebration and thanksgiving! The program, often chosen with them in mind, showcases some of their favorite songs and composers."

Battle will be presenting songs by Schubert, Mendelssohn, Rachmaninoff and Gershwin, and - of course - some spirituals and other jazz and soul hits. This is an event to look forward to.

I got to see *Lady Day at the Emerson Bar and Grill* at the Jewish Ensemble Theatre (JET), which depicts the life story of Billie Holiday, containing real singing and playing by Lauren LaStrada and pianist Alvin Waddles. By reading the forward of the Executive Director, Christopher Bremer, we get to understand the importance of Judaism in the classical jazz period. The play's author, the song writers, the themes of segregation and activism, and the leader of the band Artie Shaw, were all Jewish.

Lauren LaStrada (aka Lisa Lauren Smith) tended to convince me by her actions and singing that this was truly the way that Billie Holiday appeared in real life. I have seen LaStrada at other times at JET and the Repertory Theatre and she tends to be quite amazing in her roles.

Waddles is very well known in our area for his capabilities in improvisation and knowledge of jazz as well as classical music. He performs as soloist in the productions of *Too Hot To Handel*, and



appears in many other venues. He will be appearing at the Seligman Performing Arts Center on this coming November 17 at 7:30 p.m. together with the Rackham and other choirs.

The next scheduled show by JET - *American Buffalo* - will take place between November 16 and December 10. For further information, check JetTheatre.org or call (248) 788-2900.

This weekend: Pro Musica (promusicadetroit.com) on Friday night is presenting the *Project Trio* - double bassist Peter Seymour, flutist Greg Pattillo, and cellist Eric Stephenson - one of the most watched instrumental ensembles on the internet. This Trio blends their classical music training with an eclectic taste in musical styles.

The DSO (Nov. 4 and 5 at 3 p.m.) will be performing Lidov's *Enchanted Lake*, Ko-

rngold's *violin concerto*, and Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances*. The conductor will be Juraj Valcuha and Stefan Jackiw is the solo violinist. For information, call (313) 576-5111.

The Attacca String Quartet will be appearing at the Cranbrook Music Guild on Tuesday, November 7, at 7:30, at the Christ Cranbrook Church. Attacca participants include Amy Schroeder, violin, Keiko Tokunaga, violin, Nathan Schram, viola, and Andrew Yee, cello. They were formed at the Juilliard School in 2003 and made their professional debut in 2007. The program includes Caroline Shaw - *Entr'acte*, Felix Mendelssohn - *Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Op. 13*, and Ludwig van Beethoven - *String Quartet, Op. 132*. Shaw (b. 1982) is a versatile composer, singer and violinist, having received the Pulitzer Prize in 2013.



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LIVE THEATRE



Leading Ladies = Laughs
Paul Arlon

Greater Detroit's vibrant live theatre scene is rich with history, with some local community groups having staged a continuous schedule of productions for the better part of a century. One of the state's oldest working theatre groups is the venerable *Birmingham Village Players*, since 1923 the linchpin of Oakland County's local stages.

Leading Ladies, the second show of the Village Players' 95th season, is a madcap romantic romp which invokes the spirits of Billy Wilder's famous *Some Like it Hot*. The idea is that two down-on-their-luck Shakespearean actors, Jack (Benjamin Feliciano) and Leo (Patrick Andrews, both pictured at left), so broke that they've been staging *Scenes from Shakespeare* in Amish-country Moose Lodges, get wind of a wealthy dowager's (Florence, played by Joan Reddy) search for her two nephews, Sam and Steve, missing since they were little kids.

Florence's imminent death is publicized, as well as her final wish to leave her bountiful estate to her lost relatives. Leo and Jack plan to cash in by impersonating the two long-lost kids, now certain to be adults. The only problem is that when the duo of scheming hams arrive to enact their swindle, they find out that the nephews are actually nieces (played by McKenna Reynolds and Ashley Lane, pictured above right).



Hilarity ensues non-stop in this quick-change farce.

An evening out at the Village Players' stand-alone theatre is pretty special. Enwrapped with nostalgia, and, at the same time, being right up-to-date. Those who revel in exploring the colorful past of Greater Detroit's live theatre scene can't walk into this stylishly updated playhouse and not feel the years of coalesced positive energies swirling about them. *Leading Ladies* runs through Sunday, Nov. 12.

Tickets are \$19, plus a \$1 order fee, at birminghamvillageplayers.com, or (248) 644-2075. The Village Players theatre is located at 34660 Woodward Ave., just south of Maple Rd., in Birmingham.

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Meadow Brook's 36th 'A Christmas Carol'

One of southeast Michigan's favorite holiday traditions, returns for the 36th year when Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim and a handful of ghosts raise your spirits in *A Christmas Carol* at Meadow Brook Theatre (MBT) on the campus of Oakland University, November 10—December 24.

"This is our Christmas Card to southeast Michigan," says Cheryl Marshall, MBT managing director. "We're happy to be an important part of so many families' holiday traditions."

The Meadow Brook Theatre adaptation was written and originally staged by Charles Nolte. MBT Associate Director Terry W. Carpenter directs this season's production, with original choreography by Jan Puffer. Scenic design is by Peter Hicks, lighting by Reid G. Johnson, costumes by Mary Pettinato and sound design by Mike Duncan.

Tickets range from \$28 to \$43, available at the MBT box office, at (248) 377-3300 or at ticketmaster.com. Families can get discounted tickets early in the run, and for the November 17-19 shows, children 5 to 12 are half price.

For info see mbtheatre.com. Meadow Brook Theatre is located at 207 Wilson Blvd., in Rochester Hills.



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CINEMA CULTURE

Suburbicon: Full-On Failure

Paul Arlon

Yeesh. In a year of wholly disappointing films, with a seemingly endless string of flops foisted in my direction, here's me, still, ever the optimist, thinking that, surely, one of these big-money, big-name-soaked big-screener would change my mind about the despairing state of today's Hollywood.

That's what I was banking on when I saw George Clooney's latest directorial effort, *Suburbicon*. So, directed by Clooney, starring Matt Damon and Julianne Moore (pictured), this little wunderkind Noah Jupe, and written by ostensibly the premier scripters of modern cinema, Joel and Ethan Coen – all of whom have a small army of Oscars amongst them.

With players like these A-listers in front of and behind the camera, could *Suburbicon* be anything but revelatory filmmaking?

Well, it's not. *It's very not.*

This smarmy sludge heap of abject politically correct hectoring works up a hard sweat trying to drive a spike into the heart of



mid-century middle-class American culture.

Here's the story: Gardner (Matt Damon), lives in a brochure-perfect late 1950's cookie-cutter real estate development where every house is identical and all of his neighbors' collars and skins are white.

Also living in Gardner's house is his wheelchair-bound wife, Rose and her sister, Maggie (both played in split-screen by Julianne

Moore), and Gardner and Rose's little boy, Nicky (Noah Jupe).

Then, out of nowhere, the community's peace is suddenly shaken apart by the unannounced arrival of a black family, who by moving into *Suburbicon*, cause its thin fabric of friendliness to quickly unravel.

Nicky, however, and the newly moved-in young black kid get along just fine, but in very short order, thuggy groups of truck-

driving bigots roll up onto the black family's front lawn and start a violently loud campaign of harassment.

This is where Clooney and the Coen Bros. shove down the throats of the audience the idea that the Wonder Bread-*Leave it to Beaver*-world of post-war white middle-America was simply a façade – one that disguised its true racist core.

The white middle-class suburbanites (especially Christians, as there's anti-Semitism introduced in the background, as well) were, according to the revisionist history of Clooney and the Coens, inherently racist and rife with prejudice against all people unlike themselves.

Not only does this subplot have nothing to do with the rest of the movie, but it also has the distinct effect of offending virtually every thinking person of any race who sees it.

Anyway, back at Gardner's house, all is seemingly calm, until his home is invaded by a pair of brutal robbers. Everyone there, Gardner, Rose, Maggie and little Nicky gets a faceful of chloroform.

And, everybody wakes up... except Rose. The invaders have chloroformed her to death.

Gardner and Nicky are alone, now. But, Maggie quickly moves in with them, and for awhile, all seems okay. However, all is not ever as it appears.

The evil house invaders show up again. An insurance investigator (Oscar Isaac) shows up. Race haters show up, waving Confederate flags, no less.

Another overt plot point of this film is that none of these characters will achieve their vision of the American Dream and get what they want out of life unless they painfully hurt someone else.

This is in no way inspirational... *Suburbicon*, so pretty on the surface, suddenly turns very, very ugly. Quite honestly, some may suggest that this movie is representative of the director himself. Good-looking on the outside, ugly on the inside.

This movie gave me nothing to like, nothing to cheer about, and, really, nothing to even think about. I sincerely couldn't relate to anything in it. In fact, I almost broke from my usual gentlemanly decorum, and 'Booed!' as the houselights went up. Almost.

I can't justify even one star for this shoddy, ill-conceived and frankly, ham-handedly offensive George Clooney vanity lecture.

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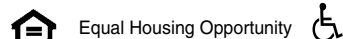
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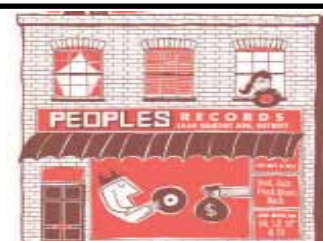
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