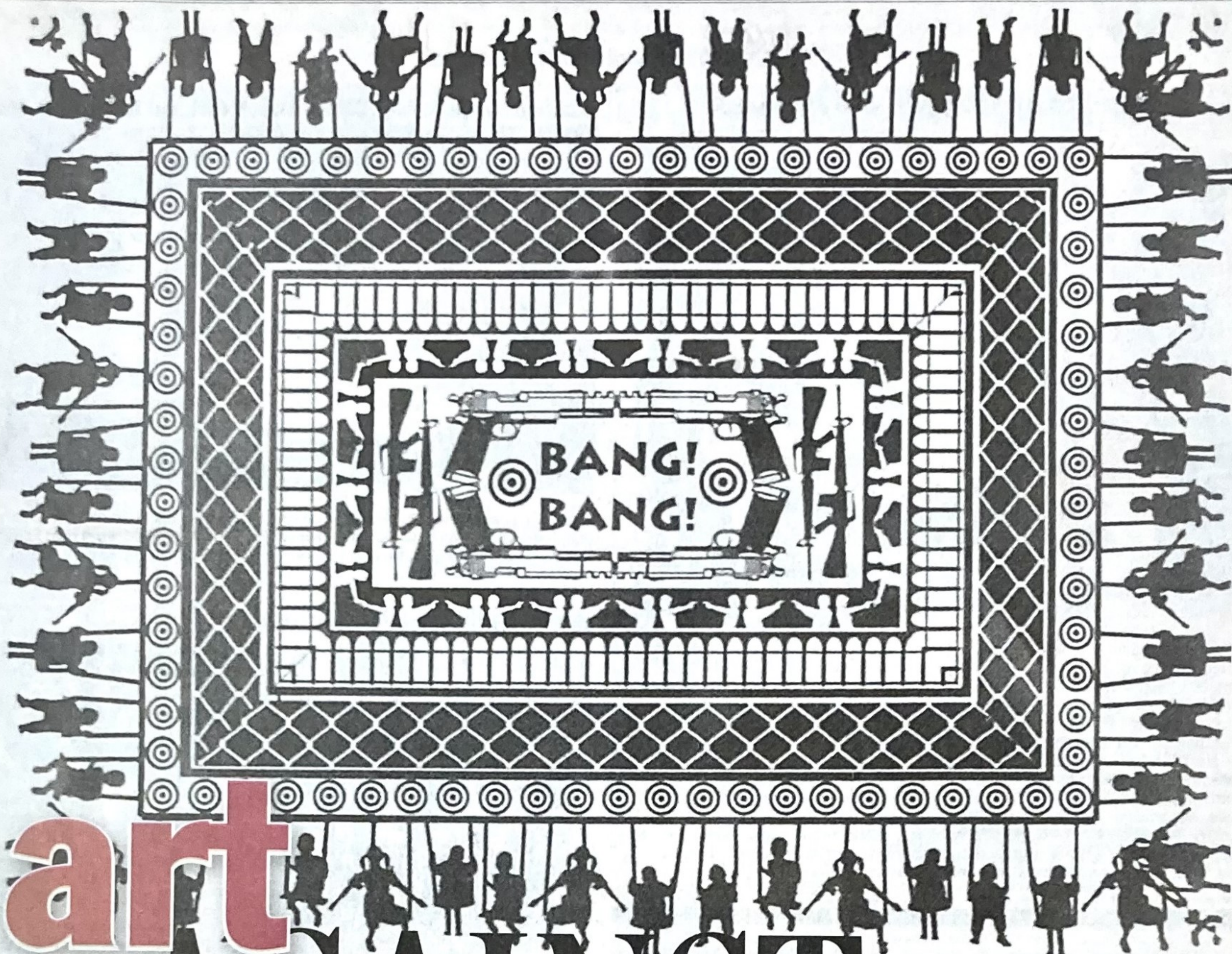


C VALLEY LIFE

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'Bang! Bang!' by Margi Weir

art AGAINST injustice

SURFACE TREATMENT

STC exhibit illustrates crimes against humanity

By Nancy Moyer
Special to The Monitor

What should the role of art in a society be? Richard Lubben, exhibit coordinator for the *Human Rights* art exhibit at South Texas College Cooper Center, believes it should enlighten the public to the many injustices and horrors found in our modern world. Appropriately, this exhibit helps to bring human rights issues into the public forum. An excellent exhibit, it will be on display for only a few more days.

"This year's juried exhibit received the most entries out of all of the previous shows," Lubben said, "and continues to address and question why and how many aspects of basic human rights are often denied to individuals or groups."

Because these artists are committed to fighting human rights abuses through their art, powerfully conceived images successfully create viewer empathy/reaction to a variety of horrific life situations.

For most of us, these abuses lie outside our normal vision. While we may have cursed the "injustice" of losing out to a perceived lesser opponent over some trivial award, the bigger picture often escapes us. Human rights abuses in

the news take on the same quality as a fictional story, but they're real.

"The Best of Show Award" went to Chicago artist, Fotios Zemenides, for his etching "Kierkegaard's Dilemma," which refers to our dilemma with disease.

"Physicians have the desire to heal," said Zemenides, "but they often lose their humanity because of the constraints of capitalism that dictate medical care. Ultimately, patients without adequate financial resources pay the price."

All the works in the show are outstanding, but three other works received special merit. A chilling painting, "Trap," by NYC artist Sudi Sharafshahi reminds us that countries under repressive regimes force women to submit to extreme denial of their rights and individual freedom. Black-clad figures, their faces nothing but bars, stand faceless; their hands held in prayer mimic men's neckties.

"Trafficked," a large dramatic painting by Lynn M. Randolph was informed by learning that her hometown Houston is one of the most frequently trafficked cities in this country.

"It all seems to happen in the dark," she pondered. "Even when it is discovered and there are arrests and busts, there are no images. It is invisible." She makes

it visible with her art. The open birdcage and hovering dove symbolize the spirits of the boxed, trafficked, girls — spirits that we must liberate.

Three-dimensional works include the book, "Human Rights? Justice?" by Ruth A. Keitz & Bobbette Morgan. This is a fascinating scrapbook containing a record of the executions at Huntsville. The ledger originally recorded the minutes from a 1940s church group before it was recycled by Jailer X from the Department of Criminal Justice. As he reread the reports of heinous crimes and the offenders' last statements, he questioned if those events were examples of justice, or simply human rights violations.

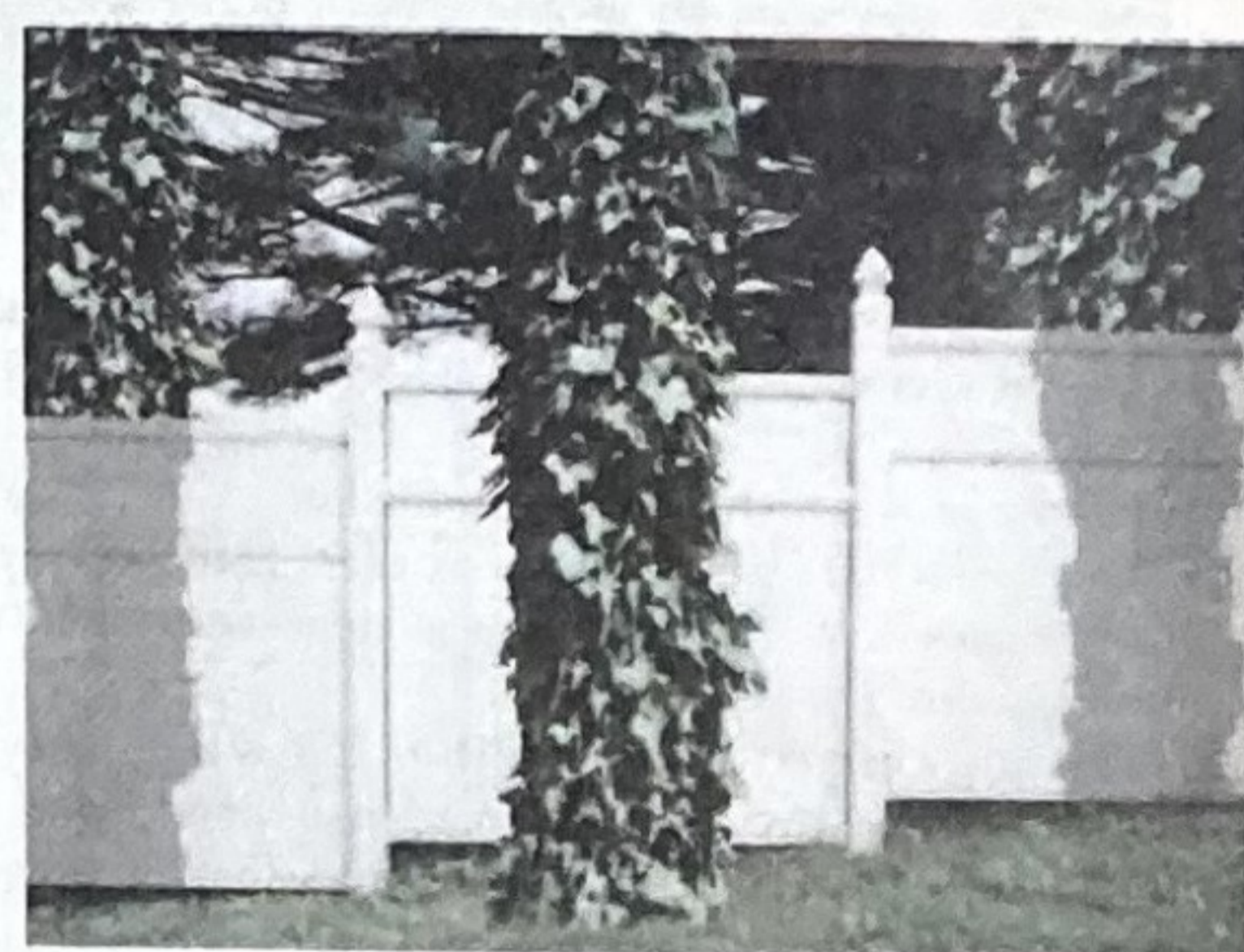
Zemenides ultimately summarized our contemporary moral quagmire with his statement: "Our treatment of one another and the environment is in desperate need of refinement as we are quickly making the world uninhabitable to us."

Human Rights art exhibit is a must-see. Take advantage of the late hours at Copper Center if you are a nine-to-five.

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'We are all Trayvon' by Denise Shaw



'Coming Out' by Keith Sharp



'Trafficked' by Lynn M. Randolph