



Whose Business Is the Arts?

On Thursday, June 7, 2012, the Lehigh Valley Arts Council and the Lehigh Valley Partnership will once again cosponsor the public forum “Whose Business is the Arts?” and release the findings of the recent economic impact study of the region’s nonprofit arts industry. Once every five years, the region’s leadership comes together to gather the data and examine the relevance of the results as they relate to the state of the arts, economy, and quality of life in the region. Stimulating a dialogue to promote entrepreneurship and sustainability in the nonprofit arts sector is the goal of this unique Lehigh Valley forum.

The Arts Council submitted data from ninety-one arts and cultural organizations to the Americans for the Arts for analysis as part of its national study, “Arts & Economic Prosperity IV.” Preliminary data indicate that the growth of the arts in the Lehigh Valley region continues to outpace the national average. Given the recent economic downturn, however, and the erosion of the old subsidy model whereby nonprofits relied on 50% or more in unearned income, issues of saturation and sustainability have replaced expansionism and urban revitalization as priority concerns.

Dr. Roland Kushner, professor of business, Muhlenberg College, will present and interpret the economic data. Ben Cameron, program director for the arts at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation where he supervises a \$13.125 million grants program for arts organizations and artists, will deliver the keynote address and speak about national trends. Todd Watkins, executive director of the Baker Institute for Entrepreneurship, Creativity, and Innovation at Lehigh University, will facilitate a break-out session that explores nonprofit entrepreneurship. The forum will take place at DeSales University Center on the Center Valley campus from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Fees: \$30/members; \$50/nonmembers. Register online at www.LVArtsCouncil.org.

The Arts Council gives special acknowledgement to the following organizations for their support of the forum: Dexter F. & Dorothy H. Baker Foundation; County of Lehigh; County of Northampton; Crayola; Discover Lehigh Valley; Harry C. Trexler Trust; Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation; Lehigh Valley Partnership; PA Council on the Arts; PPL; and Sylvia Perkin Perpetual Charitable Trust.

Get 'Em While They're... HOT DOG!



How much fun is this! The Arts Council sold John Gaydos’s original *Hot Dog* acrylic painting for \$1,300 (unframed) at our auction fund-raiser this past fall. Now you can get a limited-edition print for Dad for Father’s Day or for his birthday.

We have commissioned a printing of 150 signed and numbered serigraphs that are available for \$125 each, unframed (22" wide by 23" high), plus tax. There are also 15 signed and numbered unframed artist proofs available for \$150 each plus tax. Shipping is FREE within the continental United States.

The serigraph features the famous Yocco’s hot dog, a staple in the Lehigh Valley for over eighty years, and is truly a piece of collectible fine art; each print is individually hand-screened eleven times to attain the purity of the color separations.

Special framing offer: We’ve made arrangements with Boulevard Frame & Art for a mat and frame perfect for this print at \$115 plus tax.

Visit www.LVArtsCouncil.org to order your print today.

ARTS COUNCIL MATTERS

Increasing Visibility for Our Members—It's Blog Time

Showcasing Arts Council members has been an ongoing tradition in this newsletter. Now we're ready to give our members a broader stage and a more sweeping reach. On September 1, 2012, the Arts Council Voices section (page 3) and the Membership Profile section (page 4) will bid farewell to the printed page and move to our new online blog, "Inside Lehigh Valley Arts."

Online, these pages will continue to feature articles dedicated to covering the passion and style of selected individuals and organizations in the arts community. The "Why I Do What I Do" essay will preserve its format in which members explain the reasons why they are motivated to participate in the arts. The Membership Profile article will, as always, introduce members who have made a significant contribution to the arts in the Lehigh Valley. And, the "Featured Artist's Statement" will maintain its tradition of giving the artists who exhibit their artwork in the Arts Council office the opportunity to discuss, in their own words, their craft and their approach to their work.

The arts must be visible—so that artists may share their work with us, enrich our lives, bring us joy, and inspire our own creativity. With our online blog, we now have a social media platform that can give the Lehigh Valley art scene greater exposure. We can add links within each post to a member's website, to gallery showings, and to performances. We can also include any number of images in color and/or black and white.

In addition, a blog allows us to give our readers a simple way to share what they see with their own followers. They can read a post and pass it along through Twitter, Facebook, and other social media sites. The more eyes that read the post, the more exposure the arts community receives.

As your Arts Council, part of our mission is to "promote the arts, to encourage and support artists and their development..." What better way to do that than by using social media and especially our blog.

Please visit the blog, <http://lvartscouncil.wordpress.com>, and subscribe. That way you'll get an e-mail each time we put up a post. You also will be able to comment on what you read and see, make suggestions, and lend your support. We look forward to hearing from you.

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

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

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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.

Growing Up Artfully Awards



The Lehigh Valley Arts Council will present the Linny Fowler Growing Up Artfully Awards for Excellence in Arts Education at its spring 2012 arts-in-education workshop and Arts Council member reception at Penn State Lehigh Valley on May 10. This year, the awards are whimsical copper sculptures created by local artist Douglas R. Ihlenfeld.

The purpose of the awards is to encourage individual expression through accomplished technique, and to recognize long standing K-12 programs that bring high-quality arts experiences to our students and our community. The awards have evolved over time to serve students, their teachers, their families, and their communities. The reception begins at 6:00 p.m. and is FREE to members. RSVP to info@lvartscouncil.org.

Why I Do What I Do by Greg White



My high school ceramics/philosophy teacher, Mr. Bob Blanchard, told me, “You could do this for a living.” He was encouraging me to enroll in the Arts Academy program at William Allen High School. Stubbornly, I opted out in lieu of calculus, anatomy, and physiology, etc. His early-bird class made a serious impact on me though, and it’s funny that I am now making a living as a ceramist/sculptor. As a kid, art was like playing, something I loved to do, and not something I wanted to do when I grew up. I wanted to do a lot of crazy things, yet I’ve always made stuff. Now, being a professional is about refining my technique daily in pursuit of a very particular, and yet sometimes ubiquitous, aesthetic. After all the hard work, I still love opening the kiln. Taking time to inspect the smallest, most beautiful details is something that gets me out of bed in the morning. It’s my addiction: the thrill of discovery.

I’ll have an idea, a spark, and then imagine how I can create such a thing. The process of physically making something from nothing is different from simply imagining it. Along the way, I have cursed at my materials. Sometimes, I want to make something a certain way, my way. That’s an ego thing, I think. What I want to happen isn’t always what happens though.

I’m increasingly interested in anomalous precipitations and their fluid evolution in the continuum of possibility. Things happen especially in the kiln, “gifts from the kiln god,” like an unexpected drip from the shelf above. Late at night when the studio is so quiet, there is something primitive about it, like man in a cave with fire. After so many nights, I’ve developed a relationship with clay. I’ve watched to see what it can do, and what it wants to be. Getting to know my kiln, through five hundred firings and four rebuilds, has been educational, too.

I enjoy the pursuit of knowledge and learning by doing. For the past seven years, I’ve been an artist-in-residence at Tobin Studios. Gratitude is what I feel, since I’ve had the benefit of learning from two living-masters, Densaburou Oku and Steve Tobin. (They can still beat me in a game of ping pong.)

Densaburou Oku has taught me about flavor, in terms of a Japanese aesthetic: wabi sabi and the beauty of imperfection and evidence of process. He once said, “Make like sushi. Don’t touch so much.”

My mentor Steve Tobin has encouraged my career and shown me a bigger picture. It’s been a wild ride: Pouring bronze, constructing, and delivering the Trinity Root 9/11 Memorial to New York City; the night before the installation, I camped out at Wall Street and Broadway with a military guard about fifteen feet away. Another memorable time was installing a 20-foot painting by Tobin at the OK Harris gallery in New York City. The gallery was replacing its backdoors because they had been vandalized so many times. My friend John and I got the idea to make a painting with the actual doors, which had just been hauled away as trash. We chased those doors all the way to Saddle River, New Jersey. I’ve gotten the kind of education that you just can’t buy anywhere. It’s changed the way I see.

For me, art is language with the capacity to engage people and share what I see. It’s an honest way to make a living. The American Concern for Artistry and Craftsmanship has invited me to participate in its show at Lincoln Center this June. I’ll be there, selling my porcelain cups and sculpture. Plus, if the modern world falls apart, I can still fire ceramics in kilns.

Featured Artist’s Statement James Doddy

James Doddy’s work is on display at the Arts Council office and on our website, www.LVArtsCouncil.org, during May and June.

I constantly search for subjects that evoke my emotions. I produce numerous detailed notes and sketches (pencil and watercolor) on-site to help keep the atmosphere and topographical analyses fresh in my mind. Next, I render several small color and light comprehensive studies in my studio to aid in my final painting decisions. Atmosphere truly gives the viewer a real sense of the time of day, location, and the artist’s emotion for creating an awesome painting. Lastly, all the diligence and fortitude come to fruition in executing the final painting.



For me, painting is both technical and individual, and much of the joy I encounter in my paintings lies in the individual strokes I create and in sharing my personal experiences at the moment when emotion, revelation, and technique unite.

MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Pennsylvania Playhouse: Driven by Passion

by Randall Forte

I recently sat down with Pennsylvania Playhouse Board President Ralph Montesano to discuss the behind-the-scenes operations of this very busy community theatre. His personal involvement reflects the commitment and passion that drive the organization. Since 2002, Ralph has directed eight times, acted in twelve productions, and served on the production staff for two dozen shows. He is currently serving his second year as president of the board.

The PA Playhouse is one of the region's oldest and most successful arts organizations. To what do you attribute its longevity?

The Pennsylvania Playhouse has been around since more than twenty years before its incorporation in 1946. I believe the playhouse exists because of the people who are passionate about its mission. Our success is a tribute to the boards and members who have sunk their time, money, and sweat into what we call our second home. It is my opinion that the biggest formula for the success of the playhouse is the ability of anyone to walk through our doors and do whatever they might like to do—act, direct, and even administrate!

How are you able to ensure continuity and plan for the future?

One of the most outstanding attributes about the playhouse is the mix of seasoned theatre folk and progressive young people who get involved. This mix allows us to be open to new and innovative ideas, yet benefit from those who have experienced the ups and downs of running a theatre company.

I understand the PA Playhouse is almost entirely run by volunteers. How is it governed?

The playhouse is a volunteer organization with a fifteen-member board of directors. The board is made up of the executive positions of president, vice president, treasurer, recording secretary, and financial secretary; board members also serve as coordinators in the areas of education, development, production, publicity, membership, technical, front of house, outreach, and building operations. We do employ two box office personnel on an independent contract basis.

What is the production schedule for the theatre?

Our production schedule includes six regular season shows following a formula of comedy, popular musical, drama, family musical, cutting-edge musical/play, and a Christmas show. Recent additions include an Original Artists Series to highlight local playwrights and give them an opportunity to premiere their work; a Cabaret Series to bring a high-energy night of song to our stage; and One Night Only performances of local talent. We also, from time to time, add a children's show where we can highlight our

young talent. (Most of the children performing come out of our Young Actors Studio, a two-week theatre camp run in two sessions during the summer to give local youth an opportunity to learn all aspects of performance.)

What kind of growth have you seen with your audiences?

We seem to have a very loyal audience that is receptive to our choice of productions. I would say that we have seen an increase in attendance not only because of our productions, but also because the Lehigh Valley is a wonderfully theatre-savvy community. Another important draw in the Valley is the ability to highlight some of the best local talent at a reasonable price for a night out—a very important point in our struggling economy!



Ralph Montesano directs *White Christmas* with Nancy Broadbent.

In your opinion, what is the most exciting opportunity coming up?

Wow...I struggle with this question because I find it exciting everyday when I sit with members of our board to look over and plan for the future of the playhouse. We are entering into a couple of projects that will enhance the space at the playhouse, including the total renovation of our green-room rehearsal space and the replacing of our stage (both scheduled to be completed by this time next year). If I had to nail it down, I'd say the most exciting opportunity, for any member of the playhouse family, is that when we open the front doors, we never know who might be walking through—an old friend coming back to perform or view a production, or new friends, wide-eyed with talent and fresh vision.

You can find out more about the Pennsylvania Playhouse by visiting its website at www.paplayhouse.org or by stopping by on Illicks Mill Road in Bethlehem.

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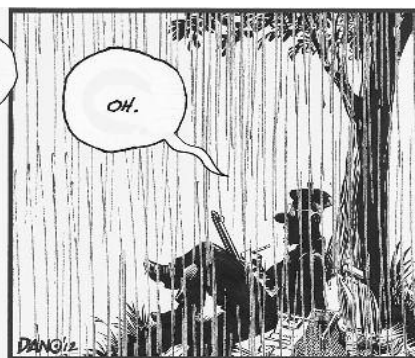
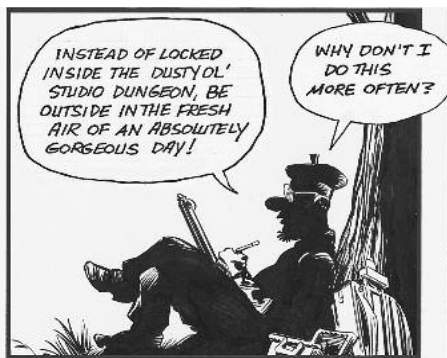
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THE INSIDE TRACK

Kudos to painter **Jacqueline Meyerson** for receiving an honorable mention from the

Pastel Journal's Pastel 100 Competition for her painting *Flags of Our Fathers*. A limited-edition print of the work has been gifted by the artist to the Arts Council and is on display at the office.

SATORI artistic director, flutist, and shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute) performer Nora Suggs recently performed at the New York Flute Fair in Manhattan, and at Mansfield Univ. in Mansfield, PA.

Ted Hallman's fiber sculpture *The Inner Tree* is showing in the Secret Garden exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art through July 2012.

Michael Barnett's ode "For Margaret Fuller," which celebrates the first American woman reporter, has been published on the website of the Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society.

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ONE LAST THOUGHT

Grants Workshops Coming Up

Individual artists, arts organizations, and community groups are invited to apply for PA Partners in the Arts Project Stream Grant funding in support of arts projects and activities that benefit local communities and under-served audiences in Lehigh, Carbon, and Northampton counties. All projects must occur between September 1, 2012, and August 31, 2013; and the deadline for submission of the grant application is June 29, 2012.

Free grant workshops will be held from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. on May 15 at the Lehigh Valley Arts Council, 840 Hamilton Street, Allentown, and on May 17 at the Sigal Museum, 342 Northampton Street, Easton. Please RSVP to ppa@lvartscouncil.org.

Randall Forte