

Life

D SUNDAY
MAY 22, 2016

*Novel media enliven
one of the oldest art
forms in New Hope.*

"Idle #2," ceramic,
glaze and metal rods,
by Winifred Weiss



"Whereupon the
Moonman & the
Three-Headed
Lizard Tried to Do
the Dishes Together
and What Ensued,"
paper mache and
mixed media, by
Holly Smith

POP & CLASSIC

By GWEN SHRIFT
STAFF WRITER

Observation, conjecture and pure fantasy lead to deep insights, which in the hands of the three-dimensionally gifted emerge in forms to challenge or delight the visual sense.

There's plenty of this going around at the New Hope Arts Center, where the annual sculpture show puts about 100 works on view in a pop-infused exhibit through June 19.

As far as deep insights go, art appreciators can fairly ask, or guess, just what was on the mind of this or that sculptor.

The complex vitality of living forms appeals to Wendy Gordon, who offers a monumentally delicate work in "Branches," a three-dimensional line drawing in brass rod and patina that reflects her deep study of small and plentiful natural objects.

Alan Carter shows "Ascendancy" and "Inside Out," arresting work of burlwood and resin so subtly joined as to suggest they are the same material in different phases. These works incorporate incorporeality with solidity in a way far different than sculpture such as Carter's "Going Green," in which voids

are literally manipulated into the wood.

Meanwhile, Randy Liebowitz Dean goes in the opposite direction, building works such as "Vase Scape" of layered and carved plywood in a process one could think of as restoring growth to the original tree, this one hollow.

The ever-evocative Winifred Weiss brings forth a small world peopled by expressive sprites or nature spirits in three ceramic sculptures, "Idle #1," "Idle #2" and "Just on the Other Side of the Wall." Their faces are haunting and elusive, some troubled by their thoughts, some wise and knowing, but all mysterious.

Holly Smith conjures the opposite mood with her zany paper mache and mixed-media work "Whereupon the Moonman & the Three-headed Lizard Tried to Do the Dishes Together and What Ensued," which sounds like a madcap fairy tale.

In form, it's a hero vanquishing a monster, in the classic pose of a combatant pressing a spear against the chest of a recumbent foe, in this case, a beast with three heads and, judging from the title, an implacable attitude toward housework.

See **EXHIBIT, Page D2**

Cranston in the multifaceted role of LBJ goes 'All the Way'

By FRAZIER MOORE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — For five seasons of "Breaking Bad," Bryan Cranston displayed his versatility through the dramatic evolution of his character, Walter White, from milquetoast schoolteacher to meth-marketing monster.

But that was just a warmup for "All the Way," an HBO film adapted from the Tony Award-winning Broadway play that calls for Cranston to embody the almost moment-to-moment volatility of its larger-than-life real-life hero,

President Lyndon B. Johnson.

"He was big, he was small. He was boisterous, he was laconic. He was embracing, he was cold," marvels Cranston. "The polemic of his personality was just unbelievable."

But Cranston's performance in the film (which premiered this weekend) is much more than an acting exercise.

"All the Way" is a full-bodied portrait of a flawed yet overpowering political force, an unrivaled sweet-talker, arm-twister, bully and, above all, horse trader who mastered, as few have, the

clattering contraption of Washington governance.

The film travels the rocky road that led to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, with LBJ finessing the clash of activism led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. versus hidebound members of Johnson's own Democratic Party as, at the same time, he furiously fought to hold on to the presidency against his '64 Republican rival, Barry Goldwater.

Capturing this stormy first year of the Johnson administration, the film is populated by an array

of stars including Bradley Whitford (as Johnson's vice president, Hubert Humphrey), Frank Langella (as his former mentor, Georgia's mighty Sen. Richard Russell) and Melissa Leo (wondrous as his ever-supportive wife, Lady Bird).

Cranston had made his Broadway debut with "All the Way" — a nervy challenge he couldn't say no to once he read Robert Schenkkan's script.

"It's all about the story," Cranston explains, "how this man ascends to power under great tragedy, and then, a Southern guy,

changes how we treat African-American citizens and other minorities in this country."

He threw himself into research, reading books, visiting key sites (including Johnson's Texas ranch and his presidential library in Austin) and meeting with people who knew him, including his two daughters.

Even before he opened at the Neil Simon Theatre in March 2014, a film adaptation was in the cards. Then, during the

See **CRANSTON, Page D4**

Exhibit

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Smith's work occupies the end of the gallery more or less devoted to colorful and humorous pop works, including Jack Knight's totem-like "Pecan Pie."

This is also the place to see art that lights up and moves, such as Barney Stone's "Lampzilla," Andy DiPietro's "Merging" and Lisa E. Nanni's "Blood Moon."

Many are the hard and durable materials worked by sculptors, but Nanni holds the distinction as the only sculptor regularly exhibited here who works in argon and neon. Like many of her works, "Blood Moon" derives a slightly eerie quality from tubes of glowing gas. It's a welcome antidote to the medium's usual back-slapping presence on the visual landscape.

For the rest, artists offered work in stone and metal, notably in unusual constructions by Oki Fukunaga, whose chosen medium here is coat hangers, Eric Schultz, a virtuoso in found metal objects, and Dana Stewart, described as a "master caster" in bronze.

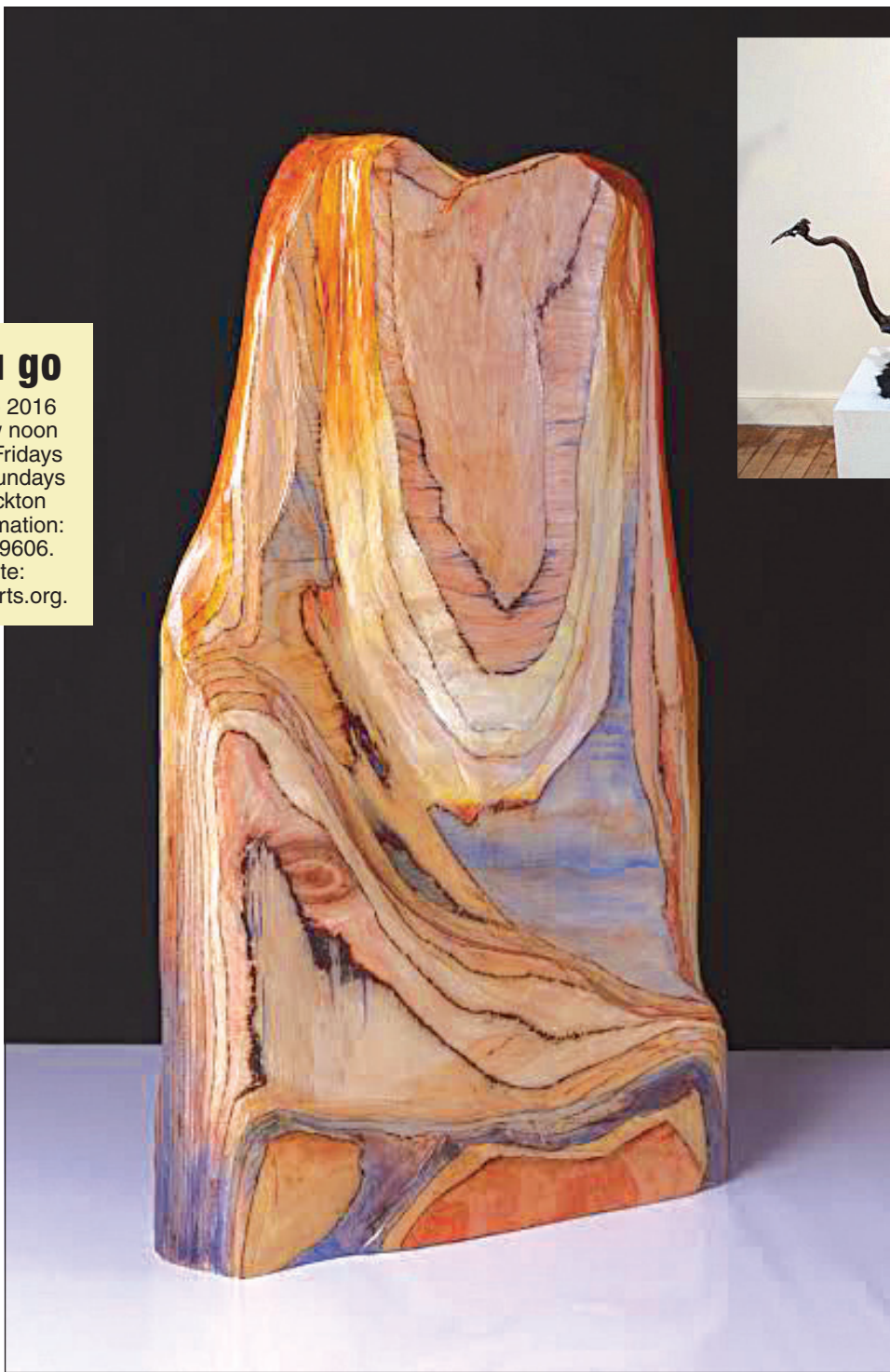
The latter again exhibits works that pay tribute to high fantasy and myth through characterization and solidity. "Charon the Ferryman," who in Greek mythology transported souls across rivers of the underworld, is reimagined as a dragon that looks like a long-tailed dog with wings.

Though often depicted poling his boat, Stewart here gives Charon an oar in the shape of what appears to be a sea turtle. The artist has not forgotten to add a bowl of tiny coins, which represent the fare to Hades; though Stewart's Charon is somewhat comical, he is not one to be haggled with.

Over the years, Fukunaga has exhibited work made of tiny iron bricks, but recently his coat-hanger geometric objects have drawn notice at this annual event. With "Kagachi (Physalis)," the artist explores solidity and open space in a symmetrical, crystalline arrangement that is both

If you go

Sculpture 2016 is on view noon to 5 p.m. Fridays through Sundays at 2 Stockton Ave. Information: 215-862-9606. Website: newhopearts.org.



"Vase Scape," carved pine plywood and acrylic, by Randy Liebowitz Dean



"Branches," brass rod and patina, by Wendy Gordon



"Charon the Ferryman," bronze, by Dana Stewart



"Ascendancy," burlwood, resin and metal, by Alan Carter

light and heavy — you can see through his sculptures, but paradoxically, they are so large they have mass and heft.

Among the great treats of this exhibit is Eric Schultz's "Phoenix," a creature of wonder made of banal objects such as old hooks, hand tools, pieces of rusted metal and machinery, knives, bicycle chains and other salvaged bits. The sculptor's insight into his material imparts grace to the

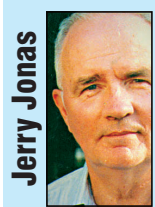
opposing curves of neck and tail feathers and gives his mythic bird an expressive face with a parrot beak.

"Sculpture 2016" also includes works in ceramic, paper, wood, fiber and diverse materials such as furniture parts and old vinyl records. The exhibit is on view noon to 5 p.m. Fridays through Sundays at 2 Stockton Ave. Information: 215-862-9606. Website: newhopearts.org.

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COMMENTARY

Still unanswered question: Was the bomb necessary?



Jerry Jonas

On Friday, while on a weeklong swing through Asia, President Barack Obama will visit Hiroshima, the first of two Japanese cities (the second was

Nagasaki) destroyed by American atomic bombs during the closing days of World War II.

He'll be accompanied by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and become the first sitting U.S. president to have visited the ill-fated city.

While certainly aware that the U.S. bears the responsibility of being the only country to have used atomic weapons in wartime, according to White House officials, Obama will not apologize for the use of those weapons.

Rather, he will pay his respects at Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park, and offer a forward-looking vision focused on our shared future and the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

I vividly remember the evening in early August, 1945, when the news first reached us that a new "super" bomb (then already referred to as an atom bomb) had been dropped on a Japanese city and basically obliterated it.

At that time, after nearly four years of horrific fighting that followed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the average American's feelings toward Japan couldn't have been any more hostile. As a result, most Americans who heard the news of the new weapon and how it had been used were elated.

As a 14-year-old, whose father,

a Marine platoon sergeant, was then serving in the Pacific theater, I was certainly one of them. To me, the war with Japan had a special significance. In addition to my father's service, my cousin, a 22 year-old Marine lieutenant only recently graduated from St. Joseph's College, had died a year earlier in the assault on Tinian Island.

And a number of my older friends and relatives were then serving or had served in various branches of the military. Some had been killed or wounded, and many of them were still in combat.

All these years later, if you raise the subject with most World War II veterans, especially combat veterans who fought against Japanese troops in the Pacific, the overwhelming odds are that they'll insist that dropping the bomb was justified, and its use saved the lives of more than a half-million Americans and countless numbers of Japanese. That was the casualty estimate given at the time by war planners, if our armed forces had been forced to invade Japan.

But there are many problems with that argument.

Contrary to what most of the public believes today, there were many prominent American military leaders of the time who insisted that the bombing was unnecessary and unjustified.

They were certain that since Japan was already badly beaten and suffering horrific shortages of food, fuel and other major resources, and since they were totally cut off from outside provisions, it was just a matter of time till they would be forced to surrender. Based on that, an invasion

of Japan would never have been necessary.

Among those opposed to the bombing were Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander, Allied forces in Europe; Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific area; Admiral William D. Leahy, the chief of staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman; and Gen. Carl Spatz, the head of U.S. Strategic Air Force operations in the Pacific.

The one individual who seems to have been most in favor of dropping the bomb on a Japanese city was Secretary of War Henry Stimson. Many of Stimson's critics insist that rather than a means of obtaining a Japanese surrender, he wanted to use it primarily as a U.S. show of force against the Soviets, who then posed a major threat to world peace.

Unfortunately, Stimson also had an apparently untoward influence on Harry S. Truman, who had the final decision on using the bomb. Truman had just inherited the U.S. presidency following the sudden death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and had only recently learned that the bomb even existed.

In his memoirs, Eisenhower, when commenting on Stimson's attempt at persuading him that the bomb should be dropped, wrote: "In [July] 1945... Secretary of War Stimson, visiting my headquarters in Germany, informed me that our government was preparing to drop an atomic bomb on Japan. ... (and) asked for my reaction, apparently expecting a vigorous assent."

"I voiced to him my grave misgivings, first on the basis of

my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives. It was my belief that Japan was, at that very moment, seeking some way to surrender with a minimum loss of 'face'. The Secretary was deeply perturbed by my attitude..."

In a later interview with Newsweek magazine, Eisenhower added: "The Japanese were ready to surrender, and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing."

In his autobiography, "I Was There," Admiral Leahy wrote: "It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons."

Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the highest ranking officer in the Pacific, was equally dubious over the use of the bomb. Norman Cousins, publisher of the Saturday Review of Literature, wrote "When I asked General MacArthur about the decision to drop the bomb, he replied that he saw no military justification for dropping it. 'The war might have ended weeks earlier,' he said, 'if the United States had agreed, as it later did, anyway, to the retention of the institution of the emperor.' "

Gen. Carl Spatz, the head of

U.S. Strategic Air Force operations in the Pacific, in a 1964 interview offered an alternative to the bombs' use. "If we were to go ahead with the plans for a conventional invasion," he said, "I believe the Japanese thought that they could inflict very heavy casualties on us and possibly get better surrender terms. On the other hand if they were told that no invasion would take place [and] that (conventional) bombing would continue until the surrender, I think the surrender would have taken place just about the same time."

Many other U.S. military brass expressed strong reservations against the bombing. Among them were Admiral Ernest King, the Chief of Naval Operations; Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the Commander of the Pacific Fleet; Marine Gen. Holland M. Smith, Commander of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific; and Gen. Curtis LeMay, later head of the Strategic Air Command.

Both Albert Einstein, the renowned physicist who first made President Roosevelt aware of the possibility of developing the bomb, and Leo Szilard, a physicist who helped build it, voiced unflinching opposition to its use.

"If the Germans had dropped atomic bombs on cities instead of us," Szilard wrote, "we would have defined the dropping of atomic bombs on cities as a war crime, and we would have sentenced the Germans who were guilty of this crime to death at Nuremberg and hanged them."

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