



Arts Alive 2015 Series Coming Up

The Lehigh Valley Arts Council is pleased to announce the new line-up for the Arts Alive 2015 Series. These three events for members and their friends allow participants to rub shoulders with the creative process and to engage their minds and spirits.

On Saturday, February 7, 2015, “Curator’s Choice” introduces Elaine Mehalakes, the new vice president of community engagement at the Allentown Art Museum. Ms. Mehalakes will guide an informal discussion from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on works of art that she selected for their relevance to the collection and to the community. Ms. Mehalakes has extensive experience in curating and cataloguing; she previously worked at the Davis Museum and Cultural Center in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

“A Joyous Rehearsal” arrives with spring as guests are invited to attend a rehearsal of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem on Monday evening, April 20, 2015, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at the First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem. Visitors will preview the power and joy of the 108th Bethlehem Bach Festival as Artistic Director Greg Funfgeld welcomes the group prior to rehearsal and speaks about

how this century-old community chorus continues to remain relevant.

“Wood & Steel” is a tour of furniture designer and craftsman Bill Kreider’s studio on Saturday, June 20, 2015, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Inspired by unconventional and discarded items, often with historical context, Bill’s designs use contemporary lines to offset traditional materials. He has transformed garage door springs into a dining room table, a ship’s drive wheel into a coffee table, and perhaps most famously, Bethlehem Steel I-beams into bookcases. Come join Bill for a personal tour of his studio workspace, which is located in the old Pennsylvania Stage Company scene shop at 127 North Lumber Street in Allentown, and discover the artistry of turning industrial debris into true masterpieces.

Attendance is limited for these behind-the-scenes cultural tours to only twenty-five visitors at each event, so reserve your tickets soon at LVArtsBoxOffice.org. Light refreshments will be served at each event. Fees for each event are \$15 for Arts Council members, \$20 for nonmembers. Enjoy a special 33% discount if you buy tickets to all three events in the series (three tickets for the price of two).

Toward Greater Inclusion



The Arts Council is collaborating with the Lehigh Valley Partnership for a Disability Friendly Community to present Arts & Access, a yearlong celebration honoring the twenty-

fifth anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act through the lens of the arts. The celebration will launch on July 26, 2015, with a monthly series of arts events that will continue through June 2016 and highlight the accessibility and inclusiveness of the region’s

cultural community. Cultural nonprofits and individual artists are invited to participate by producing or presenting one of the following cultural events:

- A performance, screening, reading, or exhibition of work created and/or performed by artist(s) with a disability;
- An open-captioned (OC) and/or an audio-described (AD) performance or exhibition;
- An American Sign Language (ASL) performance or event;
- A performance or exhibition of work presented in a sensory-friendly environment for people with autism.

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Toward Greater Inclusion (continued)

In order to encourage participation and expand the capacity to reach new audiences with disabilities, the Arts Council is also offering marketing and financial support. Events will be promoted on a new web portal for cultural accessibility; the site will highlight Arts & Access participants and local customer service providers, and give links to state and national resources.

In addition, participants may apply for a Greater Inclusion Grant, a matching grant of up to \$300, to help fund a new initiative that meets the following criteria: 1) The event must occur during the time frame of July 2015 to June 2016; 2) Applicants must commit to providing customer service training to box office staff and volunteers (local agencies offer this training free-of-charge); 3) The event must satisfy the goal to raise awareness and foster dialogue about overcoming the challenges that exist for people with disabilities when participating in cultural events.

To request financial assistance for producing an event for Arts & Access, please visit LVArtsCouncil.org and download

an application. The deadline for submission of the application is May 1, 2015.

Support for Arts & Access is provided through the generosity of Premiere Sponsors Dexter F. Baker and Dorothy H. Baker Foundation and the County of Northampton.

Audio-Describer Training for the Performing Arts

As the Lehigh Valley Arts Council prepares for the twenty-fifth anniversary and yearlong celebration of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we are offering a two-day audio-description training workshop to the performing arts community. By becoming more disability-friendly, a cultural venue can also increase its capacity to attract a larger audience. Theatre practitioners from all walks of life—actors, students, volunteers—are invited to enroll in the upcoming audio-description training session and acquire new performance skills. The training also prepares performing arts groups to participate in the Arts & Access celebration and to receive recognition and promotion in the Lehigh Valley for creating a more inclusive region.

Audio description assists patrons who are blind or low-vision to access the visual elements of stage productions through live narration provided by trained describers. Patrons use headsets to hear the audio description.

The workshop will take place on February 20 and 21, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day, in the second floor conference room of the Butz Corporate Building at 840 Hamilton Street, Allentown.

The Arts Council has contracted Mimi Smith, executive director of VSA Pennsylvania, and Steve Smith to provide the training over the course of the two days. The Smiths have been describers for more than two decades, and are the founders of Amaryllys Theatre Co., a professional Philadelphia theatre that regularly includes artists with disabilities. They will introduce workshop participants to the foundational skills—*Observe, Analyze, Communicate*—necessary to audio describe a play.

Typically, this workshop would cost \$590. Thanks to the underwriting support of an anonymous donor, the Arts Council is able to offer it at a very reasonable price: \$50 per person.

The workshop also includes admission to an audio-described performance of *Dancing at Lughnasa* at DeSales University's Labuda Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday, February 19, 2015, at 8:00 p.m.

Stay tuned for information about an audio-describer training for the visual arts workshop coming in April 2015 and designed for museums and historical societies.

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Our Mission:

To promote the arts; to encourage and support artists and their development; to assist arts organizations; and to facilitate communication and cooperation among artists, arts organizations, and the community.



The Lehigh Valley Arts Council is a Pennsylvania Partner in the Arts, a program of the PCA.

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**THE
INSIDE
TRACK**

Marjorie L. Reppert celebrates the thirtieth anniversary

of Rosemary Remembrances II, her shop and small-works art gallery, in historic Jim Thorpe.

On Christmas evening, the **Bach Choir of Bethlehem's** 2014 Christmas Concert was broadcast by WWFM, the Classical Network, reaching thousands of listeners on the East Coast.

The Pennsylvania Playhouse celebrates its fiftieth anniversary season this January with its opening production of *The Foreigner*.



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**ONE
LAST
THOUGHT**

The recent commotion surrounding the off and on again screening of *The Interview* reminds us that freedom of expression is powerful, yet fragile, and we should not take it for granted.

I saw the movie with my family over the holiday; I admit I was curious about what made it dangerous. In many ways *The Interview* reminded me of the recent production of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* at Touchstone Theatre by the Hungarian theatre company Maladype. Jarry's play is considered a precursor to the Theatre of the Absurd and satirizes the ruthless pursuit of greed and abuse of authority. Interestingly, the first production of *Ubu Roi* in Paris on December 10, 1896, closed after one performance because of the audience's riotous response.

At their best, both productions were cartoons about media excess and chaos, irreverent and crude, and ran at a breakneck pace that defied reflection and caught you off guard with your own laughter. (There is nothing like bad taste to combat complacency.) More than a hundred years later—even in this rapid technological age—words and images still matter a great deal. They remain powerful means of human expression and require our constant vigilance to protect them.

Randall Forte

HAPPY NEW YEAR!