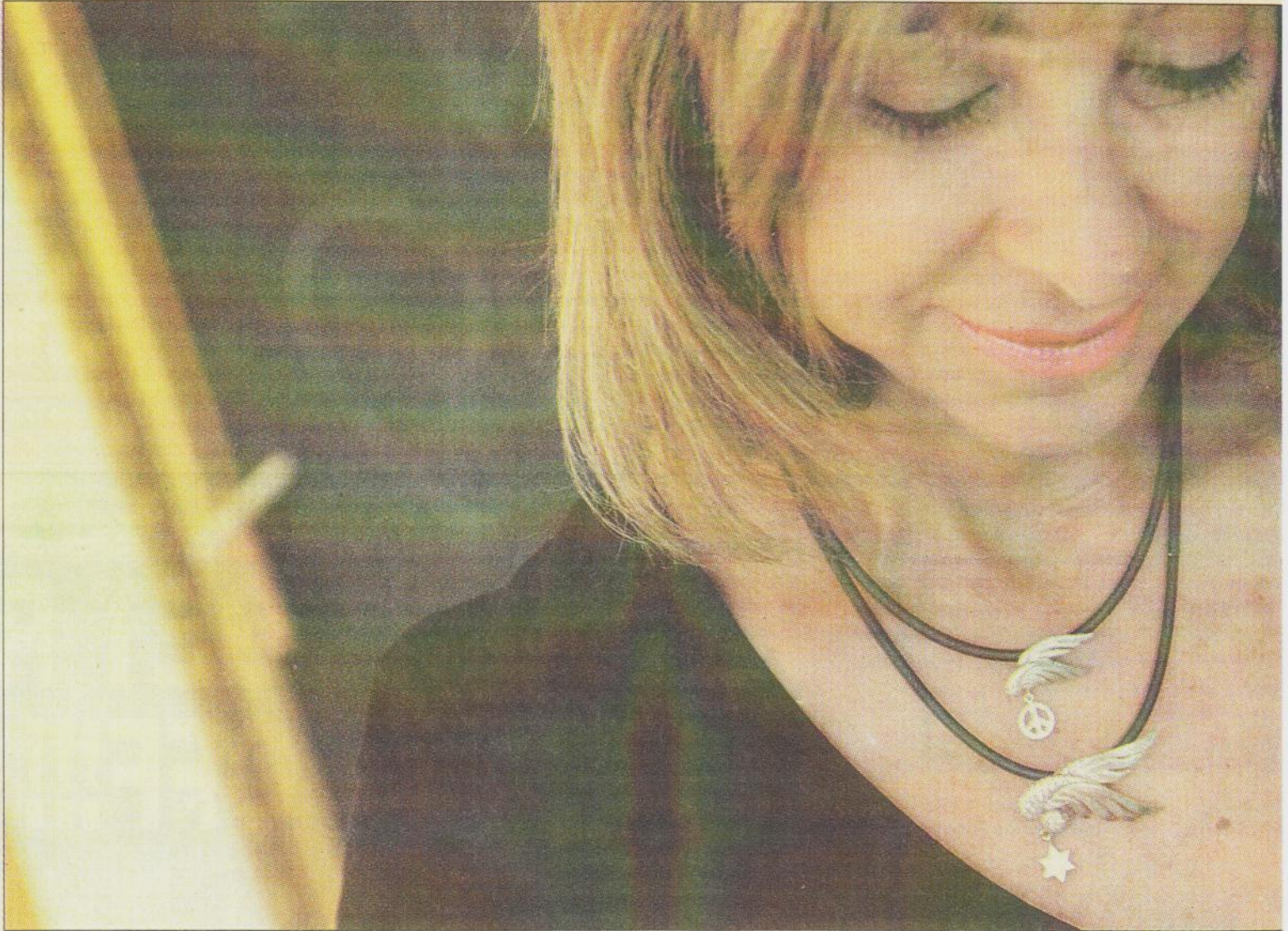


WHERE FAITH MEETS ART



■ SUSAN TUSA/Detroit Fr

"I've never seen anybody accomplish anything important without a symbol," says jewelry designer Brenda Rosenberg. The Bloomfield Hills resident uses symbols of various faiths combined with wings, symbolizing peace, in jewelry she designed with jewelry artist Jan Levin. At her home Tuesday, she wears pieces of jewelry that will be for sale today at a showcase. The sale will raise money for interfaith work. **SEE OUR SPIRIT, 3B.**

Our Spirit

Contact us by e-mail at: ourspirit@freepress.com
or by phone at 313-222-1456

WWW.FREEP.COM

Artist uses jewelry to build interfaith bridges of peace

DAVID CRUMM



Designer Brenda Rosenberg is betting that faith and art are stronger than hate.

Tonight, she will introduce Wings of Peace, a line of pins, necklaces and bracelets she has designed with jewelry artist Jan Levin to raise awareness of the message of peace in the world's religions — and to raise money for interfaith work. The debut showing is open to the public from 7-10 p.m. at Levin's shop, Pentimento, 4076 W. Maple Road in Bloomfield Hills.

"We see so much news about horrific acts of terror, but there also are quiet miracles going on every day as walls crumble between people who have been estranged. I want people to stop and think about that possibility," Rosenberg, who lives in Bloomfield Hills, told me as she prepared the pieces for the show.

Many people have contributed to Detroit's reputation as a pioneering center for interfaith cooperation. But Rosenberg's artistic eye zeroed in on a major problem in spreading the message: lack of a powerful symbol.

"I've never seen anybody accomplish anything important without a symbol," she said.

Rosenberg's design features eagle wings — an ancient symbol of divinity — combined with pendants representing Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism that can be hung, singly, beneath the wings. Prices range from \$45 for a pin to \$800 for a diamond necklace.

"Each piece starts with wings, then I can wear the one with a Jewish symbol," a star of David, she said. "Muslims can wear the Arabic symbol for Allah. Christians can wear the cross with their wings. It shows that, from each of our traditions, we come together in support of peace."

Since childhood, Rosenberg has mingled with metro Detroit's artists and designers. Her father, Herb Cohen, founded the Raven Gallery in Detroit in 1960, when she was 13. Artists and musicians, including singer Joni Mitchell, were guests at the Cohen home. In 1976, People magazine profiled Rosenberg for designing a line of jewelry shaped like auto parts. From 1977 to 1984, she was the Hudson's vice president in charge



Brenda Rosenberg uses symbols of various faiths in her jewelry designs. At her home in Bloomfield Hills on Tuesday, she prepares for her showcase, labeling bags with "Wings for Peace" sticker.

SUJAN TUSA/Detroit Free Press

of choosing the store's new fashions. Later, she designed lines of sportswear and shoes.

By 1997, when Rosenberg turned 50, she wanted to make a more enduring mark. She began working on combatting anti-Semitism. Then, the Sept. 11 attacks jolted her.

"My life changed that day," she said. "I wasn't involved in interfaith work at all. Then, it became so clear to me that we've got to move our world from its culture of violence to a culture of peace."

In their attacks, "the terrorists were successful in spreading fear. But I felt this immense connection with the world and this need to help repair it," she said. "Now, there's not a morning that I don't read the newspaper and find myself in tears over some hideous story about violence somewhere in the world. And I shed the same tears whether it's a Palestinian child who dies, an Israeli child, an Iraqi woman or a U.S. soldier."

She supports many programs now, including a new local group called Interfaith Partners and a nationwide effort through the American Jewish Committee that sponsored a recent speaking tour by a rabbi, an imam and a Christian pastor from Israel. In 24 hours in late July, the trio spoke

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

LAST WEEK: We asked about the spiritual legacy of World War II and many readers e-mailed or called to say that their memories are so complex that a brief summary would be impossible.

"Trying to get this across to younger generations is tough," said a man from Hazel Park. "The shared sacrifices we made were beyond what people can imagine."

However, Ginny Turner of Birmingham wrote that in her family, a grandson's high school term paper was an excuse for recording her oral history of the '40s.

When war broke out, she recalled, "I was a freshman in college and my roommate and I started listening to BBC radio every morning. The Navy

Waves started an offer's training school on campus and we entertained soldiers on an airfield nearby at our impromptu dances. We knit socks and scarves for soldiers. Some left to work in Washington, replacing men."

She concluded, "The age of those times for me is of people working together for a cause. We weren't so self-absorbed. I believe those times gave us a sense of what is really important in life."

THIS WEEK: Religious symbols from rosaries to framed Arabic calligraphy play special roles in our lives. Tell us about a religious symbol that's important to you. E-mail ourspirit@freepress.com or call 313-222-1456.

about promoting peace to 300 local Muslims, Christians and Jews.

"But all of the interfaith efforts are underfunded. I hope this jewelry can help." Rosenberg smiles wistfully. "Wouldn't it be great if we're as wildly successful as Paul

Newman has been with his food?"

She says she will donate her profits to interfaith work and, if the jewelry is a success, she plans to organize a nonprofit group to handle the effort. "There's so much fear in the world today. We can't waste any more time."