



Tuesday, October 23, 2007

A Local Welcome to the “Gateway to Creativity”

“We’re so glad you’re here!” Those are the words of Army veteran Jeff Rinehart of Woodson Terrace, Mo., one of the two

local veterans attending this week’s program who are thrilled to welcome fellow participants to their hometown. It has been that kind of enthusiasm about hosting the 2007 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival that has brought the event back to St. Louis after 18 years.

The host city’s reputation for being a well known sports town belies the fact that the people of St. Louis also have a deep appreciation for the arts.

Rinehart, 55, a performer who is attending the Festival for the first time this year, believes that coming to this week’s event is a great way for participants to discover the extensive talent in St. Louis. “Back in the 1800s, St. Louis was a main entertainment center for the country, and now it will become a focal point of veterans’ talent this year,” Rinehart said.



Jeff Rinehart

Rinehart won high honors in the national drama competition in the solo comedy category. He will open the show on Sunday in this year’s stage production, doing his own special impersonation of Mark Twain. (If you attended the Opening Ceremonies last night, you caught an early preview of his talents.)

Wayne Valentine, a 45-year-old Marine Corps veteran, agrees about the abundance of talent in the St. Louis area. “It’s great to have the Festival here because it will shine a spotlight on how much talent there is in St. Louis,” he said.

Valentine appreciates that the people of St. Louis tend to be very straightforward and always give him honest feedback about his music.



The *Gateway to the West* is symbolized by the famous Gateway Arch located in downtown St. Louis.

Valentine won first place in the national music competition in the original instrumental category. In this year’s stage show, Valentine will perform, on the piano, a piece he wrote when he was 15 entitled, “Melodies.”

“I entered the Festival because I wanted the opportunity to entertain people with my work,” said Valentine. He will be able to do just that in front of a hometown audience this weekend.

Employees at the local VA Medical Center are also thrilled to host this year’s Creative Arts Festival. Some key organizers say that this week will be a memorable one for all participants. “Missouri is called the ‘Show Me’ state, and hopefully after the week we have in store for you, you will see why,” said Maura Campbell, co-chair of the public affairs committee. “We hope you enjoy it as much as we’ve enjoyed planning it for you.”

Other staff members agree. One is Karen Waite, Visual Arts Coordinator who served on the local organizing committee for the event. “There is literally something for everyone in St. Louis. This is a great place for our veterans to visit — and still be able to leave with their pocketbooks intact!”

Rinehart, Valentine and all of the local VA Medical Center staff and volunteers are excited to be sharing the “*Gateway to Creativity*” with you. Have fun this week!



Wayne Valentine



How to Sing Better – Instantly!



All of us have to sing at some point, even if it's just a simple 'Happy Birthday.' Use these easy tips and techniques to improve both your voice and your confidence.

1. Keep your arms slightly away from your body. Clasp your hands out in front of you or bring your arms to your sides and a bit forward, raising them about six inches in a flexible, relaxed fashion. This will allow your ribcage to fully expand and your lungs to fill to capacity. More air allows you to project your voice more strongly and clearly.
2. Keep your feet about shoulders' width apart. If you like, one foot can be further forward than the other. Make sure you're solidly balanced, but still flexible. Slightly bend your knees. If you must sing while sitting, make sure both feet are flat on the floor and that you're sitting up straight, but not stiffly.
3. Relax! Tension destroys vocal tone. Try not to let your shoulders hunch up and keep your neck from tensing. Don't force your chest out and up when you breathe in. This will actually constrict your air flow. Stay in motion, however slightly. This will relax your body and your tone

will sound more natural. Try gently swaying from side to side with the rhythm. (You'll look better, too!)

4. When you inhale, push your stomach out. This will allow you to more completely fill your lungs. As you exhale, bring your stomach slowly in, using the muscles of your diaphragm (which is just under your ribcage) to control your notes.
5. If you have to hit a high note or you hear yourself singing flat (that is, your notes are a tiny bit too low), raise your arms a little higher and smile slightly. For very high notes, try closing your eyes and turning your face up slightly.
6. Conversely, if you start to sing sharp (a tiny bit too high), bring your arms down a little lower and open your mouth slightly wider by dropping your lower jaw. Don't dip your chin toward your neck, however, as this will cause your air flow to become constricted and that will show up in your voice.
7. Enjoy yourself! This is the most important tip of all.



Artist Interaction Session Held Today

The Artist Interaction Session is an annual Festival activity, where our visual artists to share their stories, describe their artwork, explain the concept behind their visions and tell



the artists' early morning photo sessions.

more about how they created their award-winning pieces. Family, friends, local media, volunteers and VA staff will all be there to view the award-winning artwork and enjoy the inspiration. The media is also invited to participate during

This year's Artist Interaction Session will be held today in the Renaissance Ballroom on the 12th floor of the hotel. Beginning at 8:30 a.m., Teams I and II will assemble by their artwork for photos. Teams III and IV are asked to arrive for their photos at 9 a.m. Following photos and media interviews, the formal slide and oral presentation will begin where all of the artists describe their work for up to five minutes. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet our talented visual artists and listen to them tell you all about their stunning and inspirational pieces. The interaction session ends right before lunchtime at noon.





SHOW ME STATE

Missouri: The Show Me State

This most widely recognized nickname for the state of Missouri is not a new one, and was actually being used in the late 1890s. It's not known exactly where or how this nickname originated.

The most popular story revolves around remarks made by U.S. Congressman Willard Duncan Vandiver. A scholar, writer and lecturer, Vandiver, who had a passing resemblance to Mark Twain, was speaking to Philadelphia's Five O'Clock Club. Questioning the accuracy of an earlier speaker's remarks, he concluded "I come from a state that raises corn and cotton and cackleburs and Democrats, and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me."

Another story is that the nickname originated as a derogatory reference to Missouri miners working in Leadville, Colorado. During the Colorado miner's strike, men from Joplin, Missouri were brought in to work the mines. It is said that the Missouri workers, unfamiliar

with Colorado mining methods, required frequent instructions from the pit bosses. "That man is from Missouri. You'll have to show him!"

Another legend indicates that the name originated on passenger trains. Around 1897, hundreds of free train passes were given to Missouri legislators. The conductors, when told that a free pass was being used, would say "You've got to show me."

Yet another story centers around soldiers stationed at Chickamauga Park in Tennessee in 1898 at the start of the Spanish-American War. It is said that the gate guards were from St. Louis, Missouri and that any soldier wanting to leave the encampment to go to town was required to "show" the guards a pass.

Regardless of its origin, the nickname has stuck and can be found today on Missouri license plates. It has come to represent Missourians as stalwart, perhaps somewhat stubborn and with a dedication to common sense. (If you don't believe that's true, I'm sure they can show you.)

Auditions Held Today!

Sign-up and rehearsal for audition solos and narrations will be held today from 4 – 5:30 p.m. on the first floor of the hotel, in Gatwick A & B, Heathrow A, and Lambert A & B. Auditions will break for dinner at 5:30 p.m. and resume at 7:30 p.m. Though the stage show may seem far away, it will be here before you know it. There is much to prepare for and many exciting opportunities for those who love the spotlight. The following is a list of narrators, soloists and actors needed for a variety of parts this year:



- A soloist to accompany a veteran's dance performance.
- Three vocal soloists and three narrators are needed for the popular Veterans piece.
- Two vocal soloists to sing the first two verses of the song "Hero."
- "Come Shine Your Light America," a Festival favorite, needs six vocal soloists.

- A change from last year, the "Star Spangled Banner" solos will be sung by a small ensemble.
- Two narrators are needed to read throughout a video segment during the show.
- During the show, we will have a small opera scene and need a number of veterans to portray village people during the piece "Toreador" from the opera Carmen.
- Five flag bearers are needed for the stirring performance of "A Salute to American Service."

The show is sure to be more enjoyable the more you participate. Please take the opportunity to audition for one of these extra parts.

The names of those selected for solos, narrations and other roles will be posted early tomorrow morning. Break a leg!



Founded in 1859, the Missouri Botanical Garden, one of the oldest botanical institutions in the United States, is a national historic landmark.

The Botanical Gardens include a number of different, smaller gardens, including a Chinese garden, a Japanese strolling garden, a camellias conservatory house, a sculpture garden, a geodesic-domed rainforest greenhouse, a hedge maze, a home-gardening resource center, a Victorian garden, an English woodland garden, and even a scented garden for the delight of the visually impaired.

The stunning Climatron conservatory covers more than a half-acre, housing 1,200 species of plants in a natural, tropical setting. Visitors enjoy bananas, cacao, and coffee trees, plus a collection of orchids and epiphytes. The Climatron is also home to a variety of animals, including tropical birds. Several pools and waterfalls give a sense of lushness, as if visitors were within a true tropical rainforest.



Climatron conservatory at the Missouri Botanical Garden

Our artists will enjoy the “Chapungu: Nature, Man and Myth” exhibit at the garden. Animals, families, and creatures of legend spring to life in the monumental hand-carved sculptures from Zimbabwe. Carved from opal stone, cobalt, and springstone, the statues depict their African creators’ traditional close bond to nature and the environment.

Artists will be visiting this popular attraction this afternoon, where there will be plenty of great sketching and photo opportunities. Buses board at 1:30 p.m.

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Statistics

- Males: 93
- Females: 22
- Artists: 39
- Performers: 76
- Youngest Male: Randy Johnson, 23
(combat-wounded OIF veteran)
- Youngest Female: Rachael Booth, 26
- Oldest Male: Raymond H. Ross, 84 (WWII veteran)
- Oldest Female: Ingrid de Baintner, 62

Branch of Service

- Army: 63
- Navy: 23
- Marine Corps: 15
- Air Force: 16
- Coast Guard: 1
- National Guard: 4
- Multiple Branches: 7

Periods of Service

- World War II: 3
- Korean War: 1
- Vietnam: 27
- Gulf War: 6
- Grenada: 1
- Iraq: 2
- Other Wars or Conflicts: 2



Military Combat Experience Presentations

The artwork submitted this year by veterans who experienced combat duty during World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, the Gulf War, or current combat operations will be presented tonight from 7:30 till 8:30 p.m. in the Renaissance Ballroom on the 12th floor.

The artwork, using fine or applied art media, relates to each veteran’s personal experience in that war or conflict. A narrative explaining how the art relates to the veteran’s wartime experience, composed by the veteran or his VA therapist, will be shared with the audience.

This is always a moving presentation, so please stop in.





Veteran Lana Gillaspie from Knoxville, Iowa, receives her Festival meal ticket from Mary Schilgman and Amy Pawlitschek.



Kent Lent from Syracuse, N.Y., poses for his registration photo taken by Connie Young.



Leayle "Al" Todman from Bronx, N.Y., and Laurance Fleming also from Bronx check in with Katy Ryan.



Bob Treanor from Hastings, Minn., shows his award winning grin while waiting in line to register.



Festival participants unload their suitcases and carry-on bags at the Renaissance Hotel after flying into St. Louis for the week.

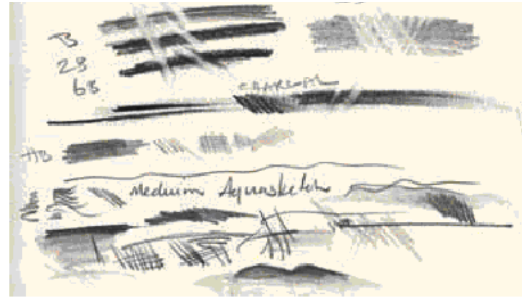




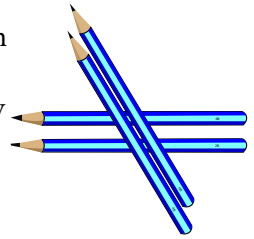
Get to Know Your Materials

To start or reacquaint yourself with drawing and sketching, all you need is some sketch paper (why not get a sketchbook just for lessons and practice?) and a B pencil.

Use a page of your sketchbook and have a scribble! Try making round loopy marks, ziz-zags, light lines and heavy dark lines. Or, try shading from light to dark and back again. Use all of your pencils and pens. Make some different marks and then drag your eraser across them. Which pencils erase well? Which smudge? It can be handy to make a note of which pencil makes which mark. Your page might look something like this:



Great! You are on your way to becoming an artist. Experimenting with materials is something all artists do – you will get to know how each medium behaves when it is just on a piece of sketch paper, not half-way through a major piece. Happy accidents are often the inspiration for really great works of art!



Cloudy
(40% Chance of Rain)
High 63°
Low 47°



Veterans History Project (VHP) Interviews will take place all week (through Saturday) in the VHP taping room (in the Gateway Room on the first floor of the hotel). Artists, performers and veteran staff members or volunteers may be interviewed today, from 8 a.m. – noon and again from 1 – 5 p.m. Take advantage of your free time and sign up for your interview with Butch Miller in the VHP taping room. This historic project honors our nation's veterans by creating a lasting legacy of their military experience. Regardless of branch or period of service, age, military career or experience, all veterans are invited to share it with our VHP program staff this week at the Festival and help make history! Veterans' interviews will be taped and given to the Library of Congress. Each participant will also receive a special VHP tote bag, a DVD copy of their interview and a VHP Challenge Coin. Interviews will take place through Friday at the same times and location and on Saturday from 10 a.m. - noon. Sign up soon!

NVCFAF Web site
www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov

Share the Festival experience with friends and family by providing them with the Festival Web site address – www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov. There, they will be able to check out daily editions of the *ArtsGram* (on the main home page) and read individual news releases and photos, located on the *Participant Information* tab. The *Art Gallery* tab displays photos of our artists' winning entries.

F or Y our I nfo

Hospitality

The hospitality room volunteers are ready to welcome you with warm smiles and a variety of snacks and refreshments. All hospitality room locations are on the 12th floor of the hotel.

Location	Day	Hours
Penthouse, Ballrooms A&B	Tuesday	9 a.m. - 11 p.m.
Penthouse, Ballrooms A&B	Wednesday	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Renaissance Ballroom	Thursday	9 a.m. - 11 p.m.
Renaissance Ballroom	Friday	9 a.m. - Midnight
Renaissance Ballroom	Saturday	9 a.m. - 1 p.m. 4 - 6:30 p.m.
Boardroom	Sunday	10 a.m. - Noon

Medical Suite

The Medical Suite is located Lindbergh A & B on the first floor of the Renaissance St. Louis Hotel.

Hours of Operation: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Medical Suite phone number inside the Renaissance Hotel: ext. 4025/4026

Outside of the Renaissance Hotel: (314) 450-0299

After 10 p.m., call (314) 450-0299 for emergencies.

Participants, please inform your team leader of any medical concerns, so your team leader can help you contact the Medical Room. Medical personnel will be wearing red T-shirts and will accompany veterans and support personnel on all trips away from the hotel.

INTERNET CAFE

HP (Hewlett Packard) is running an Internet café for your use during the week of the Festival.

Hours of operation are Tuesday, October 23 through Saturday, October 27:

7 - 8:30 a.m

11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

7 - 9 p.m. (except for Wednesday and Saturday)

It is located in the Truman Room on the main floor of the hotel.



for Tuesday,
October 23, 2007

Meals will be served in Grand Ballrooms C&D unless otherwise designated.

Breakfast: 7 - 8:30 a.m.

Lunch: Noon - 1:30 p.m.

Dinner: 5:30 - 6:45 p.m.

Breakfast

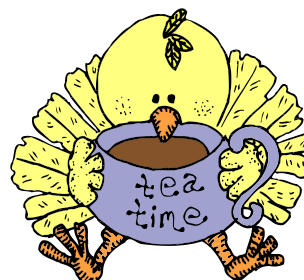
Sliced Fresh Seasonal Fruits
Assorted Fresh Baked Danish
Breakfast Breads, Bagels & Cream Cheese
Scrambled Eggs with Cheese
Crisp Bacon, Skillet Potatoes, Dry Cereal
Chilled Assorted Juices, Coffee, Tea

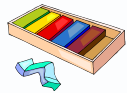
Lunch

Mixed Greens with Baby Shrimp, Jicama, Oranges, Sweet Red Peppers and Citrus Vinaigrette
Beef Fajita Bar, Vegetarian Option
Spanish Rice, Refried Beans
Soft Flour Tortilla, Salsa, Guacamole, Sour Cream
Diced Tomatoes, Black Olives
Shredded Cheese & Lettuce
Tri Color Chips & Salsa
Churros with Chocolate Sauce
Iced Tea, Lemonade, Coffee, Tea

Dinner

Spinach & Radicchio Salad with Fennel
Choice of Raspberry Vinaigrette or Ranch Dressings
Roasted Breast of Turkey, Corn Bread Dressing
Mashed Potatoes and Gravy
Mixed Vegetables
Artisan Rolls
Chef's Choice Dessert
Iced Tea, Coffee, Tea





Artists



Performers



Tuesday, October 23, 2007

7 — 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Hotel
— Grand Ballrooms C&D, 1st Floor

7:30 — 8:30 a.m. Late Registration — Orly A&B and Lambert C&D

8:30 a.m. Teams I and II report to the Renaissance Ballroom, 12th Floor for photos

9 a.m. — 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
— Penthouse Ballroom, 12th Floor

9 a.m. Teams III and IV report to the Renaissance Ballroom, 12th Floor for photos

10 a.m. Artists Interaction Session begins at Renaissance Hotel
— Renaissance Ballroom, 12th Floor

Noon Lunch at hotel — Grand Ballrooms C&D

1:30 p.m. Board buses for tour — Botanical Gardens (Sketching & photo opportunities)

1:45 p.m. Depart for tour

2 — 4:30 p.m. Tour the Botanical Gardens

5 p.m. Board buses and return to hotel

5:30 — 6:45 p.m. Dinner — Grand Ballrooms C&D

7:30 — 8:30 p.m. Presentation of the Military Combat Experience entries (electronic images) from the 2007 national art competition
— Renaissance Ballroom, 12th Floor

9 p.m. Performers view visual artwork
— Renaissance Ballroom, 12th Floor

9 — 11 p.m. Karaoke and Talent/Social Time at Hotel
— Penthouse Ballroom, 12th Floor

7 — 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Hotel
— Grand Ballrooms C&D, 1st Floor

7:30 — 8:30 a.m. Late Registration — Orly A&B and Lambert C&D

8 a.m. Team Leaders meet with Amy Kimbler
— Gatwick A&B, 1st Floor

8:30 a.m. Team Leaders meet with performers

9 a.m. — Noon Introductions and announcements for ALL stage performers and staff. Individual acts introduced and perform in costume in show order — Grand Ballrooms A&B (Photos of individual act performers taken)

9 a.m. — 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
— Penthouse Ballroom, 12th Floor

Noon Lunch at hotel — Grand Ballrooms C&D

1 — 3 p.m. Chorus music rehearsal with assistant directors (ALL participants must participate in these rehearsals when not needed in the Main Rehearsal Room) — Gatwick A&B

1 — 4 p.m. Rehearsal of individual acts with directors as scheduled — Grand Ballrooms A&B

1 — 4 p.m. Chorus member vests, other costume fittings
— Heathrow B, 1st Floor

4 — 5:30 p.m. Rehearsal and sign up for audition solos and narration as scheduled
— Gatwick A&B, Heathrow A, Lambert A&B, 1st Floor

5:30 — 6:45 p.m. Dinner — Grand Ballrooms C&D

7 — 9 p.m. Chorus number rehearsal with music director (All show participants)
— Grand Ballrooms A&B

7 — 9 p.m. Chorus member vests, other costume fittings
— Heathrow B

7:30 p.m. Auditions for solos and narrations
— one person or small group at a time will be called out of chorus number rehearsal
— Gatwick A&B, 1st Floor

9 p.m. Performers view visual artwork
— Renaissance Ballroom, 12th Floor

9 — 11 p.m. Karaoke and Talent/Social Time at Hotel
— Penthouse Ballroom, 12th Floor

Please check with your team leader or the posted schedule outside of Grand Ballrooms A & B for any changes or updates to your daily schedule.