

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Welcome First Time Participants!

Make new friends, but keep the old. That's exactly what the Creative Arts Festival is all about. This year, among the 113 veterans in attendance for all or part of the week, there are so many new friends with whom to swap stories, share artistic techniques and laugh. It can be intimidating to attend a new event such as this, but this year's nearly 40 newcomers should have no worries – the Festival and its staff, volunteers and fellow veterans all welcome you with open arms. Let's take a look at four of our 2007 first-timers.



Terry Carr, originally from Wilmington, Del., now living in Sharon, Tenn.

taken at a concert of the famous musician. With tickets to the performance, Carr mistakenly believed that photography would not be allowed so he left his camera at home. Then, he saw a woman taking still photos while the blues legend sang his theme song, "The Thrill is Gone," and Carr asked to borrow her camera, handing her his business card. Recognizing Carr, she handed over the camera. He chose the piece because of the intensity of the facial expression and the wonderful colors in the shot. "I have always been a fan of B.B. King and I'm happy to have such a fine photo of him," Carr said.

Although Carr has been entering the creative arts competition for ten years, this is his first gold medal and first time attending. "Staying actively involved in artistic endeavors reminds me that I can still make creative contributions to the world of art and society as a whole, and my lack of physical mobility doesn't have to restrict me from pursuing my goals." A wheelchair user, Carr also participates in the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic as well

as the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

At 26, Rachel Booth is one of the two youngest participants this year. Her piece, "Women of Grace and Charm, the Star in the Window Quilt," is a beautiful quilt that features 12 star blocks representing the activities that women took on to further the war effort during WWII. What started out as a way to develop a closer relationship with her mother-in-law, who got her interested in quilting only three years ago, turned into a long-lasting therapeutic hobby for Booth. A Marine Corps veteran from Salt Lake City, Booth said, "I use the arts as a way to relieve stress. The arts allow me to express myself and explore endless opportunities for creativity, which makes me feel good about myself and my work."



Rachel Booth, from Salt Lake City

Julia McGuire is also a first-time participant this week. A 54-year-old Navy veteran from Miami, McGuire took first in the national drama competition in the multimedia video category. She also placed first in two categories of the national music competition, the vocal solo (jazz/rhythm & blues) category and vocal group (patriotic) categories. As if that wasn't enough, McGuire also won high honors in the vocal solo (classical) category.

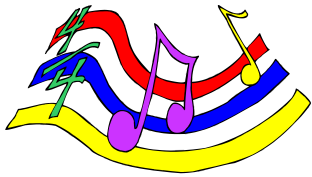


Julia McGuire of Miami

See "First Timers" cont'd on page 2



How To Overcome Nerves When Performing



1. First impressions are important.

Wear something appropriate and comfortable for the performance. Check your body

language. Look and feel confident from the moment you walk out on stage. When you walk to the piano, stand up straight and smile at the audience. Take your time getting to the bench and bow in the middle of the stage.

2. Adjust your bench before showtime.

If possible, don't do this in front of your audience. When you sit down, you should be ready to go.

3. Choose to perform a piece in front of an audience that is slightly under your top ability.

Don't pick something that you can't perform with ease when you are a little bit nervous. Choosing something under your ability and performing it well will be a continual confidence builder as you perform again and again.

4. Nerves are good. Controlled nerves are better.

Begin your piece just slightly slower than what you think is the "normal" tempo. Your heart will be racing, so do a quick check-in on the tempo in your mind before you start. If anything, you can pick up the pace. Start a little slower so that you can catch your breath.

5. Take a deep breath before you hit the first note.

Your oxygen intake is important!

6. Think about something personally meaningful to you when you perform.

Don't focus on the mechanics of the piece. If you are well-prepared, you won't have to think about the actual piece itself. Think about something pleasant and personally moving to you so that you will play with comfort and ease.

7. Practice, practice, practice.

The most important tip is to be over prepared. You should be able to perform the piece in your sleep! If you are over prepared, you will be as confident as you can possibly be.



8. Exit the stage the same way you entered.

First and last impressions are important.

"First Timers" cont'd from page 1

McGuire says that she spent most of her life singing and now instructs others. "It took me almost 50 years to learn how to sing correctly, and I wasn't able to find many good instructors out there," she said. "Because of that, I want to be the best instructor possible to save others from similar frustration." During Sunday's performance, McGuire will perform in two acts – one with her group, *Voices from Home*, entitled "Homeward Bound," and the other, "Habanera," is a solo piece. McGuire says, "I like being able to contribute to the Festival through my singing. Frankly, I couldn't exist without it!"

Newcomer Lanse Dowdell's song, entitled, "Autumn Leaves," seems like a perfect fit for a Creative Arts Festival in October. Dowdell, a 75-year-old Army veteran from West Haven, Conn., will also grace the Festival stage on Sunday for the first time. Another multi-category winner, he won first place

in the instrumental solo category for both pop and religious entries, and received high honors in the instrumental solo (jazz/rhythm & blues) category as well. Although Dowdell took formal lessons to learn the basics of music, he continued to learn many facets of music from "people on the street." Like many veterans here, Dowdell says he "feels blessed" to be able to participate in this special event.



Lanse Dowdell, of West Haven, Conn.

We hope that all our first-timers will take an opportunity this week to learn from each other, and to also share in the camaraderie and fellowship available from more than 60 seasoned participants also here in St. Louis.



The Gateway Arch



The famous Gateway Arch is a stunning national monument that reminds all who visit that St. Louis is truly the “Gateway to the West.” This beautiful stainless steel structure stands 630 feet tall, making it the nation’s tallest monument.

Here are some fun facts about this innovative and masterful monument that you will visit this evening. Enjoy!

- It is the city’s best known landmark and a popular tourist attraction.

- Construction began on February 12, 1963 and the last section of the arch was completed on October 28, 1965.
 - The Arch’s structure is called a catenary curve (similar to curves formed by a chain hanging between two hooks).
 - The Arch weighs 17, 246 tons (and 900 tons of stainless steel were used to build it).
 - The Arch sways a maximum of 18 inches in a 150 mile-per-hour wind.
 - The entrance to each leg contains a different informational exhibit. The south leg depicts life in the 1800s along the St. Louis riverfront. The north leg tracks the construction of the Arch itself.
 - There are eight tram cars that travel to the top of the arch. Each takes approximately four minutes to reach to observation level.
 - The top of the Arch is not fully accessible to those with mobility impairments. However, there is a virtual display in one of the information exhibits that allows you to feel as if you have traveled to the top!
- For more information, visit www.gatewayarch.com.

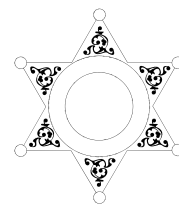
Arch Security



Tonight we will be touring and having dinner at the St. Louis Gateway Arch. Buses start loading at 6 p.m. and leave the hotel at 6:30 p.m. The following information is to help you prepare for our exciting evening. Please remember to wear your name tag, as it is your pass to the Arch site grounds. Please read the list below and abide by the Arch security requirements, as that will ensure you have the best possible evening.

- All guests will have to go through electronic surveillance and metal detection, just like the airport.
- No liquids.

- No drugs except those prescribed by a physician in the original bottle.
- No firearms.
- No knives.
- No smoking inside the Arch. (Those wishing to smoke may do so outside but will have to have their name badge to re-enter.)
- No alcohol.
- No candles.
- Those with ambulation difficulties will enter the south leg of the Arch; others enter at the north leg.



Artist Interaction Gives you the Whole Story

Veterans create art for various reasons – hobby, therapy, self-expression. Veterans and guests learned about these motivations from the artists themselves at the Artist Interaction Session on Tuesday.

For some, art is a fun hobby. Larry Beauford of Oklahoma City, Okla. described his metalwork piece as a “work of tinkery.” Smith Iuli of San Marcos, Calif. explained how he made his digital art while learning to use his new computer program. Robert Lewis, of San Diego, said he “got on the sewing machine and got happy” while creating his Marine Corps Band uniform for his G.I. Joe.

At this event, the artwork is often in tribute to veterans and those who currently serve, such as the quilt made by Salt Lake City’s Rachel Both, “Women of Grace and Charm; the Star in the Window Quilt,” or the fabric art kit, “Never to be Forgotten,” made by Marilyn Adamitis of Milwaukee, Wisc.

The winner of the Military Combat Experience category, Allen Eckman of Rapid City, S.D., expressed his commitment to not leave a comrade behind in battle in the sculpture, “Not on my Watch.” John Folcé of Sepulveda, Calif., conveyed his “self determination to get the obstacles out of my way” following his Vietnam experiences in his creative piece entitled, “Self-Opening Door.”

Leayle “Al” Todman of Bronx, N.Y., and Pamela “Jade” Scott of Denver, Colo., earned gold medals in the Special Recognition categories for physical disability and mental health challenges, respectively. Todman had a stroke which paralyzed his dominant right side; he painted “In the Army” with his left hand. Scott said that her work on “Celtic Warrior” and other pieces “ground me and help me feel like a real person again.”

One poignant story was about the photograph, “Sister,” by Carlous Chambers of Louisville, Ky. Actually named, “Sister out of Darkness,” Chambers explained that the subject is his sister, also a veteran who had “been feeling blue.” Chambers suggested taking her picture and draped her in black,



Carlous Chambers

instructing her to lower her head and raise her hands as in prayer. The result is his gold-medal photograph. “You pray in times of darkness,” Chambers explained. “I wanted my sister to get out of the darkness and into the light.”

Talk to the artists this week and ask them about their work. You’ll be amazed, touched, and awed by what you learn.

CEU Session Sure to Get Your Heart Pumping!



Please join us today from 3 – 4:30 p.m. for an exciting class all about developing a cardio pulmonary exercise program in the Penthouse Ballroom on the 12th floor of the hotel. Taught by Michael Lippmann, M.D., Jan Robinette, R.N., and Chris Piedmont, Recreation Therapist, this class will teach techniques and general exercise workouts that will keep you fit and healthy. There is no need for special clothing because the course is in a lecture format — but once you leave, we promise you won’t stop moving!

The City Museum and Snowflake Creations

Wednesday, October 24 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. City Museum

The visual arts group will tour the phenomenal City Museum in St. Louis. It is an architectural marvel made out of unique objects from cities in the U.S. as well as around the globe. There will also be an opportunity to participate in a workshop to construct unique snowflake creations, presented by artist Vivian Nichols. The city museum is an eclectic, fun, and unusual museum; and Vivian’s workshop fits right in. The artists will be entertained while Vivian combines the art of snowflake construction with a whimsical story.



Opening Ceremonies

PHOTOS FROM THE FESTIVAL



St. Louis Gateway Singers perform before the Monday evening Opening Ceremonies.



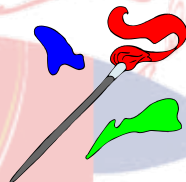
Chairman of the Board of Veterans Appeals James P. Terry speaks to the Festival participants.



St. Louis VA Medical Center Director Glen E. Struchtemeyer illustrates a point during his speech at the ceremonies.



"Mark Twain" (a.k.a. Jeff Rinehart) waves to the audience as he helps open the Festival.



Marvin Hooper displays his talent on the trombone during the Monday practice session.



George Farr "raps" out his song during rehearsals on Monday.



How to Draw a Caricature



This afternoon from 2 to 5 p.m., caricaturist Share Faerber will be drawing caricatures at the Festival. For artists who may want to try this on their own, there are a few key elements to a caricature that will separate the good from the mediocre. Keep them in mind while drawing.

Likeness: This is obviously the most important element to a caricature. Without careful observation, likeness can be lost very easily.

Life: Try to capture that particular individual's personality and character. Don't paste the same expression on every face.

Exaggeration: Imagine a line with two ends on it. One end is labeled "exaggerated caricatures" and the other end is labeled "portrait caricatures." Every caricature artist finds some spot between the two ends.

Line Quality: Good line quality is critical to a successful caricature. Varied lines are much more pleasing to the eye than flat, boring lines. Make sure your lines are

thicker where there are harder edges (like under the nose, mouth, chin, eyes, and all outer lines) and softer where there is detail (such as wrinkles and the overall facial structure).

Composition: Boring composition kills the life and energy of any drawing. Make your composition dynamic. Think of it as if you are looking through a window, visualizing a three-dimensional space that is occupied by people. When drawing several people, it is best to stack each person (shortest to tallest) behind each other in space. Also, make sure you leave some space up top for their heads.

Caricature drawing is one form of art that is loved by the masses – everyone enjoys seeing how closely their caricature matches their appearance and their personality. Have fun as you demonstrate your artistic talents through this popular form of visual art!



Caricature Drawings Today

Caricature artist Share Faerber has been drawing caricatures in the St. Louis area and around the country since 1979. Share draws in a "cartoon portrait" style that is usually flattering to the subject. She loves to draw clever original situations to personalize each caricature, and always has great fun doing it as well as entertaining the crowd. Everybody loves to watch! Join Share from 2 to 5 p.m. today in the pre-function area on the first floor and have your caricature drawn!



NVCATF Web site
www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov

This year's National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is an experience you will never forget. You can share your experiences with your friends and family back home by providing them with the Festival Web site address (www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov). The ArtsGram is posted there every day with all the latest on what is happening each day – including photos from rehearsals, workshops and tours.



Thank you to those veterans who have already recorded their military histories for the Veterans

History Project (VHP). You have helped make history!

Interviews continue through Saturday morning in the Gateway Room on the first floor of the hotel. Artists – stop by in between workshops and trips, and performers, come over when you aren't busy rehearsing! 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.

The VHP taping schedule for today through Friday is from 8 a.m. – noon and from 1 – 5 p.m. and from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday. There are several appointment slots available for tomorrow, Thursday.

F or Y our I nfo



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	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. - 11 p.m.
Boardroom	Sunday	10 a.m. - Noon



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: extensions 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.



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

Hours of operation today through Saturday, October 27:
 7 - 8:30 a.m.
 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 7 - 9 p.m. (except for today and Saturday)

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



for Wednesday, October 24, 2007

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

Breakfast: 7 - 8:30 a.m.

Lunch: Noon - 2 p.m.

Dinner: 7 p.m. at Gateway Arch

Breakfast

- Sliced Fresh Seasonal Fruits
- Muffins and Bagels with Cream Cheese
- Waffles with Butter and Maple Syrup
- Maple Sausage Links, Hash Brown Potatoes
- Coffee and Tea Service
- Oatmeal with Raisins and Brown Sugar
- Dry Cereal, Chilled Assorted Juices
- Coffee, Hot Tea

Lunch

- Sliced Fresh Fruit Platter
- Marinated Mushroom and Artichoke Salad
- Deli Style Sliced Meat Platter with Smoked Turkey, Roast Beef, Honey Cured Ham, Swiss and American Cheese
- Deli Style Sliced Breads and Rolls
- Assorted Terra Chips, Fudge Brownies
- Iced Tea, Lemonade, Coffee

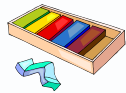
Dinner at Gateway Arch

- Sparkling Cider
- Romaine Salad
- Choice of: Baked Chicken Quattro Fromaggi, Roast Beef Au Jus, or Vegetarian Entrée Portobello
- Mushroom Ravoli
- Baby Yukon Gold Potatoes, Tuscan vegetables
- Cheese Cake Bites, Fresh Strawberries
- Iced Tea, Coffee, Soft Drinks



Weather

Clear
 High 63°
 Low 44°



Artists



Performers



Wednesday, October 24, 2007

7 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel — Grand Ballrooms C&D
 7:45 a.m. Team leaders meet with Katy Ryan
 — Ladue, 1st Floor
 (review Wednesday & Thursday schedules)
 8 a.m. Team leaders meet with artists
 8:30 a.m. Board buses for tour — City Museum
 8:45 a.m. Depart for tour
 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
 — Boardrooms 3 & 4, 12th Floor
 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Local art committee takes down art exhibit
 9:15 a.m. Tour and Art Workshop #1 at City Museum

 12:30 p.m. Board buses and return to hotel
 1 – 2 p.m. Lunch at hotel — Grand Ballrooms C&D

 2 – 5 p.m. Caricature Drawings
 — Pre-Function Area, 1st Floor
 2 – 5 p.m. Massage Therapy Sessions
 — Pre-Function Area, 1st Floor
 3 – 4:30 p.m. CEU Session
 — “Developing a Cardio-Pulmonary
 Exercise Program”
 — Penthouse Ballroom, 12th Floor
 6 p.m. Load buses
 6:30 p.m. Depart for the Gateway Arch
 7 p.m. Dinner at the Gateway Arch
 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Tour the Museum of Westward Expansion,
 Arch tram rides, museum store,
 film viewing
 — Gateway Arch

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 – 10 a.m. Chorus member photos — Heathrow B
 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
 — Boardrooms 3 & 4, 12th Floor
 9 a.m. – Noon Rehearsal of individual acts with directors as
 scheduled — Grand Ballrooms A&B,
 Gatwick A&B, Lambert A&B
 (Photos of chorus members taken)
 Noon Lunch at hotel — Grand Ballrooms C&D
 1 – 4:30 p.m. Complete run-thru in show order, include
 ing chorus numbers, stopping to fix problems,
 we will get as far through the show as we can
 - ALL VETERANS NEEDED
 — Grand Ballrooms A&B
 Continue fitting for chorus member vests and
 other acts — Heathrow B
 2 – 5 p.m. Massage Therapy Sessions
 — Pre-Function Area, 1st Floor
 3 – 4:30 p.m. CEU Session
 — “Developing a Cardio-Pulmonary
 Exercise Program”
 — Penthouse Ballroom, 12th Floor
 6 p.m. Load buses
 6:30 p.m. Depart for the Gateway Arch
 7 p.m. Dinner at the Gateway Arch
 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. Tour the Museum of Westward Expansion,
 Arch tram rides, museum store,
 film viewing
 — Gateway Arch

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.