



Voscar's artistic legacy lauded

Admirers mourn County photographer

BY MARK PUTNAM
PRESQUE ISLE STAR-HERALD

PRESQUE ISLE — His images tell the stories of Aroostook County. When John F. Kennedy came to town, he was there. When someone needed a wedding photographer, he was there. When wildlife roamed, he was there. Adorned in a black wide-brimmed hat and never without his camera, Oscar S. Nelder was Voscar, The Maine Photographer. He died on April 14, a little more than five months shy of his 90th birthday. "I think he saw the world a little bit differently than the rest of us saw it," said Michael Gudreau. "I think he just had the gift." Gudreau, a local photographer, grew up around Nelder.

"During Voscar's time there was maybe a handful of photographers that were in town. They were all good at it but I think that those guys were more in it for the money," Gudreau said. "I think Voscar was in it for the art of it."

Nelder began taking photos right out of high school. He did everything from studio portraits to crime scene photography.

"Without him there would hardly be any picture history of Presque Isle," said Dr. Richard "Dick" Graves.

Graves met Voscar when he came to take portrait shots of his mother.

"He stood out because he took these photos," Graves said. "Back then it was a big deal."

Graves remembers Nelder as one of the kindest people he has ever met.

"He never had a nasty word to say about anyone," he said.

Presque Isle was Voscar's hometown and he made it the homebase for his studio, according to his longtime friend Ed Hews, who worked with Nelder during his time at WAGM radio and television.

"When anybody came into the area, well, he was always willing to work with See Voscar, Page C2



Actors in the Penobscot Theatre's production of "Duck Hunter Shoots Angel" go over a scene during a dress rehearsal at the Bangor Opera House in Bangor on Friday. The show opens tonight and runs through May 15.

A 'laugh-out-loud' tale of redemption

Penobscot Theatre's rendition of 'Duck Hunter Shoots Angel' poses tough questions about human frailty, God

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

"Duck Hunter Shoots Angel," the poster reads, the giant white lettering splashed across a photo of a hunter with a gun being interviewed by two men in suits. The title is accompanied by other unbelievable things: "Fat cat owns 23 old ladies," one headline reads, "Half man — half alligator" another says.

A story that appears to come straight from the front page of a flashy tabloid is next in line to be staged by the Penobscot Theatre Company at the Bangor Opera House.

Written by Mitch Albom, the author of popular novel "Tuesdays with Morrie," the play follows a New York journalist sent to cover a mysterious angel shooting in Alabama. The comedy ultimately becomes an allegory about redemption



Actors in the Penobscot Theatre's production of "Duck Hunter Shoots Angel" go over a scene during a dress rehearsal at the Bangor Opera House in Bangor on Friday.

with a heartfelt message, but not before laughter ensues.

Helping bring the story to life is New Yorker Jonathan Spencer, the lighting and set designer for the production. Spencer, who has been working with the Penobscot Theatre Company for more than 10 years, was first introduced to Maine's theater scene by Scott R.C. Levy, a previous producing artistic director of Penobscot Theatre Company, whom he met at a dinner party.

"He said, 'I'm moving to Maine to take over this theater,'" Spencer

said, recalling the conversation he had with Levy. Levy told Spencer he would have him up to do a show, but Spencer said that most of the time, a conversation like that is filled with empty words.

"Every person in the world will say that to you at a dinner party, and never follow through," Spencer said. "But Scott said, 'I'll have you up to do a show,' and three or four months later, he did."

The first production Spencer worked on was "The Laramie See Theatre, Page C2

The power in a pay-it-forward chain

My mother was diagnosed with Stage 3 colon cancer when she was 34 years old.

I was 14 at the time, a freshman in high school, and didn't fully understand the severity of the situation.

But I knew enough to realize I might lose my mom.

What I didn't know was how my hometown would come together during my family's time of need.

The Thursday before last was much like any other. I woke around 8 on my day off and planned to run some errands but figured I would stop at Dunkin' Donuts on Broadway first to grab a quick breakfast.

As a new resident of Bangor, I've been trying to make this place feel a bit more like the home I moved away from in Aroostook County. Little did I know I was in for a surprise that would brighten my day and remind me of the power of Maine's communities.

The drive-thru line was long and I debated going inside to order, but instead I took advantage of the downtime and called my mom.

I'm not sure what we discussed. I call her often, and we usually don't talk about much, but there's an unspeakable value in that after what my family has been through. Simply being able to check in with her and talk about my plans for the day is worth much more to me than she probably realizes.

It's one of the things I'm glad I can still look forward to.

I put down the phone as I pulled up to the window to pay.

"Your order has already been paid for," the woman at the window said with a smile. "The person ahead of you paid it forward."

I didn't know what to say at first and simply replied with an, "Oh! That's so nice!" as she handed me an unsweetened iced tea and breakfast croissant. I had a \$5 bill in hand, ready to give to her, so I figured I might as well pay for the person behind me. See Hartin, Page C2



SHELBY HARTIN

BSO's stripped-down 'La Boheme' puts music above spectacle



Lucas Richman conducts the Bangor Symphony Orchestra on Saturday during a dress rehearsal for the opera "La Boheme" at the Collins Center for the Arts. Giacomo Puccini's story of young bohemians living in Paris in the 1830s was performed Sunday.

BY JUDY HARRISON
BDN STAFF

Life in the garrets of 1830s Paris was cold and lonely for the city's young bohemians. They burned their own poems to ward off the cold and longed for a fiery love to keep them warm.

OPERA REVIEW

Their joys and sorrows delighted the sold-out audience Sunday at the Collins Center for the Arts as the Bangor Symphony Orchestra marked its 120th anniversary with a production of the opera "La Boheme." It was the first time the BSO has presented an opera complete with costumes and sets.

Conductor Lucas Richman and his staff spent a year planning the production of Giacomo Puccini's well-known musical saga.



COURTESY OF BANGOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

John Bellemer as Rodolfo and Emily Birsan as Mimì express their growing love for one another during a dress rehearsal Saturday for "La Boheme."

The orchestra, singers and designers joined forces to create an enchanting production that rare-

ly faltered. It was a lovely and much-appreciated gift for the symphony's loyal supporters and the community.

Director Loren Lester and Richman cleverly conceived a production that emphasized music over spectacle and emotion above pageantry. By stripping "La Boheme" of its theatrical trappings, the audience got caught up in the characters and their stories.

Tenor John Bellemer and soprano Emily Birsan portrayed star-crossed but doomed lovers Rodolfo and Mimì. Their voices intertwined like vines. Birsan's Mimì was a woman with a tenacious soul but delicate constitution too fragile for bohemian poverty. The soprano's beautifully balanced voice so charmed the attergoers that some wept at See BSO, Page C2

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Colby College Museum of Art • Maine Film Center
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Waterville Opera House • Waterville Main Street

April 29, 8:00 PM
Waterville Opera House
Shemekia Copeland

April 30, 12:55 PM
Waterville Opera House
The Metropolitan Opera: Elektra

April 30, 5:30 PM
Common Street Arts
Voices of Waterville: POETRY Open Mic

May 1, 12:55 PM
Waterville Opera House
The Metropolitan Opera:
Madama Butterfly

UPCOMING ON WATERVILLE MAIN STREET

May 14, 1 – 4 PM / Head of Falls, Downtown Waterville

1st Annual "Let's Go! Fly a Kite!" Day

Celebrate spring with downtown Waterville at this family-friendly event for all ages! Make and fly your own kite while surrounded by a spectacular display of giant kites along the river's edge – you've never seen anything like this before, don't miss out.

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

