



Saturday, October 27, 2007

Musical Groups: Timeless, Talented and Terrific!

Music, said to be the art of the divine, has enchanted human beings for as long as recorded time. Probably the oldest musical instrument is the human voice. All over the world, people listen to and play music. The rhythmic beat of the drums, the melodious vibrations of the guitar, the tinkling of the piano keys – all bring joy not only to the performer but also the listener.

Musicians are as diverse as the many cultures that exist in the world. They have rhythm, timing, tone and an abundance of talent. Many are joining us this week as musical performers at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

One duo features a mother and a son. Calling themselves, “Highly Favored,” they include Army veteran Emma Nichols and Anthony Conley, an Army combat veteran of the Gulf War. Hailing from Fresno, Calif., they won first place in the national music competition in the vocal group (religious) category. Together, they will play the piano and sing “Ordinary People” in this year’s show.

“Voices from Home” is a musical trio whose members are Marc Hansen, Julia McGuire, and Christine Pointer. From Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Hansen is an Air Force veteran who



Mother and son duo, “Highly Favored” - Emma Nichols and Anthony Conley from Fresno, Calif.

won first place in the national music competition in the vocal group (patriotic) category. He also won first place in the national drama competition in the multimedia video category. McGuire, an Army and Navy veteran who lives in Miami, won first place in the national drama competition in the multimedia video category; and first place in two categories of the national music competition, which include the vocal solo (jazz/rhythm & blues) and vocal group (patriotic) categories. She also won high honors in the vocal solo (classical) category.

Christine Pointer is no stranger to the Festival, and won first place in two national competitions this year: the national music competition in the vocal group (patriotic) category; and the national drama competition in the multimedia video category. In addition, she won high honors in the national dance competition in the solo (novelty) category. Also from Ft. Lauderdale, Pointer will again grace the Festival stage with both Hansen and McGuire on Sunday, singing the song, “Homeward Bound.”



Christine Pointer from Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

The final musical group in this year’s Festival is sure to be a crowd favorite. Calling themselves, “David and Dad,” they are an instrumental father and son duo composed of David and Louis Wilson, both Navy veterans. David is from Seymour, Tenn., and won high honors in the national music competition in the special recognition group category. Louis is the “Dad” part of the duo, a combat Navy veteran of Vietnam who lives in Richmond Va. He won high honors in the national music competition in the senior instrumental group and special recognition group categories. Coming together for the third time in Festival history, this talented instrumental duet will perform a “Western Swing Medley” in the stage show. David says, “I entered the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival because I thought it would be a great way to spend some quality time with my Dad.” Louis is glad to be here as well. “I only hope that my small contribution to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is as good for others as it has been for me,” he said.

There is certainly no shortage of musical talent among the performing groups, chorus members and individual acts this year and we look forward to watching these talented veterans at the Touhill Performing Arts Center this weekend. The enjoyment will also certainly extend to all members of the audience!





Relax following a hectic schedule at the Festival

Have you been feeling those muscles tense up in your shoulders following a long rehearsal schedule? Try these ideas to help you relax and enjoy St. Louis to the fullest!

1. Sit on a chair.
2. Place both feet flat on the floor.
3. Put your hands around the arm rests, gripping them gently.
4. Place your back flat against the chair.
5. Keep your eyes open and focus on a spot in front of you, at eye level.
6. Do not look at the ceiling or floor.
7. Breathe in – pause – breathe out – pause (slowly and evenly).
8. Now, say out loud (if possible, or if not then say in your mind):
“I see five things ...” (i.e. the wall, window etc..)
9. “I hear five things ...” (i.e. radio, footsteps, etc.)
10. “I feel five things...” (i.e. my fingers clenching, the chair, my toes, etc.)
11. Continue exercise by saying “I see... I hear...I feel... four things then three, two and one.”

After all this, you should be fully aware of your surroundings, calmer, more relaxed and ready to rehearse some more.



Volunteers, Filling the Gaps

As most of us are aware, an event this size could not happen without the dedication of our many volunteers. According to Maura Campbell, this year’s volunteer coordinator, nearly 200 volunteers have donated their time during the week-long event. The St. Louis area is very supportive of veterans and has helped make this event a memorable one through generous donations of time, labor, supplies and money. Dozens of groups, organizations and individuals have supported the local facility’s fundraising efforts by attending a trivia-night event, participating in a *Sweat with the Vets* 5K/one mile run, walk and roll, and buying locally produced cookbooks and calendars.



ALA volunteers (L-R) Martha Arnold from Scottsboro, Ala., and Lila Speckels from Chamberlain S.D.

Reflecting on what volunteers provide, Becky Ballard, host site coordinator, sums it up quite simply, saying, “Volunteer work is always perfect – and in St. Louis we have the most perfect volunteers!” She adds, “The success of the Festival is due to the many people who have volunteered countless hours.”

The local VA family has really pitched in this week, providing help in a number of areas. Records Management Center

employees greeted staff and participants at the airport. Employee Education System provided graphic and media support, as well as help at breakfast and lunch each day. Veterans Canteen Service assisted with memorabilia, and this evening’s Bingo night activities. The Veterans Benefits Administration helped with public affairs and assisted with dinner on Tuesday and Friday.

Some of the notable organizations that provided volunteers were our national co-presenters, Help Hospitalized Veterans – which organized the craft kit workshop; and the American Legion Auxiliary, which staffed and stocked the hospitality room and provided “clickers and markers” at all meals at the hotel. Locally, the Gateway Paralyzed Veterans of America provided their van and driver for the week. The VFW and St. Louis Community College served as hosts at dinner on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. The St. Louis County Garden Club did much of the sewing and ironing for both the stage and art show. These are just some of the many organizations lending a hand this week.

One person volunteering their time this week is Army veteran Ellen Davis, who said, “I am enjoying the opportunity to meet fellow veterans from other parts of the country.”



Local volunteer Ellen Davis

See “Volunteers,” cont’d on page 4

“Show Me” Missouri ...



Dred Scott and St. Louis

Do you remember learning about the Dred Scott decision in high school history? It was one of America’s most famous civil rights cases. Tried in the

St. Louis’s Old Courthouse, Scott, an African-American slave, fought unsuccessfully for his freedom in a case that took the issue all the way to the Supreme Court.

Born into slavery in 1799, Scott was bought by Dr. John Emerson, who uprooted him from the slave state of Missouri to the free state of Illinois. His presence as a slave in a free state raised serious issues regarding freedom. After Emerson’s death in 1843, Scott tried, unsuccessfully, to buy his freedom from Emerson’s widow. The jury initially ruled against Scott, but during the retrial ruled he and his family should be free because they lived in free territory for more than seven years. In 1846, he sued Dr. Emerson’s widow for false imprisonment and battery.

Later, Scott and his wife, Harriett, were sold to a relative living in New York. Because the sale now involved two states, New York and Missouri, the case could be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. In March 1857, after almost 11 years, Chief Justice Roger Tanner ruled on the case, stating that no slave or descendant of a slave had ever been or could be a U.S. citizen. As a non-citizen, Scott had no rights and could not sue in a Federal Court and must remain a slave. The Court also ruled that Congress

could not stop slavery in the new territories and declared unconstitutional The Missouri Compromise, which prohibited slavery north of the Louisiana Purchase.

At that time, there were nearly four million slaves in America and the ruling affected the status of every enslaved and free African American. Further, it appeared to ignore the Declaration of Independence and the fact that black men in five of the original states had been full voting citizens since the Declaration was signed in 1776. The controversial decision further widened the gap between the north and south.

The issue of slavery was not settled until after the civil war and the loss of 600,000 lives. In December 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, stating, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude ... shall exist within the United States.” The Fourteenth Amendment, passed in 1868, declared “all people born or naturalized in the United States ... are citizens of the United States.”

In 1857, a descendant of Scott’s original owner bought Dred and Harriett and gave them their freedom. Scott died a few months later, a free man. Records of his struggle for freedom are located in the Office of the St. Louis Circuit Clerk.



Tours of the Missouri History Museum take place today. Performers may begin loading the buses at 9 a.m. and will tour the museum from 9:15 – 11:15 a.m. The buses for visual artist will depart from the hotel at 1:30 p.m. and tour the museum from 1:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

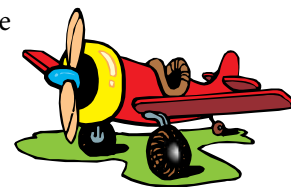
The museum is located in Forest Park and is housed in the Jefferson Memorial Building built in 1913 on the site of the main entrance to the 1904 World’s Fair. It was built with the proceeds of the Fair in memory of Thomas Jefferson.

The Missouri History Museum has the largest collection of information and memorabilia from the 1904 World’s Fair, and also includes rare exhibits of firearms and military trophies from the Revolution to the Civil War.

St. Louis’s history, presented through a collection of photographs, memorabilia, portraits, and media accounts document the city’s role in westward expansion, the Dred Scott case (which upheld slavery), and famous St. Louisans such as Chuck Berry and Tennessee Williams. Other features of the exhibit include clothes, machines, furniture, document activities of daily life for local residents. You’ll also learn how people washed their clothes, what their beds were like and what they did for fun.

One of the most popular exhibits is the Charles Lindbergh exhibition which commemorates his 1927 solo transatlantic flight. The exhibit contains a replica of his plane, “The Spirit of St. Louis” which hangs in the exhibit hall.

Enjoy your trip to the Missouri History Museum!



Meet the Artists



Since 2001, VA's Journal of Rehabilitation and Research (JRRD) has featured artwork from the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Army veterans Smith Iuli and Gary Wedin, as well as Navy veteran Michael Thompson, were all chosen as the feature cover artists for 2007.

JRRD cover art is selected from entries in the special recognition categories. Entries in this category must use artistic expression to reach successful results in treatment. Iuli, Wedin and Thompson have all exhibited exceptional creative expression through the visual arts.



Smith Iuli's digital artwork, "Arc de Matatula"

(Left) Michael Thompson's digital photograph, "Kayak" (Above)

Gary Wedin's acrylic painting, "Concerto"

Iuli, 57, from San Marcos, Calif., has been creating digital art for roughly 12 years. His piece, entitled, "Arc de Matatula," won first place in the national art competition in the digital art category. Iuli is always drawing and has been interested in art

since childhood, but he discovered that creating artwork on the computer is less time consuming than other media. He uses his home computer for a variety of other activities such as video editing, creating a professional at-home recording studio and working on 3-D animation. "Participating in the Festival has given me more confidence," he said. Confidence, self-esteem and healing are all qualities at the root of the Festival as well as the mission of JRRD.

Wedin, a 65-year-old veteran from Plymouth, Minn., has art in his blood. His father was a fine artist and his brother is an architect. Wedin's painting, "Concerto," took first place

in the acrylic painting category. "I entered the Creative Arts Festival for the chance to have one of my pieces displayed in the company of other veterans," he said. "This has given me a deep sense of pride. Creation is such a personal thing. To be recognized by the public or colleagues with an 'attaboy,' feels really fantastic!"

The third JRRD cover artist is Michael Thompson, a 53-year-old veteran from Layton, Utah. His second place piece, "Kayak," is another digital photograph that will grace the covers of the JRRD next year. Thompson's interest in photography goes back 30 years. He taught himself how to use new digital photography equipment and has created an award-winning piece as a result. Thompson, like Iuli, Wedin and so many other veterans here, is aware of the therapeutic benefits the event offers. "Participating in the Festival raises my self-esteem and confidence," he says.

The Journal is a bimonthly publication that is distributed to an international audience of more than 6,500 readers. JRRD is a rehabilitation research publication that is a resource for both scientists and doctors, as well as veterans with disabilities.

Meet Iuli, Wedin and Thompson during today's Meet the Artists session in the Renaissance Ballroom on the 12th floor, from 9 a.m. – noon.

"Volunteers," cont'd from page 2

Davis has had the enormous job of taking ticket orders for the show and sending them out. During the Festival, she is continuing that duty and staffing the volunteer check-in table each day in headquarters. Rose and Victor Ganz are also staying for the week, helping with transportation and providing assistance wherever needed. Victor says, "I feel privileged to be a part of the pit crew."

A huge thank you from all of us to each and every one of our Festival volunteers who have contributed so much to this week's success – and all they do to support our nation's veterans every day.

Thank you!

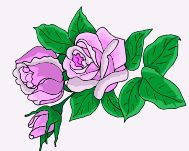
The St. Louis VA Medical Center has done a tremendous job hosting the 2007 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Their efforts, not only this past week but over the past year, have resulted in an experience that

none of us will soon forget. Special kudos to our host site coordinator, Rebecca Ballard, and all of the local planning committee chairpersons, members and volunteers, who worked tirelessly to make sure the 2007 Festival was an outstanding success.



A special thank you to St. Louis's top management team, Glen E. Struchtemeyer, Director; Peter M. McBrady, Associate Medical Center Director; Olivia Stallings, Assistant Medical Center Director; and Nathan Ravi, M.D., Chief of Staff; for their continuing support and leadership during the past year.

Congratulations, everyone on an outstanding job – and thank you for your commitment to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival!



Museum of Western Expansion Ceremony
&
View from the St. Louis Gateway Arch at Night



PHOTOS FROM THE FESTIVAL



Festival artists work on their artwork in the print making workshop at the St. Louis Art Museum on Thursday.

Integrated Dance Workshop participants Christine Pointer, Randy Forrester, Misty Wick and Richard Stang "create" a campfire in dance.

Leland Parker from Oklahoma City, Okla.; Dee Shriener, HHV staff; Penny James, VA volunteer; and Larry Beauford from Seminole, Okla., participate in the HHV Workshop.



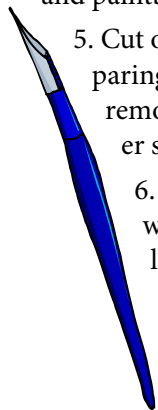


How to Choose Leather Working Tools

Basic leather craft projects don't require a lot of tools. Here are some of the items you'll need to work just about any project, from the simple to the more complex.

Steps:

1. Make sure that you have a flat, stable surface on which to work. A rubber mat placed under your work will prevent the surface from being scarred and will also protect the blades of your cutting tools.
2. Measure lines and curves onto leather with items such as a sturdy ruler and a French curve. Choose metal measuring tools, as these can also be used as straight edges against which the leather can be cut. Mark lines along the leather's surface with pencils and felt-tip pens.
3. Use items like leather bleach and leather deglazes to clean dirt, oil and residue from the surface of the leather before any work starts.
4. Color your leather with leather dyes and paints. These items can be found at any leather craft store, as can paint and dye applicators such as wool daubers and paintbrushes.



5. Cut out leather pieces with a razor knife and use paring tools such as edge bevellers and skives to remove thin layers from a piece of leather. Leather shears can be used to cut thinner pieces.

6. Tool a piece of leather with a swivel knife, wood or rawhide mallet, and a variety of leather stamps. Decorative cuts are made



with a swivel knife and then the mallet and stamps are used to create textures and depressed surfaces around those cuts. Stamps come in many patterns.

7. Make perforations in your leather with an awl, a stitching awl (for holes that will be stitched through) and/or leather hole punches of various sizes. Use a rotary hole punch for easy, even hole placement.
8. Sew leather with leather craft sewing needles, waxed linen thread and artificial sinews. Use the waxed linen thread on softer, thinner pieces of leather and use the artificial sinew on harder pieces. The artificial sinew does not stretch and may cut into the stitching holes in soft pieces of leather.

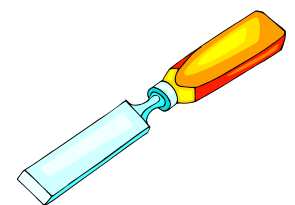
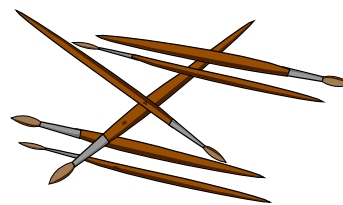
Tips:

Use acrylic paints instead of leather paints. Make sure, however, that the paint you use is safe for leather.

Run a piece of beeswax along the length of any unwaxed thread before stitching.

Affix leather pieces to one another without stitching by using leather glue.

Keep a plastic spray bottle of water and a sponge in your work area. Use these to dampen the leather while you work it.



Saturday Night Live

It's here – the Festival's annual "Saturday Night Celebration" is going to be another evening full of fun and surprises.

This enjoyable evening will also give you a chance to relax and get any last minute jitters out of your system.

The celebration dinner will take place at 7 p.m. in the Renaissance Ballroom on the 12th floor. The head chef has prepared a comforting meal of meatloaf and mashed potatoes, and our own favorite pianist, Jerry Lederer will entertain us during dinner. (You'll remember him from



Monday's Opening Ceremonies). A presentation from VA's Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development will take place, and some special surprise awards will be given.

Following the program, get your markers ready as we compete to win some great prizes in everyone's favorite pastime, "BINGO." Marilyn Iverson, Director of the Veterans Canteen Service and her staff will be hosting an exciting evening of bingo, with winners receiving some fabulous prizes. You won't want to miss out on a great meal, lots of fun, and another chance to mix and mingle with your Festival friends. See you tonight!

A or Your Info

Hospitality

The hospitality room volunteers remain available

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

Location	Day	Hours
Renaissance Ballroom	Saturday	9 a.m. - 11 p.m.
Boardroom	Sunday	10 a.m. - Noon

Medical Suite

The Medical Suite is located Lindbergh A & B on the first floor of the hotel.

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

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

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

After 10 p.m., call ext. (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.

INTERNET CAFE

HP (Hewlett Packard) is running an Internet café for your use through today.

The hours of operation today are:

7 - 8:30 a.m.

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

It is located in the Truman Room on the main floor of the hotel. Many thanks to HP for providing this valuable service.



Partly Cloudy
High 60°
Low 37°



for Saturday,
October 27, 2007

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

Breakfast: 7 - 8:30 a.m.

Lunch: 11:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Dinner: 7 - 9 p.m.

Breakfast

Sliced Fresh Seasonal Fruits, Fresh Baked Cheese and Fruit Danish, Breakfast Breads, Scrambled Eggs with Cheese, Crisp Bacon, Maple Sausage Links Skillet Potatoes, Chilled Assorted Juices, Coffee, Hot Tea

Lunch

Muffaletta Sandwiches
Pasta Salad, Vegetable Salad, Fresh Fruit and Cottage Cheese, Baked Sun Chips
Italian Ice, Iced Tea, Lemonade, Coffee, Hot Tea

Celebration Dinner (Renaissance Ballroom)

Iceberg Wedge with Cherry Tomatoes and Cucumbers
Choice of Two Dressings
Chef Marlon's Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes with Gravy Broccoli and Carrots, Artisan Rolls, Layered Carrot Cake
Iced Tea, Coffee, Hot Tea

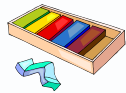
Vegetarian Option

Grilled Porobella Mushroom with Fresh Shaved Parmesan
Roasted Vegetables and Mashed Potatoes



As part of the Saturday night celebration this year we are having Bingo in the Renaissance Ballroom. This event is sponsored by

the Veterans Canteen Service, and the Crestwood Elks will be calling the game. We will have more than \$2,000 in fabulous prizes for you to win including kitchen appliances and bakeware, Rachel Ray cookware, games, figurines, DVDs, watches, and more!



Artists



Performers



Saturday, October 27, 2007

7 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel — Grand Ballrooms C&D

8:30 a.m. Team leaders meet with Katy Ryan — Ladue

9 a.m. Team leaders meet with artists

9 a.m. – Noon “Meet the Artist” – Renaissance Ballroom

9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
— Renaissance Ballroom

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Completion of artwork projects
— Lambert A&B

11:30 a.m. Lunch at hotel — Grand Ballrooms C&D

1:15 p.m. Board buses for tour
— Missouri History Museum

1:30 p.m. Depart for tour

1:45 – 4:15 p.m. Tour Missouri History Museum

4 – 6:30 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
— Boardrooms 3&4, 12th floor

4:15 p.m. Board buses and return to hotel

7 – 9 p.m. Saturday Night Celebration Dinner
(casual dress)
— Renaissance Ballroom, 12th Floor

9 – 10:30 p.m. Bingo
— Sponsored by the Veterans Canteen Service
— Renaissance Ballroom, 12th Floor

7 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel — Grand Ballrooms C&D

8 a.m. Team leaders meet with Amy Kimbler
— Gatwick A&B

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

9 a.m. – Noon “Meet the Artist” — Renaissance Ballroom

9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
— Renaissance Ballroom

9 – 11:30 a.m. Individual coaching (To Be Announced)

9 a.m. Board buses for tour
— Missouri History Museum

9:15 a.m. Depart for tour

9:30 – 11 a.m. Tour Missouri History Museum

11 a.m. Board buses and return to hotel

11:15 a.m. Lunch at hotel — Grand Ballrooms C&D

12:30 p.m. Performers depart for
Touhill Performing Arts Center

12:45 – 1:25 p.m. Performers into costume and makeup

1:30 – 5 p.m. Final dress rehearsal with orchestra

4 – 6:30 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
— Boardrooms 3&4, 12th floor

5:30 p.m. Performers depart for hotel

7 – 9 p.m. Saturday Night Celebration Dinner
(casual dress)
— Renaissance Ballroom, 12th Floor

9 – 10:30 p.m. Bingo
— Sponsored by the Veterans Canteen Service
— Renaissance 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.



Thanks to all the veterans who have participated

in the project this week – you have helped make history! Twenty-six interviews were recorded this week. If you weren't able to do it this time, we hope you have a chance to participate in this wonderful project in the future.

INVCAT Web site
www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov

Don't forget to share the Festival's Web site!

Friends and family who were unable to come with you will have the opportunity to tune in to what is happening by reading the daily ArtsGram, checking out the *Participant Information* tab and scrolling through photos of artwork and photos from the week. News releases are already posted to the site, along with many photos from earlier in the week. The address is easy – www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov.