



The Lehigh Valley Arts Council and the Lehigh Valley Partnership for a Disability Friendly Community are teaming up to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Americans with

Disabilities Act through the lens of the arts. They are developing training opportunities for community volunteers and arts administrators, and offering support to designated cultural and arts programs that demonstrate commitment and inclusiveness. On July 26, 2015, a year-long celebration, Arts & Access, will commence with a series of arts events that highlight the accessibility of the region's cultural community.

The mission is "to engage all citizens of the Lehigh Valley, intentionally securing the participation of persons

of all abilities, regardless of physical, sensory, or cognitive limitation, both as audience members and/or providers in the dance, theatrical, musical, visual, literary, and media arts."

Planning for Arts & Access has been underway for the past eight months, and the scope of the celebration is designed to unite the entire community around creating a more inclusive region moving into the future. Arts & Access will impact tourism and economic development, as well as the quality of life for persons with disabilities and their families by:

- 1) Expanding cultural access to all people with disabilities.
- 2) Helping cultural nonprofits a) recognize the needs of persons with disabilities and the abilities of artists with disabilities; b) comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act; and c) build audiences for their events.

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Vacation All Year in the Valley

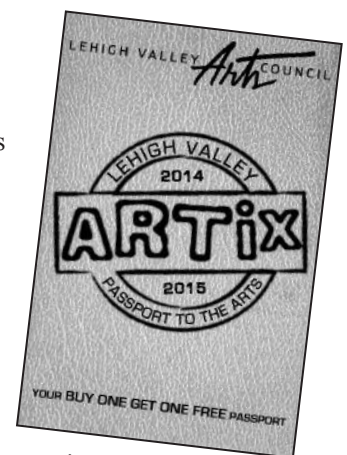
The Lehigh Valley Arts Council announces to the community the release of the new ARTix Passport to the Arts, a buy one, get one free ticket to twenty-four arts and cultural venues through June 30, 2015. Dance, musical, theatrical, and historical offerings are just some of the travel destinations offered by the passport.

"This year marks the sixteenth anniversary of this successful arts marketing promotion," says Randall Forte, Arts Council executive director. "The Lehigh Valley Arts Council is proud to provide regional leadership that advances the arts in this growing community."

ARTix is distributed to real estate and corporate relocation offices in order to introduce new residents to the variety of arts programming in the region. There is definitely something for everyone to enjoy—from symphonic to folk music, fine arts to vintage cars, Shakespeare to Broadway musicals—fun and entertainment for the entire family. Volunteers and staff at the Lehigh Valley Health Network also receive the passport, which promotes the arts as part of a healthy lifestyle.

ARTix is a value-added membership benefit. The Arts Council welcomes new members throughout the year; join today and receive your very own ARTix Passport to the Arts. With passport in hand, you can start planning a full year's itinerary to events at the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre, the Da Vinci Science Center, the Sigal Museum, Godfrey Daniels, the Lehigh Valley Zoo—and many more! Members also receive discounts to seminars, backstage cultural tours, and arts services; subscriptions to the bimonthly *Inside the Arts / Arts Calendar* and to *Lehigh Valley Style*; and free admission to the annual spring and fall membership receptions.

Visit www.LVArtsCouncil.org to sign up for membership.



ARTS COUNCIL MATTERS

Arts & Access *(continued)*

- 3) Promoting the benefits of inclusion by telling the stories of how engagement in the arts is transformative.

“It’s time to lead,” says Arts Council Executive Director Randall Forte, “and use the power of the arts to increase everyone’s comfort level with accessibility.”

BACKGROUND:

Since 2011, the Lehigh Valley Arts Council has been managing the Pennsylvania Arts Accessibility Program (PAAP) in the Lehigh Valley with the guidance of VSA-PA, the Center for Vision Loss, the LV Center for Independent Living, cultural groups, and individuals with disabilities. PAAP offers visual- and hearing-impaired individuals greater access to cultural events by providing nonprofit arts groups with training, marketing support, and shared use of audio-description and open-captioning equipment. Open captioning provides the audience with an electronic text

display to the side of the stage, displaying lyrics, dialogue, and sound effects in real time. Audio description is a form of audio-visual translation using natural pauses to insert narrative that translates the visual image into an audible form. Patrons use headsets to hear the audio description.

In cooperation with the Lehigh Valley Health Network, the Arts Council hosted a community discussion on accessibility at the Mack Boulevard campus on November 21, 2013. Featured guest Betty Siegel, Director of Accessibility at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, outlined the importance of embracing accessibility as a community asset and a core value of customer service. At the close of the session, fifty-five attendees were invited to participate in the planning for the anniversary.

The Partnership is a diverse network of people and agencies united in the goal to improve the lives of people with disabilities in our community. Since 2010, the Partnership has been working to improve community awareness and advocacy, and transportation and housing access.

“People with disabilities are a large and growing market, with \$175 billion in discretionary spending.”

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, *Expanding your Market... Customers with Disabilities*.

NEED:

According to U.S. Census data estimates from 2012, the number of non-institutionalized people with disabilities living in the Lehigh Valley is 81,000, or 12.7%, which represents a significant number of potential new audiences for the cultural community.

Both the Arts Council and the Partnership have been engaging their constituents in assessing challenges and measuring their capacity to meet those challenges. The first step was to conduct an audit of current accessibility practices in the region in order to identify how to assist cultural nonprofits in complying with the ADA. Sixty social service agencies and 110 cultural nonprofits were invited to participate; approximately 50% of each group responded and the results show a significant need to provide training to staff and volunteers and build more awareness of the challenges and barriers that exist for people with disabilities when they participate in cultural events.

The surveys also indicate that the majority of cultural nonprofits offer wheelchair accessibility and accessible parking and restrooms. However, less than 13% of the groups offer open captioning, sign language interpreters, audio description, and Braille printed materials. Only 16.7% offer large print brochures; and 29% offer assistive listening devices.

The Planning Committee meets on the first Monday of the month, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the second floor conference room in the Butz Corporate Building. Interested citizens are invited to attend the next meeting on Monday, July 7; call 610-437-5915 to RSVP.

Inside the Arts is a bimonthly publication of the Lehigh Valley Arts Council, 840 Hamilton St., Suite 201, Allentown, PA 18101.

Editor-in-Chief: Randall Forte

Call for submission guidelines. News items must be received by the fifth of the month preceding publication.

Phone: (610) 437-5915

E-mail: info@LVArtsCouncil.org

Fax: (610) 437-5259

Website: www.LVArtsCouncil.org

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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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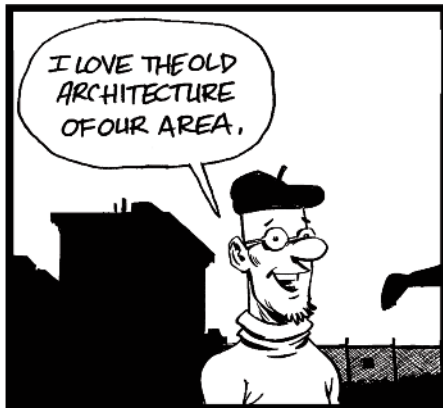
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THE INSIDE TRACK

Stewartsville, New Jersey, professional plein-air painter **John Stinger** recently was

named the winner for his acrylic painting, *Ft. Frederica Shadows—St. Simons*, which was executed on the Georgia coast.

The **Arts at St. John's** announces the release of *Platinum*, a new CD recording by Stephen Williams on the organ of St. John's Lutheran Church in Allentown. This recording has the same program that was played when the organ was dedicated in November 1993 and includes the music of Bach, Mendelssohn, Franck, Sor, Whitlock, Sowerby, and others.

Dr. Christine Oaklander has written an article on Jonathan Sturges, NYC businessman, art collector, and patron to Hudson River School artists Asher B. Durand and Thomas Cole. The piece will appear in the fall issue of *The Archives of American Art Journal*, Smithsonian Institution.



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ONE LAST THOUGHT

Thank you to our members who sent congratulations or attended our twenty-fifth anniversary reception, Put Yourself on the Map, on May 28.

One-hundred and sixty people celebrated the promise of a new cultural horizon as we looked out on the vista of the Lehigh Valley from the new Two City Center Building in downtown Allentown.

Four prominent cultural leaders were recognized for their vision and for taking their organizations in new directions: Greg Funfgeld, Artistic Director and Conductor, and Bridget George, Executive Director, of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem; Ellis Finger, Director of Williams Center for the Arts, Lafayette College; and David Mickenberg, President & CEO of the Allentown Art Museum.

The arts map our future.

Randall Forte