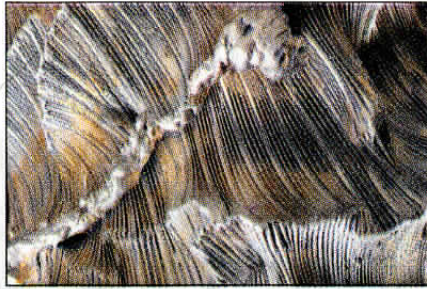


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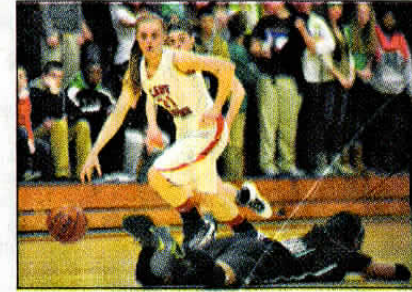
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Homegrown talent to be featured in Racine Art Museum yearlong 10th anniversary celebration
Out & About, inside



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Transit's future a question

Residents weigh in on public transportation at forum

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RACINE — As citizens weigh in on a series of proposed public transit alternatives, county and city officials said funding uncertainty is making the area's future public transportation options an open question.

Presenting the South-

eastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's proposals at a public forum Wednesday, SEWRPC's Eric Lynde offered multiple scenarios because, he said, "There's a lot of flux, in terms of funding" over the next five years.

Several dozen residents filtered through

the Corinne Reid-Owens Transportation Center on Wednesday, taking in posters and packets on the proposed alternatives. Those interested in commenting wrote out their thoughts and dropped them in a marked box. Others listened to a half-hour's worth of information presented by com-

mission project leader Lynde.

That public input will get weighed and added to the commission's proposal before it goes to Racine County and the City of Racine later this spring, Lynde said.

Funding in flux

Moving forward, federal

funding is especially uncertain, Lynde noted. State funding is flat, at least in Gov. Scott Walker's biennial budget, which also proposes transferring mass transit funding from the protected transportation fund to the general fund, putting it in the same pot as school aids, Medicaid and other pub-

licly funded services.

According to the governor's budget, the move is designed "to further strengthen the relationship between user fee revenues and investments in transportation infrastructure."

But it has some, like City

More **TRANSIT**, Page 7A

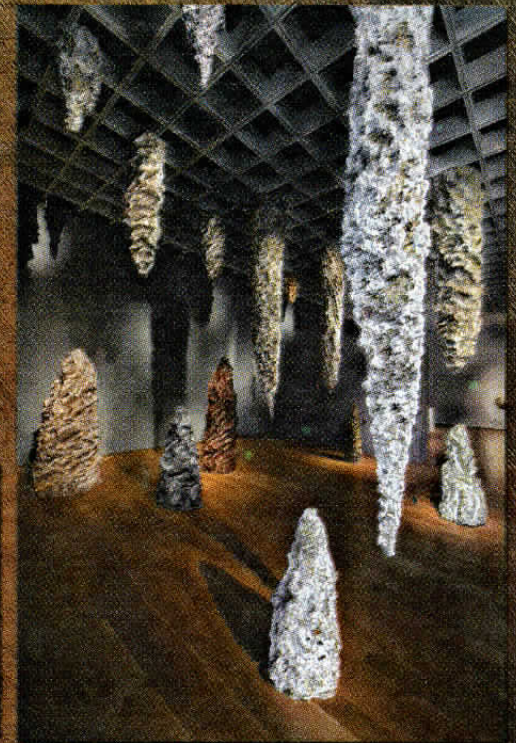
Student's doodle brings money, fame to Prairie

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Out & About

The Journal Times
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at

RAM



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Homegrown Talent

Work of artists who grew up in Racine to kick off Racine Art Museum's yearlong 10th anniversary celebration

LEE B. ROBERTS
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The Racine Art Museum is celebrating its 10th anniversary in Downtown, and two of the city's homegrown, nationally accomplished artists have returned to town to take part in the celebration.

New York-based painter Karen Gunderson and Florida-based sculptor Barbara Sorensen each have their work featured in side-by-side exhibitions in the RAM's upstairs galleries through April 14. "Karen Gunderson: Reflective" and "Barbara Sorensen: Elemental" highlight the recent work of these two artists, whose art has been featured in numerous galleries and museums around the country. And together the exhibits set off a year-long series of anniversary events at RAM which will not only look back at the institution's history and traditions, but its relationship with area artists.

"We have been following both Karen and Barbara for years and thought this was an opportune time, in both their careers, to give them each a solo show as the launch for this year's celebrations," said Bruce Pepich, RAM's executive director and curator of collections. "We believe they are both producing mature and intellectually challenging work and that exhibiting near each other would allow for the two artists to engage in a visual dialogue."

That dialogue is a first for Gunderson and Sorensen, who didn't know one another prior to sharing RAM's gallery space this year. Despite having grown up in Racine around the same time — Sorensen (Gerler) graduated from St. Catherine's High School in 1963 and Gunderson graduated from Park High School in 1961 — each left town to attend college and went on to develop successful careers while living in other states, never having met.

Yet both have created works of art that focus on the natural elements around us. And when exhibited along side one

If You Go

WHAT: "Karen Gunderson: Reflective" and "Barbara Sorensen: Elemental"

WHERE: Racine Art Museum, 441 Main St.

WHEN: Now through April 14. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday (closed Mondays, federal holidays and Easter).

COST: Admission to RAM is \$5 for adults; \$3 for seniors, full-time students and young adults (ages 12-18); and free for children younger than 12. Admission is free for everyone on the first Friday of every month.

INFO: Go to www.ramart.org or call (262) 638-8300.

Reception, discussion set for March 22

A gallery reception and discussion with Barbara Sorensen and Karen Gunderson will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday, March 22, at the Racine Art Museum, 441 Main St. The public is invited to this program, which will be led by Bruce Pepich, RAM executive director and curator of collections. Admission is \$10 (free for RAM members). For more information, go to www.ramart.org.

◆ **RAM turns 10:** Bruce Pepich reflects on the museum's first decade. — **Page 3**

another, they seem to connect on several levels.

Light and depth

Bodies of water, mountains and constellations are the subjects of Gunderson's paintings. But these aren't your typical land or sky scapes. Painted completely in black (with one exception), these large-scale works of art capture light and express depth through their carefully created textures and exacting brush strokes. And, depending on what angle you view them from, they may even appear

to move.

Gunderson, who for many years painted cloud formations (you can see some of these inside Our Saviors Lutheran Church), began experimenting with black paintings in the late 1980s and has been perfecting the process ever since — experimenting with various shades of black and different ways of manipulating the paint.

It is a process that she is still learning new things from today, Gunderson said. And through it all, it has "always been about the light."

Her paintings also have political undertones, although not in-your-face type of political statements, according to Gunderson. Instead, her work is meant to get the viewer to think about the subjects it represents. Whether it's the ocean's water or the mountains of Tibet, they are beautiful things that can also be dangerous, she said. "And they are things we really need. I want us to think about that." (www.karengunderson.com)

Spatial experience

While Sorensen's sculptural representations of natural forms are more abstract, they too are meant to provoke thought, and to create a spatial experience for the viewer.

Her "Dwellings" series — which consists of pod-like forms made out of powder-coated hollow aluminum rods — hangs from the gallery's ceiling and walls, as well as resting on its floor, creating an environment that the artist says reminds her of being under water, surrounded by sea animal and urchins. Originally inspired by Aborigine fishing nets she'd observed in Australia, these creations took on a new sense for Sorensen when displayed in RAM's galleries. And she hopes that viewers will find their own experience among them.

Another section of Sorensen's

composer and professor of composition at the University of Ireland at Maynooth, will be in residence at Carthage College Saturday and Sunday, March 9-10. There are several opportunities to hear O'Leary's music and to learn more about contemporary Irish music.

O'Leary will be joined that weekend by the Muzika Piano Trio, consisting of violinist Darlene Rivest, cellist Michele Venturella and pianist Anna Kojovic-Frodl. This collaboration began over a year ago when the trio performed O'Leary's work, "Bluescape." The trio contacted O'Leary to learn that their performance of "Bluescape" was the American premiere. After O'Leary heard their performance on a CD he generously offered to write a piece for the trio. This work, "Avanti," will receive its world premiere on the weekend of O'Leary's residency, along with a repeat performance



Muzika Piano Trio

an open rehearsal with O'Leary at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 9, in Siebert Chapel at Carthage, 2001 Alford Park Drive. This is an opportunity to hear the trio perform and witness the collaboration between composer and artist. There will be opportunities to ask questions and gain insight into O'Leary's works.

O'Leary will lecture about contemporary Irish music composition at 1 p.m. Sunday, March 10, in the H.F. Johnson Recital Hall at Carthage. There will be recordings and examples along with information about various movements in musical composition in Ireland.

The Muzika Piano Trio will give a performance featuring the two works by O'Leary in a concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 10, in Siebert Chapel. The concert will open with Shostakovich's "Piano Trio, Opus 67" in e minor. All events are free and open to the public.

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3319 Washington Ave.

Sonia Lee, a world-renowned scholar, harpsichordist, organist, pianist and recording artist, will perform works on a French harpsichord, built by Racine builder Lewis E. Schultz. She will be accompanied on the flute by Paula Braun of the Dave Braun Trio. Lee enjoys a prolific concert and lecturing career, with engagements throughout North and South America, Europe and the Far East. Her CDs will be sold.

An offering will be accepted. Proceeds received will be matched by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for the pipe organ repair fund.

Library hosts harpist, storyteller

WATERFORD — Celtic harpist and storyteller Jeff Pockat will perform from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 12, at the Waterford Public Library, 101 N. River St.

Pockat is a self-taught Celtic harp (Gaelic harp) musician and composer. The music is performed on the ancient wire strung Celtic harp. His music will be traditional and original pieces.

There is no admission fee.

TALENT

From Page 2

"Elements" exhibit takes viewers into a cave-like environment, where giant "Speleothems" seem to grow up out of the floor and down from the ceiling. Much like the stalagmites and stalactites found in real caves, Sorensen's forms are created with a variety of materials including polyurethane and resin, as well as everyday items such as aluminum dryer ducts and chicken wire.

"There are even some quartz crystals in there," she said.

The large-scale work featured in Sorensen's exhibit grew out of her desire to create "great big, huge things" — something she just couldn't do in clay, which was her original medium of choice. While she spent her early career making functional ceramics, her work today "really relates to the topography of the landscape." (www.barbarasorensen.com)

Both she and Gunderson said they feel honored to have their art shown at

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From the time its Downtown campus was being built, the Racine Art Museum's two main goals have been to change the way people in the community think about themselves and to help create a positive image for Racine outside this community, according to Bruce Pepich, RAM executive director and curator of collections. And, Pepich said, the museum has delivered on that promise, and continues to deliver on it every day.

"Anyone who has come Downtown on a First Friday or Gallery Night in

the RAM. And both said they still feel connected to Racine, despite having lived in other cities for 30 or more years.

"I love Racine, and the museum is such a positive aspect of the city," Gunderson

RAM turns 10

the summer months and seen literally thousands of people enjoying being together, knows this changes the way we see the community in which we live, and the way we think of ourselves as residents," he said. "We are very pleased to be one of the anchors in Downtown that makes this possible."

Since it opened Downtown in 2003, RAM has:

- ◆ Nearly tripled the size of its collection through gifts from collectors living in 30 different states.
- ◆ Organized shows that have traveled across the U.S. to cities including Houston, Seattle, Newark and New York.

said. "I'm very proud and honored to be a part of it,"

Sorensen said she is especially proud to have a show at RAM because of the museum's focus and notoriety as a crafts

◆ Regularly received national media attention in a variety of art and news publications, as well as through electronic media.

◆ Doubled its annual attendance, hosting more than 50,000 guests each year. Current figures show 67.1 percent of RAM's visitors come from outside Racine County, and 34.8 percent from outside Wisconsin.

"These out-of-town visitors spend money on shopping, food and gasoline, which helps the local economy," Pepich said. "This is great for all of us and we are happy to be a small, yet supportive, part of the local economy."

museum — one where her mentors have had their work exhibited.

It also feels good to be able to come back to her roots, Sorensen said. "I'm excited to have my friends there see what I do."