

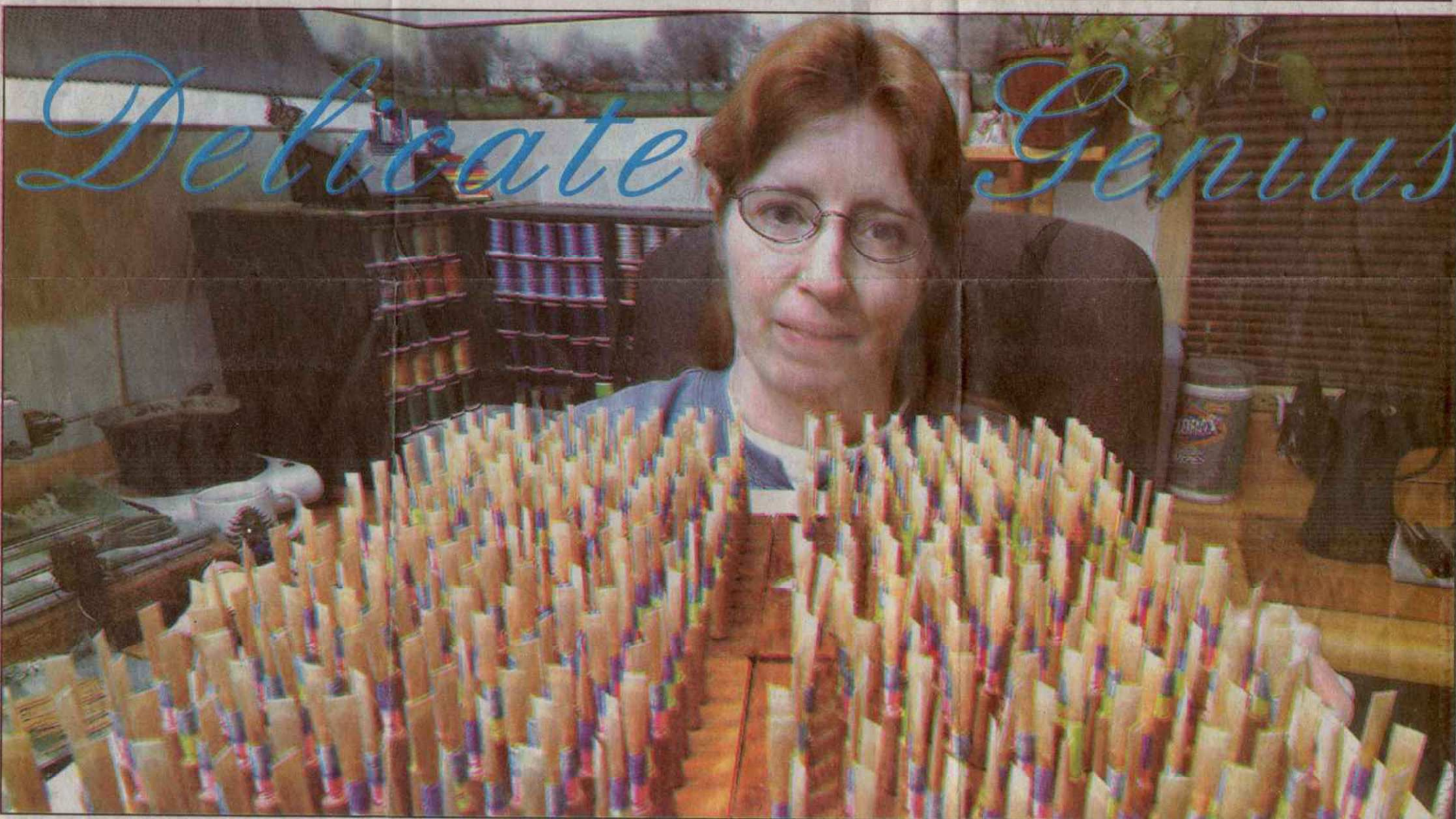
# Saturday

JANUARY 14, 2006



Celebrating a Mozart milestone  
Page C-7

C-1



*Delicate Genius*



## Kennedy woman shares talent with music world

By JACK BERGER

Karen Jordan cannot read a note of music or play any instrument, but she does contribute to the music world. She assembles roughly 2,700 oboe reeds nearly every week of the year, an estimated total of 140,000 reeds.

Her reeds go to young musicians in this country, from as far away as Japan and to young "wanna-be's" — whose feet hardly touch the floor, squeaking away during lessons in school. Professional musicians usually custom build their reeds.

Karen has experience plus with folding, assembling, winding and final lacquering her reeds since

**At top left, Jordan wears a leather-fingered glove to protect her first finger from the sharp winding cord she uses to attach the oboe reed to its base. At bottom left, A final coat of special lacquer is applied to seal the winding to the oboe reed.**

1992. Adding to those 14 years was her five years of employment at Edward Wadin's Marlin-Lesher Reeds Co. in Randolph.

When Wadin sold his business to Emerald Reeds in Port Townsend, Wash., she brought her machines (which are modified sewing machines) to her home in Kennedy where she set up a small 8-by-10-foot workplace and continued assembling those delicate oboe reeds.

She installed a large cornered work bench where, in her high-back swivel chair and like organists at their pipe organs, she can move swiftly from phase to phase in her assembly.

Her oboe tubes come from the Albuquerque with the special bamboo reed blanks from Emerald Reeds, that must be softened in hot water before assembly.

Sunday night is packing night, to get the 2,700 reeds ready to ship to the company Monday morning.

They are then cut back, individually tested and packaged for shipment to their distributors. The final

test comes when the student musicians' "fine-trim" their reeds to produce the sound they want. In short, the reed has to be of top quality and — it is.

A paradox to the Jordan family are Karen's two sons, both musicians; Kyle, 15, plays oboe and saxophone and his brother Travis, 12, plays trumpet and trombone. Both play in the band at Falconer Central School.

Not to be left out of the Jordan picture is her husband, Larry, an employee at the Jamestown Container Company, is the assistant homemaker, making his working wife's job a lot easier.

"I would not be doing this if I didn't enjoy it," Karen told *The Post-Journal*.

The next time you hear a symphony playing the distinct and beautiful "Bolero" by Maurice Revel, a masterpiece featuring "oboes and more, so-to-speak," think of this energetic woman from Kennedy and her contribution to the future musicians as well as those beginning small fries throughout the world.