Asheville Ballet
Ann Dunn, Artistic Director

2011-2012 Family Season

September 30 - October 1
Winnie the Pooh
by Ann Dunn

New Work
by Lindsey Kelley

Moonshine
by Ann Dunn with original
LIVE music by the Chapel Hill band Kangaroo

December 9-11, 2011
The Nutcracker

May 18-19, 2012
Sleeping Beauty

All shows at
Diana Wortham Theatre
Box Office: (828) 257-4530

Registration for classes with the Asheville Ballet is ongoing throughout the year!
Call Ann Dunn, Director, at (828) 258-1028, or visit www.ashevilleballet.com, for more information or to register.
The Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place Mainstage Series presents a wide range of top touring artists in music, theater, dance, comedy, and other performing arts in an intimate, 500-seat hall.

The 2011/2012 Mainstage Series season opens on September 24, 2011 with the Upright Citizens Brigade – they’ll bring down the house and perhaps the whole city with their outrageous sketch comedy. This performance is part of the “Laugh Out Loud” Series, new to Diana Wortham Theatre this year.

The LOL Series includes Shakespeare on Trial (October 27, 2011), an unwitting Bill Shakespeare must defend his writing to a court of some of his most memorable characters. The Adam Growe Comedy & Quiz Showe (November 12, 2011) features Adam Growe, host of Discovery Channel Canada’s hit show Cash Cab. With the right answers, audience members can win money right out of Adam’s pocket.

The 2011/2012 Mainstage Dance Series presents world-renowned hip-hop dance company Rennie Harris Puremovement (February 23 & 24, 2012), and Diavolo Dance Theater (March 13 & 14, 2012) whose spectacular gymnasts, dancers, actors and surrealistic props create a sense of daring and risk-taking. Keigwin + Company (March 30 & 31, 2012) will showcase a knockout fusion of pop culture and high art.

The 2011/2012 Mainstage Music Series presents world-renowned hip-hop dance company Rennie Harris Puremovement (February 23 & 24, 2012), and Diavolo Dance Theater (March 13 & 14, 2012) whose spectacular gymnasts, dancers, actors and surrealistic props create a sense of daring and risk-taking. Keigwin + Company (March 30 & 31, 2012) will showcase a knockout fusion of pop culture and high art.

The Teetotallers featuring founder and host Isaiah Sheffer. Aquila Theatre Company will stage two performances. The Importance of Being Earnest (February 3, 2012), Oscar Wilde’s wildly funny portrayal of the British upper class. The following night the renowned company breathes fresh life into Shakespeare’s Macbeth (February 4, 2012).

The 2011/2012 Mainstage Celtic Series presents four unforgettable bands in the Scots-Irish tradition. Irish-American supergroup Solas (February 10, 2012) is ranked among the “most exciting bands anywhere in the world” by Irish Echo.

With its bass driven grooves and inventive arrangements, Lúnasa (March 24, 2012) was recently featured on Natalie Merchant’s landmark project, Leave Your Sleep. With lush orchestration, Téada (May 11, 2012) revels in the vibrant, traditional music of Ireland. Marvel at the sound of three world-class musicians when The Teetotallers featuring John Doyle, Martin Hayes and Kevin Crawford (May 24, 2012) perform.

The 2011/2012 Mainstage Special Attractions Series showcases five performances that cross multiple genres. Doc Watson & David Holt (October 15, 2011) share their love of bluegrass, traditional American music and stories. Tis the season for A Swannanoa Solstice (December 18, 2011), featuring Al Petteway, Amy White and Robin Bullock who are joined by a wealth of storytellers, dancers and special guest musicians.

Pianist Christopher O’Riley (March 3, 2012) is not to be missed. Irish-born and now-Asheville resident Danny Ellis holds audiences spellbound with his powerful work 800 Voices (March 9, 2012). The following night Danny Ellis and his band perform An Irishman in America (March 10, 2012).

The 2011/2012 Mainstage Young Audiences Series is open to school groups, home-
Meet the Artist Tour with Hoss Haley

Hoss Haley’s artwork is all over Asheville this summer — an impressive granite and bronze fountain in Pack Square, a shiny stainless steel pergola over the stage with the County Courthouse and City Hall as a backdrop, a magazine cover in July and an exhibit at Blue Spiral 1 Gallery through September.

Grab this rare opportunity to meet the man behind these public and private works of art on Monday, August 8 when Hoss Haley conducts a Meet the Artist Tour of his two works of art in Pack Square Park, in Asheville. Both pieces interpret the landscape surrounding the city. In the case of the fountain, over five different ones have vied for attention in Pack Square since the park was created over a century ago. Haley knew he wanted something different from all of them — something reflecting a contemporary feel and personality of the city today.

The Meet the Artist Tour with Hoss Haley, begins on the stage under the pergola in front of the County Courthouse and City Hall at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, August 8, rain or shine.

After the tour Posana Caffé invites you to walk across the street and enjoy delicious hors d’oeuvres created to satisfy your palate on a summer evening. Continue to ask questions and relax with a beverage from the cash bar.

*The tour with Hoss and reception at Posana Caffé are $25 per person. $15 for members of the Friends of Pack Square Park. Space is limited so make your reservation today by calling (828) 252-2300 by August 7. Everyone must have a ticket to attend this event.*

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

Dedicated to Peace Lovers Everywhere

Wednesday, September 21

4:30 to 7:30 PM

Pack Square
Downtown Asheville

FREE MUSIC
Open to All
Great Folks Speaking Great Words
Youth Happenings
Pinwheels for Peace

Come Declare PEACE in Asheville!
internationaldayofpeaceasheville.wordpress.com

Locations: Asheville Pizza & Brewing, Posana Cafe, and Tryon Theater

For details visit www.aicff.org or call (828) 298-4789

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Diana Wortham Theatre – Possibilities: An Evening with Linda Lavin & Friends – takes place April 28, 2012. The 8:30 p.m. performance is preceded by a special 7:30 p.m. VIP reception.

Tickets for all performances available after August 18. Purchase three or more shows and take 10% off all regularly priced tickets; purchase five or more shows and take 15% all regularly priced tickets; and purchase seven or more shows and take 20% off all regularly priced tickets.

**Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place. Tickets on sale August 18 for all events. For a season brochure or more information please call the box office at (828) 257-4530 or visit www.dwtheatre.com.**
Hello! This month I went to see Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part Two, and I give it five stars. If you are even a small fan of Harry Potter you will absolutely love this movie.

I have read all of the Harry Potter books so every time I watch one of the movies I compare it to the book, and I must say that Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part Two compared very well with its corresponding book. Of course, the movie did differ in a few ways though, but what movie doesn’t?

This movie contained lots of action, a good bit of humor, and a few sad moments. This movie is quite amazing and does an excellent job of summing up all the movies. I highly recommend this film for anyone 11 and up. I would also like to thank the Carmike 10 theater in Asheville for giving me a reviewer’s pass to see this movie.
**HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH ROCK ASHEVILLE**

**by Amanda Leslie**

The glam-rock musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* opens Wednesday, August 24 at NC Stage in downtown Asheville. This cult hit, about the transgendered singer Hedwig, is by John Cameron Mitchell, with music and lyrics by Stephen Trask. It was later turned into a film starring Mitchell.

In between some of the catchiest songs you’ll ever hear, Hedwig tells her life story, from her start as a young boy named Hansel in communist East Berlin, to her botched sex-change operation and marriage to a U.S. serviceman, to her discovery of her musical gifts in a Texas trailer park. She also reveals publicly, for the first time, her scandalous relationship with mega-rock star Tommy Gnosis, the love of her life.

*Hedwig and the Angry Inch* stars Michael Sheldon, better known to Asheville audiences as drag legend Cookie LaRue. He has worked with Betterdays Productions, Asheville Vaudeville, and more drag shows in the Southeast than you can shake a can of Aqua Net at! He currently lives in Philadelphia with his partner Robert, so *Hedwig* is a rare chance for Asheville audiences to see him.

Hedwig is joined by her band the Angry Inch, made up of some of Asheville’s hardest-working musicians: Aaron Price, Caleb Beissert and Matthew Kinne.

**If You Go:** Tickets are $17 - $29, based on the day of the week, with a Pay-What-You-Can Night Wednesday, August 24. Performances are Wednesdays - Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 7 and 10:30 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. Call NC Stage at (828) 239-0263 or visit www.ncstage.org. NC Stage is located at 15 Stage Lane, Asheville NC 28801.

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**Part 2 of a 3-Part Discussion**

**CONVERSATIONS WITH Charlie Flynn-McIver**

*Hedwig and the Angry Inch* opens Wednesday, August 24 at NC Stage in downtown Asheville. In our July issue, Flynn-McIver shared the history of NC Stage Company and a few of his early experiences.

**Rapid River Magazine:** Before you were able to support yourself wholly in the theatre, what kind of jobs did you have?

**Charlie Flynn-McIver:** Oh man. Well, the main day job I had in NY was data entry for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. That was a great day job because they were all theatre people and let you go on auditions and jobs and welcomed you back with open arms. Plus, it was such a great cause. But I’ve done all sorts of things. Mainly I did temp work in offices around Manhattan. But I’ve also done teaching work, educational theatre performances for schools.

The weirdest job I had was for a private investigator in NY. I did a lot of surveillance work for him. I’m not at liberty to discuss it in detail...just kidding...it was really mundane stuff. A client would hire the PI trying to prove something in court and the PI would send me out to scope out the situation. One time I had to put on a suit, drive out to NJ, get on a bus, and travel to Wall Street. All the time, writing down information about the bus route.

One time I had to sit in a car for 3 days and write down how many bottles and of what color, were turned in to a recycling center in the Bronx.

**RMR:** You direct, produce, act and write. What is your first love and why not just act or just direct or...?

**CFM:** To be clear, I don’t really write. I’ve helped on a few things but not done the original writing. I think the thing I have the most experience with and am like a fish in water is, is acting. I really love producing though.

Not to be over dramatic, but it really takes it out of me to act. The hours of running the theatre, raising money, managing a staff, planning for future productions, dealing with cash flow and budgets, attending meetings, planning fundraisers, AND rehearsing 36 hours a week and doing 6 shows a week...did I mention that I have 2 kids?...it’s just too much sometimes.

There was a stretch last year where I didn’t have a day off from work for about 9 months. And there’s no getting out of producing for me. Not until we’re a little bigger. So I’d like to direct a little more and be able to leave the theatre a little more. But really, I’m only in about one show a year. Last year I was in 2 but that was not the norm.

**RMR:** How is a play formed in your mind before rehearsals start, and what kind of criteria become important when you select a play to stage?

**CFM:** We try to choose plays that we like. Seems kind of goofy to say that, but that’s pretty true. And plays we like tend to be plays that are entertaining but have some substance. We also like plays that have harder themes but are also accessible. Our goal at NC Stage is to figure out what the intent of the playwright is and produce that on stage. We don’t try to put our stamp on it or our own political views on it, like doing Shakespeare set in the White House or something like that.

We are attracted to a story that tells what we think is a truth about the human experience. That’s not as limiting as it might seem. It includes tragedies, dramas and comedies. In fact, the truth of the human condition the playwright taps into is what makes the play particularly tragic, dramatic, or funny.

We’re not attracted to dogmatic or didactic plays and we don’t like plays that wrap everything up at the end in a nice little package. We prefer plays that raise more questions than answers because we think that’s the way life really is. Much more grey than black and white.

**RMR:** Do you have any commercial concern when you start to prepare a play? How does this affect the development stage of the play?

**CFM:** Sure. Aside from the question of whether anyone will come to see a particularly play, there are all sorts of concerns, commercially and financially. On some shows we’re required to use a certain amount of union actors and stage managers and that can raise the cost up quite a bit. Do we do a smaller show? Does that bring in as many audiences as a larger show? How much is it going to cost to build that set, how much will shop rental be? Where will we rehearse it? Etc.

We have tried to make a lot of those things second nature, using the same builder for multiple shows, we have a dedicated rehearsal and class space we pay for year round out at the Riverside Business Park. Those kinds of things make it so we don’t have to find things like that as we start to develop a production. But, it adds to the overhead of the organization. It’s a big balancing act that there isn’t a magic formula for. At least that I’ve discovered.

**RMR:** Where do you see live theatre in the Asheville area in five years?

**CFM:** That’s a good question. When we were first starting NC Stage, when it was just Angie and me meeting in our Brooklyn apartment with a full pot of coffee or three and talking about how we should go about this thing, there was an article in the paper about the boingyng theatre scene in Asheville including, I think, 3 professional theatres. 5 years later, there was only one left. So there will be some attrition in the theatre world but then others will pop up. As it always does.

We have at least two new theatre spaces with as many theatre companies opening in the past 12 months and I think there’s another one in West Asheville that’s opened up. Theatre is the passion of a lot of people who feel it’s important to tell a compelling story in this manner.

Now, whether or not there is enough demand in the public for buying tickets to such events is another story. There is a movement in theatre to find your tribe. Scott Walters talks a lot about this on his blog mentioned earlier. It’s different than finding the market niche you can sell to. It’s more about finding the people that share your values and for whom you perform mainly.

It feels like theatre is moving more toward this idea. But I think a lot of people who do theatre feel that this is not them. They feel that everyone should love what they do and flock to their performances. I think theatre folks should figure out who they’re having this theatrical conversation with and continue that discussion and then maybe the individual tribes can branch out and experience other theatre companies.

And a word about the word professional. That word gets bandied about rather loosely. And it means different things to different people.

*‘Charlie Flynn-McIver’ continued on page 28*
Would you rather be amused, amazed, or both?

Asheville’s only professional Equity theatre, performing in the heart of downtown.

www.ncstage.org 828.239.0263
As I mentioned last issue our theme this time around is: “Keep it local.” We are so fortunate to have an abundance of fine musicians in the area, and Rapid River Magazine is committed to supporting them. Given the variety of styles covered, I am going to forego my usual rating system and simply share a bit about each album. Visit the artist’s website to sample or purchase a few tunes, and if you like what you hear, be sure to support the many local independent record stores that carry the CDs. “Keeping it local” should be more than just a bumper sticker!

Vince Junior
the last tear
VinceJunior.com

That Vince Junior manages to juggle fatherhood, a career as a fourth grade teacher, and his musical outings is remarkable enough, but that he is able to make records – however infrequent – as satisfying as this one is even more so. The last tear is a generous collection of sixteen songs (fifteen of which are originals) exploring such basic themes as family, romance, and the seemingly mundane challenges of everyday life.

The overall tone is jaunty and upbeat, threaded with a recurrent theme extolling wise acceptance of the absurdities that inevitably come our way. “Cincinnati ’79” is the obvious exception: it’s a mournful rumination on the tragic stampede at a concert by The Who that left eleven young fans dead, an event that the artist witnessed first hand.

On hand to assist Vince Junior (whose own blues-infused resonator guitar work is stellar) are a number of Asheville’s finest musicians, many of whom share the sacred calling of teaching and each of whom demonstrate just how sonically blessed our fair city is. The end result is a smart collection of songs that should appeal to the grown ups among us. Just don’t be too surprised if you find the kids dancing along!

Charlie Van Buskirk
darkroom

A longtime fixture on the Asheville scene as both musical supporter and host, Van Buskirk has finally made good on his promise to record his own music. Assisted by local ubiquitous producer/ace of all trades Chris Rosser, Van Buskirk has recorded a gathering of songs that speak directly to matters of the heart.

The album is an unapologetic love song to both his late wife Barbara and his beloved daughter Sara, and while such personal statements can often veer into mawkishness, Van Buskirk has always been a behind the scenes part of that community, eager to lend a helping hand to others. Darkroom provides many of them with an opportunity to give in return. They, and Van Buskirk himself, have done so with class and distinction.

Jamie Laval
Murmurs and Drones
JamieLaval.com

While I confess that my affection for Celtic music is at best minimal, there is an undeniable beauty to master violinist Laval’s playing that renders such prejudices meaningless. Having worked extensively as a recording musician, all the while racking up an impressive number of awards and citations, Laval is the very definition of a consummate musician. But what really elevates his music to a higher plane is the sincerity and exuberance he brings to the table.

Having engaged in many a passionate concert with Laval, I can attest that the man lives and breathes music; he’s in constant motion, looking for new and improved ways to express his art. That makes Murmurs and Drones more than just a “pleasant” listen – a description that I suspect might make Laval cringe – but one that demands your attention and rewards such with continual depth and rediscovery.

Each subsequent listen has revealed, even to my Celtic-challenged ears, new sounds, intonations, and subtle shifts in tenor that might yet help me see why Laval is so in love with the generational traditions of Scotland and Ireland. So while I’m not yet ready to sell my home and move to Brittany I will gladly admit that Murmurs and Drones has made me realize there’s much more to Celtic music than bagpipes and kilts.

Dan Walters
Invisible/Speak of Love
DanWaltersMusic.net

While he may be a longtime resident of central Florida, Walters’ connection to our area runs deep. He’s a Beale Chere fixture moving and reserved. And while Van Buskirk’s voice is somewhat limited in range, he smartly works within such restrictions, relying instead on his skill for engaging hooks and pleasing melody. In many ways this disc exemplifies the Asheville musical community at its best. Van Buskirk has always been a behind the scenes part of that community, eager to lend a helping hand to others. Darkroom provides many of them with an opportunity to give in return. They, and Van Buskirk himself, have done so with class and distinction.

Typically holding court as bassist for the Reverend Billy C. Wirtz – and has played with as many regional bands as anyone, Walters is the consummate utility man; these days he balances playing keyboards with guitar great Les Dudek while plying his own guitar skills with an assortment of world/folk and jazz ensembles.

In the past year Walters has released a pair of fine discs, each distinct unto themselves and each giving ample evidence of his talents and stylistic leanings. Invisible is deeply steeped in his love of 60s classic rock/blues: “Sense of Time” sounds for all the world like a lost tune from the Blues Magoos (including some delicious psychedellic era flourishes) while the wounded heartbreak of “Belong” would have fit in nicely on either of Dennis Wilson’s solo albums. With a few exceptions Walters plays the entire affair, giving Invisible a consistency that belies its genre hopping revelry.

Speak of Love leans a bit more towards Walters’ affection for Gypsy Jazz – best heard in “Europe Approaching (parts one and two)”, but it’s no less intoxicating in its reach and grasp. Both discs are sonic delights, replete with charming Beach Boy-like harmonies and the sort of studio concocting that would make Jeff Tweedy blush. I am simply amazed at Walters’ talents, and equally stumped as to how he’s managed to remain so woefully neglected.

Without the slightest bit of thought I can mention dozens of musicians whose talents are dwarfed by his but no doubt out sell him a hundred to one. I know life isn’t fair but we can all do our part to balance the scales by purchasing a Dan Walters CD or two. You won’t be sorry.

Albatross Party
Glass
AlbatrossParty.com

From the opening helter skelter guitar/piano drive of “Fall” to the closing dreamscape of “Rocketship,” this sophomore album is a stunning revelation of just how ripe the musical talent in our fair town is. Here’s a band that comes out of seemingly nowhere, has been together for a relatively short time and played only a handful of gigs, and yet
Albatross Party: Making Their Musical Mark

By James Cassara

Once of the nicest perks about covering the local music scene are the people I meet and the serendipitous ways in which associations are made.

An email I received a few weeks back from singer/pianist Tiziana Severe of the supremely talented band Albatross Party is one such example. She inquired about getting some coverage for a few upcoming shows, a request which, despite my thinking I knew nothing about the band, I was more than happy to grant.

Meeting over coffee (how *very* Asheville!) I was immediately struck by her boundless energy, creative intensity, and gregarious nature. In the course of our conversation I realized I had seen the band as an opener for The Checksters. “You guys were great!” I told her with complete sincerity. At the time I was more than happy to grant.

So while I make no claim that only in Asheville could these conversations take place, it does seem there’s something uniquely wonderful about a town small enough for people to gravitate within the same circles while attracting creative individuals who might normally make their way to Greenwich Village or Berkeley. What better way to celebrate such a balance then hearing from the artist herself? Ok, so here it goes.

James Cassara: Talk about the band. How did Albatross Party come together? Were you initially attracted by musical interests, friendships, or some combination thereof?

Tiziana Severe: Albatross Party began in the summer of 2005, when The Shuffle Board City Allstars fell apart. That band was Andy Bishop, Brent Baldwin (my then boyfriend, now husband) Eddie Knighton and Ted Salvatore. Ted quit the band, leaving it sans drummer, which meant no more playing out. Brent and I had JUST started dating, and I happened to mention that I played keys and sang a little.

It took a long time for Andy and Eddie to come around, but over beers one night we got to screwing around and made up a little rap song. Eddie said maybe we could play seriously some time, so we found a drummer and Albatross Party was born.

JC: As my review indicates, I am wonderfully impressed by the album. It sure doesn’t sound like a first effort. How much recording experience did you guys have?

TS: Albatross Party released its first self-titled album in August 2009. But Brent and Andy have been making music together for over 10 years. Plus, Andy owns and operates Giraffe Studio, a recording studio in Hendersonville. He recorded both of our albums, so I think his experience as a professional audio engineer really contributes a LOT to the professional sound of our final results.

JC: You’re still at a stage where the band

‘Albatross Party’ continued on page 11
music

The Very Talented and Beguiling Angela Easterling

When no less an iconic figure than Byrds founder and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Roger McGuinn dubs you one of the “bright shining stars on the horizon,” the pressure to live up to such lofty expectations must be tremendous.

McGuinn has gone on to add, “Her gift is so special [it] brought me back to the time the Byrds recorded Sweetheart of the Rodeo – tradition meets youthful exuberance.” That’s some high praise indeed, but for Greenville, SC native Amy Easterling it’s a call to arms, a challenge to recommit to being the very best musician she can.

Hers is a story of talent, timing, and location. She was exposed to a healthy dose of traditional, rife with the type of good fortune and timing that doesn’t mean a thing if the talent isn’t there. Fortunately for all of us it is.

Born and raised in Greenville, SC, where she was exposed to a healthy dose of music from the Carter Family, Loretta Lynn, and others, Easterling moved to Los Angeles after college, hoping to further her musical ambitions. She quickly learned the Catch-22 of working in a music industry-heavy scene. “I had to work a day job to pay my bills, but I spent so much time working, I couldn’t play music and totally lost track,” she says. “To get yourself out there, you have to tour, so why am I paying this high rent if I’m never going to be here anyway?”

So Angela Easterling went back to the South, and in an almost providential manner, found everything she needed in her own backyard, including a permanent band and a constant stream of inspiration all around her.

The result is a new album, nominally named after the band she formed upon her return to Spartanburg. The trio, which features Easterling, guitarist Brandon Turner and drummer Jeff Hook, are keen on music that draws you in with gentle and well crafted songs. The lyrics might address political and social issues head on, but they do so without the slightest hint of proselytizing.

Likewise the arrangements, while easily absorbed, are deceptively complex. It’s an approach which serves her well. To “beguile” means to charm or enchant, and Angela Easterling quite convincingly does just that. As with her previous release, the record was produced by lauded singer-songwriter Will Kimbrough, currently serving as Emmylou Harris’ lead guitarist and known for his work with folks like Rodney Crowell, Todd Snider and Jimmy Buffett. Also helping out in the studio are bassist Byron House (from Robert Plant’s Band of Joy) and noted multi-instrumentalist Fats Kaplin.

A pair of South Carolina songbirds, Starling McLean (longtime harmony singer for Emmylou Harris) and folk-pop artist Hannah Miller are also on hand. While the diversity of musicianship is different this go around, Beguiler keeps in line with the themes of her other efforts.

“I wouldn’t call myself a political songwriter, but I’m a curious person, and if I listen to an album in which all songs are about one topic I get bored. I want to sing about things that are important to me,” she says, “But I don’t want to sound preachy or trite. So I try to do this by telling a story that sometimes in an illusory way.

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‘Angela Easterling’ continued on page 11

WNC Jazz Profiles: JE Widenhouse and the Firecracker Jazz Band

Here’s the saga of WNC’s Firecracker Jazz Band…related by founder JE (pronounced “Jay”) Widenhouse:

I’m from Concord, North Carolina. I played trumpet in the marching band in high school. Both there and in college I studied jazz with Bill Hanna, who still plays piano and trombone in Charlotte. I studied for two years at Appalachian State, but dropped out in 1987 to start touring with a rock group with a horn section. I’ve been doing the performing music thing ever since.

The Firecracker Jazz Band idea started in the summer of 2003 when Bill Smith, now with The Truth and Salvy Company, came over to visit me. He thought we could put together a traditional jazz band with Reese Gray and Joe Edel. Joe and Joe had played around town with a local group called Scrappy Hamilton. Reese had performed with me in the Squirrel Nut Zippers.

Our first shows were at Tressa’s downtown and grew out of a “Traditional Jazz Night”… It was there where I said to Bill, “I’d like to call our project “The Firecracker Jazz Band”. Everyone was challenged to come up with a better name. No one did, so we stuck with it. Shortly thereafter, I got approached by Chris Jones, who’d opened a New Orleans themed restaurant called “Thibadeaux Jones” with his wife Ashley Thibadeaux, and asked if they’d like to have music in their restaurant. Immediately, many local musicians came to our performances to support the project.

Our reputation has grown and ever since I’ve been leading the band, with a lot of help from our trombonist Earl Sachais. We’ve had many personnel changes over the years so there’s a growing list of Firecracker Alumni. To do a Traditional Band right, you need seven players. We’ve always had six live on stage that make for a great sound and reminds me of Lester Bowie or Steven Bernstein… creating something new while drawing from the tradition.

“While traveling with the Squirrel Nut Zippers on our 2007-2009 victory lap tours, I managed to get the Firecracker opening slots in a half dozen East Coast venues. We’ve played at Bele Chere, LEAF, Montford Music and Arts Festival, White Squirrel Festival in Brevard, French Broad River Festival and more. After seven years, we’ve accumulated quite a rep sheet.

I’m motivated to keep the band together by my own ambition to perform wherever I can get a booking, and by my belief that people should experience live music. Traditional Jazz grew alongside a dance culture in the early 20th century in New Orleans, New York, Chicago, LA, Texas and anywhere a hall that could get a dance band. I want to do my part with The Firecracker Jazz Band to grow a dance culture and see it thrive!”

~ JE Widenhouse

“The audience has given (the new) Firecracker Jazz Band a positive and welcome response. There’s always a chance that when new members (in this case four, to be exact) come into a group, they’re sometimes not well received by the fans. This is not the case with FJB. They come to dance and dance they do - they love the new songs and the new singers. The dancers react to the strong rhythm and the high energy by getting out on the dance floor and dancing their butts off.”

~ Drummer Russ Wilson

www.firecrackerjazz.com

Share Eddie LeShure's passion for Jazz with Jazz Unlimited on MAIN FM each Wednesday
7-10 p.m., at 103.5 or MAIN-FM.org.
Wood Day on August 13

The Folk Art Center in east Asheville will host its annual celebration of wood crafts at Wood Day on August 13 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The festivities include live demonstrations and the Eleventh Annual Carve-Off Competition from 1 to 3 p.m. For the contest, participants have two hours to turn a simple block of wood into a work of art. Carvers must sign up by 12:30 to participate.

The Folk Art Center’s auditorium will be filled with lathes, sawhorses, wood tools and the master craftsmen who know how to use them. Demonstrations include wood turning, broom making and furniture design and construction. The Carolina Mountain Woodturners will help visitors try working on a lathe. Southern Highland Craft Guild members Sandra Rowland and Jan Morris will host activities for children.

Admission to Wood Day and the Folk Art Center is free. The Folk Art Center is located at milepost 382 on the Blue Ridge Parkway in east Asheville. Headquarters to Wood Day on August 13 will be filled with grants and bookstore.

The Folk Art Center also houses the Southern Highland Craft Guild, the Center also houses three galleries, a library, Allanstand Craft Shop and a Blue Ridge Parkway Information Desk and bookstore.

The Southern Highland Craft Guild is a non-profit, educational organization established in 1930 to bring together the crafts and the people of the Southern Highlands for the benefit of shared resources, education, marketing and conservation. The Southern Highland Craft Guild is an authorized concessioner of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

For tickets and more information call (828) 298-7928 or visit www.craftguild.org.

— RAPID RIVER ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE — August 2011 11
Beginners

Short Take: A humorous and heartfelt story of a son coming to grips with life and love in the wake of his father's death.

REEL TAKE: Director Mike Mills', Beginners tells the story of a young man coming to grips with life and love after his father's death. Oliver (Ewan McGregor) is a melancholy man in his late 30's. After his mother's death, Oliver's father, Hal (Christopher Plummer), tells him that he is gay, that he has always been gay (even though he was married to his mother for forty-four years), and that he no longer wants to be.

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Christopher Plummer and Ewan McGregor star in Beginners.

Arthur is Hal's dog, who becomes Oliver's constant companion after Hal's death. Arthur's dialogue is even subtitled when he and Oliver ‘talk’. Aptly titled, Beginners is a story of new beginnings and fresh starts, none of which come with an instruction manual. The story and the actors bring such honesty to their parts it is truly touching. I liked the film (a lot) and it's a good film, but I wanted to love it, and it could have been a great film. I'm not quite sure what missed the mark to bring it to that level, but it did. It could have been the combination of the stylized narrative sequences in conjunction with the non-linear chronology. Perhaps they should have chosen one over the other.

Either way Beginners is good little film and it stays with you. It deserves to be seen and enjoyed. The blockbusters aren't going anywhere any time soon, but little indie gems like Beginners don't stay long.

Rated R for some language and sexual content.

Review by Michelle Keenan

Buck

Short Take: Superb documentary on Buck Brannaman, the inspiration for Robert Redford's The Horse Whisperer, is a textbook example of how to make a film about a living person and make it entertaining as well as informative.

REEL TAKE: Even people who are not into horses read Nick Evans' novel The Horse Whisperer and even more saw Robert Redford's 1998 film version thanks to the star power of Redford himself. Very few people know that the character is based on a real life person named Buck Brannaman who works with horses and achieves remarkable things with them (without whispering).

One of the main reasons that Buck is such an interesting documentary is the man himself. Raised to be a rodeo performer (he did roping tricks blindfolded) by an incredibly abusive father, he was eventually placed in a foster home that gave him the power of Redford himself. Very few people know that the character is based on a real life person named Buck Brannaman who works with horses and achieves remarkable things with them (without whispering).

The original "Horse Whisperer" Buck Brannaman and one of his charges in the remarkable documentary Buck.

Like any good documentary we have lots of interviews of people who have known or have worked with Buck over the years including Robert Redford whose anecdotes about the making of The Horse Whisperer (on which Buck was technical adviser) along with clips from the movie itself, help to give us a deeper understanding about the man and his methods and show us why he is successful.

Director Cindy Meehl has no cinematic tricks up her sleeve to try and fancy up her presentation and that comes as a relief. She has the "horse sense" to let the story tell itself and thanks to her judicious use of editing and visual composition, we stay involved emotionally and intellectually. My litmus test for a documentary on a subject I

Questions/Comments?
You can email Chip or Michelle at reeltakes@hotmail.com
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2

Harry Potter is a phenomenon that has defined a generation. I grew up with Harry Potter, looking forward eagerly to each new book and movie but now, it’s true that “it all ends here.” David Yates, the director of the last 2 Harry Potter films, certainly has a tough task to tackle—tying together all of the series’ loose ends and satisfying Rowling’s droves of fans.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 ended with Voldemort acquiring the world’s most powerful wand, the Elder Wand. All that remains is for Harry to find the remaining horcruxes and for the two adversaries to duel. They do, amidst an epic battle at Hogwarts. In fact, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 is the most adrenaline-packed and violent Harry Potter film of all.

I was neither delighted with Deathly Hallows: Part 2 nor disappointed with it. Sometimes the pace seems rushed, as though the director wanted to fit in every event but didn’t care about the quality. The film has far less dialogue than the other Potter installments, but the few scenes with conversations seem to drag on. Still Yates does a fine job of including enough details to satisfy Potter devotees and while making nostalgic references to previous movies in the series.

The tone of the eighth movie is much different than the others. It has an atmosphere that is very similar to the Lord of the Rings films. In fact my Dad and I both bemoan the fact that this last movie seems to have lost its distinctive Potter identity. Nonetheless, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 is the most successful movie of all. Last but not least, I do not understand why, after breaking the last book into two movies, director David Yates literally rushed the film to its climactic end. After all these years and some fairly long running times, this is THE film they could have taken just a bit more time with a few more details of the story.

That said, the merits of the performances and the story outweigh the negatives. Harry Potter films have brought joy and magic the world over and this one is no different. J.K. Rowling could never have known the impact her creation would have, but the world is the better for it. The boy wizard is all grown up. Good triumphs over evil. Love conquers all. What more is there to say?

Rated PG-13 for some sequences of intense action violence and some frightening images.

REEL TAKE: From its humble beginnings as screenplays on a cocktail napkin to literary phenomenon and box office smash, the story of the boy wizard named Harry Potter has come to an end. It’s been ten years since Warner Brothers first adapted J.K. Rowling’s first book, “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone”. At the same time Rowling had not yet even completed the series of books, and Harry Potter fans anxiously anticipated each book and film with equal enthusiasm. Seven books and seven movies later, fans broke box office records with final installment of the series, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2.

As audiences braced for the final showdown between the boy wizard and “he who shall not be named,” Warner Brothers braced for its own vault of gold at Gringot’s. Neither filmmaker nor film maker were likely disappointed with the result. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 delivers exactly what most people expect and then some. It is a fitting, albeit slightly hurried, ending to the franchise.

In rendering my opinion of the film I considered it from the perspective of a reader of the books and from the perspective of someone who has only seen the films. This film picks up exactly where Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1 left off (if you need me to explain that, stop reading – this movie isn’t for you). While it is not the best of the films, it is thrilling and it packs enough emotional wallop from the book to satisfy most people.

I confess to being grateful for seeing it in 3-D, not because it was necessary (it’s not), but because the large dark glasses hid my face awash with tears at a few junctures of the story. Most of the world has watched Harry, Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson) and the rest of their Hogwarts friends grow from childhood to adulthood.

Over the years the most impressive of the lot are Daniel Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis as Neville Longbottom. Radcliffe honed his chops immersed in the who’s who of Britain’s thespians (as most have had parts at one point or another in the Harry Potter franchise). Now Radcliffe can go toe-to-toe with them as a peer, as is evident in scenes with Professor Snape (Alan Rickman), Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) and Dumbledore (Michael Gambon). All of the performances are strong, but ultimately Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 is Radcliffe’s and Rickman’s picture.

On the downside the battle scenes between at Hogwarts against Voldemort’s army of death eaters were a touch too Lord of the Rings for my taste. I never pictured the battles scenes quite like that and somehow the Harry Potter movies have done well at depicting exactly what Rowling conjures in the mind’s eye.

I also didn’t care for Alexandre Desplat’s score. It too was a little too Lord of the Rings-ish and was not harmonious with the themes long associated with the Harry Potter movies by John Williams. Last but not least, I do not understand why, after breaking the last book into two movies, director David Yates literally rushed the film to its climactic end. After all these years and some fairly long running times, this is THE film they could have taken just a bit more time with a few more details of the story.

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‘Movies’ continued on page 14
Her daughter, however, encourages her to keep playing as she notices the beneficial changes in her mother. Under Kroger’s tutelage she blossoms and he encourages her to enter a local tournament where she is the only woman there.

Within this basic plotline derived from Pygmalion, first time director Caroline Bottaro makes a number of observations on the nature of not only relationships but of economic class differences and of people’s ingrained attitudes. It is these observations that help to give the film added resonance that keeps you interested and remains with you after the film is over.

What is essentially a two character screenplay rises or falls on the performances of the two leads and here the two performances cannot be bettered. Kevin Kline embodies the widower who is brought back from the dead by his cleaning lady’s interest in the game of chess, a hobby he doesn’t expect to life by his cleaning lady’s interest in the game. Kevin’s change is gradual and Bonnaire allows us to witness the various stages of her transformation in subtle ways. I always find it a pleasure to watch a character discover his or her potential and then be able to use it for their benefit.

Like many European films, Queen to Play is more concerned with character development and storyline than with fast pace or hyperactive visuals. If you don’t mind the leisurely pace, aren’t annoyed by subtitles, and have an interest in the game of chess, then you’ll find Queen to Play a game worth playing.

This film is not rated but contains adult situations and language.

**Review by Chip Kaufmann**

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**Tree of Life ★★★★★**

**Short Take:** Armchair philosopher and occasional film maker Terrence Malick’s Palme d’Or winning reflection on life.

**REEL TAKE:** Days of Heaven and Thin Red Line director Terrence Malick doesn’t direct often, but when he does it makes it count. I had heard that Terrence Malick’s Palme d’Or winning Tree of Life was a bit of a cinematic sermon that you either love or hate. I didn’t dislike it, but … I don’t actually see how anyone could come out of this film saying they loved it or declaring it a masterpiece. To be sure, Tree of Life is a beautiful film and a cosmic opus of sorts, but it is also a deliberately and madly abstract (maybe even pretentious) work. At its roots, Malick’s rumination on life is nothing any human hasn’t pondered before, and to me, his abstractness might make it interesting, but does not make it great.

Tree of Life starts with the fade in of an enigmatic light and a voice reading from the book of Job, which gives way to the cosmic touchstones throughout the film. However, the story (such as it is) is centered around a family in Texas in the 1950s. Early on it looks like the O’Briens are the quintessential American family — a beautiful young couple and their beautiful children living in a quintessential American neighborhood and enjoying a quintessential American life.

There is no narrative story and the film jumps in time from big bang to modern day, but it’s the experiences of this family and the questions they pose to God which are at the core of the film.

Brad Pitt is Mr. O’Brien, a frustrated man who gave up his aspirations of being a great concert pianist to live the American dream. While affectionate and generally well meaning, he is strict and unyielding and his frustrations get the better of him from time to time. Those frustrations are taken out mostly on his wife (Jessica Chastain), and his eldest son Jack (played Hunter McCracken) when he’s a boy, and Sean Penn as an adult. Jack’s strained relationship is apparently stretched even further when his little brother dies at age 19. Mind you’ve I’ve just explained this in a much more linear way than it is presented in the film, and sans the cosmic oratorio that interrupts the proceedings.

When the film jumps to modern day, it is the anniversary of the brother’s death. We see snippets of Jack at work, Jack at home, Jack on the phone with his father. Jack has obviously grown from a tormented kid into a moody mess of a middle aged man. We never see Mr. or Mrs. O’Brien in modern day, but we hear their utterances to God (or whomever) throughout the film as well as Jack’s. Mrs. O’Brien, once so filled with a childlike love of life, wonders about life and love. Mr. O’Brien, once so full of answers, asks questions. Jack is never destined for peace and happiness until he walks onto a beach in dreamlike sequence that reunites him with the 1950s version of his family and all is well. Or perhaps all is forgiven? Or maybe it’s a place where they all live in the love.

Perhaps Malick uses the abstract in part as a reflection of the questions of life, creation and purpose. Perhaps he uses the cosmic imagery in part as an answer to the question. Either way, Malick creates a film that illustrates the miracle of life and the awesomeness of the universe, but at the same time shows how frail and small we are, and asks, “Do we matter?” “What’s our purpose?” And, probably the most uttered prayer of all. “Are you there?”

Rated PG-13 for some thematic material.

**Review by Michelle Keenan**

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**Winnie the Pooh ★★★ 1/2**

**Short Take:** Disney’s return to the original Winnie the Pooh storyline has great hand drawn animation but suffers from an unfortunate music score and from being aimed too squarely at kids.

**REEL TAKE:** The original Pooh films made by Disney (The Adventures of Winnie the Pooh (1966), Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day (1968), Winnie the Pooh and Tigger Too (1974) were intended as short subjects to be shown before regular Disney features. They were collected into The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh (1977). What made them so outstanding was not only the fine hand drawn animation but also the songs by Richard M. & Robert B. Sherman who had done the songs for Mary Poppins. They appealed to adults as well as to children and that is what is absent from this latest release.

I was looking forward to seeing this reboot as it was advertised as a return to hand drawn animation with a different animator for each character just like in the old days. That part of the film lived up to the hype. It is beautiful to look at with a certain personality that no computer generated effort has yet been able to match. Each character is brought to life without that annoying “outline” that attempts to make them look more than two dimensional and so 5 stars for the look of the film and the characters.

Then we have to dock the film half a star for its excessive length. Not that it’s too long at 69 minutes but the originals clocked in at 25 minutes each and so their single storylines weren’t unnecessarily padded as this one is which makes for some dull stretches especially in the middle of the movie. There are separate storylines but they are too drawn out and sometimes dispensed with altogether which adds a subliminal sense of frustration to the proceedings.

My major objection, and this cost the film a full star, is the musical score. Rarely have I encountered songs that made me want to get up and leave. While I wasn’t expecting the Sherman Brothers, I was hoping for something with a hint of intelligence and a decent rhyme scheme but this score by Henry Jackman (I hope he’s no relation to Frank) when he’s a boy, and Sean Penn as an adult. Jack’s strained relationship is apparently stretched even further when his little brother dies at age 19. Mind you’ve I’ve just explained this in a much more linear way than it is presented in the film, and sans the cosmic oratorio that interrupts the proceedings.

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A Painter's Quest to Become an American Artist

As an immigrant from the Ukraine, life in America has not always been easy for artist and Asheville resident Olga Dorenko. She arrived in the United States in 1998 with a 12-year-old son and what they could fit into one suitcase. She did not speak English and had trouble finding work.

Now a U.S. citizen and successful artist, she gives back by using one of her best talents – painting. Dorenko wants to ensure that other immigrants have the opportunity to learn English, become American citizens and realize their dreams.

Dorenko is participating in a special event to benefit the Literacy Council of Buncombe County, an organization that teaches basic literacy and English language skills through instruction by trained volunteer tutors.

She will create an original watercolor, live on August 26 at the Literacy Council’s Authors for Literacy Dinner and Silent Auction, to be auctioned at the end of the event. The painting will incorporate natural elements of the Western North Carolina mountains, which are an inspiration to Dorenko and to the event’s keynote speaker, New York Times bestselling author, Ron Rash.

The 4th Annual Authors for Literacy Dinner and Silent Auction will take place at Crowne Plaza Resort, Friday, August 26, from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Tickets ($75) are available by contacting Ashley Vandewater at (828) 254-3442 x205. Visit www.litcouncil.com for more information.

The Secret Invasion (1964)

Having recently completed teaching a course on the Vincent Price-Edgar Allan Poe films of B Movie producer-director Roger Corman as well as shown a series of his films last month at the Hendersonville Film Society, it seems only logical and fitting that I recommend at least one film from this extraordinary individual who changed the face of moviemaking in the last half of the 20th century.

Corman has produced close to 400 films to date (he’s still active at 85), directed 56 titles himself from 1955-1990, and launched the careers of such Hollywood luminaries as Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Jack Nicholson, Robert De Niro, and Sandra Bullock. He was given a lifetime achievement Oscar last year and this year was a special honor at the Cannes Film Festival.

The film I have chosen to represent Corman is The Secret Invasion which embodies all of his best qualities. The story about criminals pressed into service during World War II sounds like The Dirty Dozen only it was made 3 years earlier and tells its story in 95 minutes as opposed to 150. It is a textbook example of effective, efficient filmmaking that is also entertaining.

Stewart Granger and Mickey Rooney head a cast whose job is to rescue an Italian partisan from deep inside an impregnable fortress. Within the first 20 minutes we meet the characters, see them try to escape, watch them go through basic training, and then see them delivered to start their mission. Along the way there are the various expected setbacks which lead to a surprising and still effective conclusion.

While there is nothing new here, the way the director utilizes his resources, the social observations of the script (a Corman trademark), and the remarkable performances allow The Secret Invasion to be placed in the upper echelon of War films. Even the “ladies” won’t have too bad a time as one of the subplots is aimed squarely at them. If you’ve never seen it then you owe yourself the pleasure of observing a master filmmaker at the height of his powers.

Bell, Book and Candle (1958)

Faced with life as a muggle and no more entries in the Harry Potter series, I was Jones’n for some magic like a chain smoker for Pall Malls. It was about this time that I revisited Bell, Book and Candle, a kooky treat from 1958 starring Jimmy Stewart, Kim Novak, and Jack Lemmon. I hadn’t seen it in years and was reminded of how cool I thought it would be a witch (Bewitched had a lot to do with that) and have a cat named Pyewacket.

Kim Novak is Gillian Holroyd a rather bohemian and carefree, beautiful witch living in New York City with her mysterious Siamese cat (non other than Pyewacket himself). When she meets publisher Shep Henderson (Stewart), the fiancé of an old college rival, she decides she’ll cast a spell on him to lure him away from the nasty Merle Kitteridge (Janice Rule). Pyewacket doesn’t take to Shep, but all goes according to plan until she finds herself doing the one thing a witch can’t do – falling in love. In this story, if a witch succumbs to love they lose their magical powers.

Of course everything gets a bit silly as Shep realizes he’s been duped. With Jack Lemmon as Gillian’s ne’er-do-well warlock brother, Elsa Lanchester as her Aunt Queenie, and Ernie Kovacs as a writer of witch books, the ensemble is full of colorful characters as the mayhem progresses. Will Shep love her if he’s not under a spell? Will she keep her magic powers? Bell, Book and Candle is much lighter fare than Vertigo, which paired Novac and Stewart together earlier that same year, and was apparently quite fun for them to make. It also shows the dawning of the beatnik scene in Greenwich Village. Bell, Book and Candle is not the beguiling world of magic from the Harry Potter stories, but it’s an awfully fun time capsule to 1958.

Special Free Book Offer!
—Pat Boone

Crashing the Dollar: How to Survive a Global Currency Collapse by Craig R. Smith was written to help save American families from the economic death spiral of a falling U.S. dollar and rising inflation.

To help prepare Americans for the dollar’s demise now, I have been authorized to offer a FREE copy of Crashing Special Free Book Offer! —Pat Boone

Call 1-866-709-3643 today!
The Asheville Ballet’s 2011-2012 Family-Focused Season

The Asheville Ballet is Asheville’s year-long resident repertoire ballet company. Seasoned ballet fans and novices alike have the opportunity to watch consummate professionals dance a wide variety of roles, from classical to contemporary, in powerful, meaningful, memorable performances.

The Asheville Ballet has produced both cutting edge interdisciplinary work and full-length major work, collaborating with other local art agencies and working live with the area’s major musical, poetic, and visual artists. They are pleased to introduce audiences to the wonders of dance for another season.

**Magic In The Moon**

“Moonshine” and “Winnie the Pooh” are the featured works in the season opener, Friday and Saturday, September 30 and October 1 at 7:30 p.m. “Pooh” retells the adventures of the loveable bear, Christopher Robin, and their forest friends, all set to the stunning music of Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony – “The Pastorale.”

“Moonshine” is an original contemporary ballet that plays on a pun – Moonshine the secret mountain liquid that kept families alive and in good “spirits” in our region, and Moonshine the mysterious force that pulls at tides and the human “spirit.” “Moonshine” is a collaboration with Troy & Sons Distillers, Troy Ball chairwoman. Troy & Sons, a craft distillery, is the first producer of legal white corn liquor, made with produce grown right here in Western North Carolina.

The abstract ballet, (don’t worry, families), moves from lyrical to percussive, to powerful, to sad, to joyously triumphant – all set to the original music of the Chapel Hill Band Kangaroo, which will perform live. We guarantee all ages will leave in good “spirits,” with this wonderful combination.

**The Nutcracker**

“The Nutcracker” has been a holiday tradition in Asheville for 37 years. This all-time favorite story of Clara’s magical midnight trip to the Land of Sweets is classical ballet at its best. The exquisite Sugar Plum Fairy and her handsome Cavalier dance their eternally lovely pas de deux, while beautiful flowers waltz, waltz, waltz. This year the ballet has new surprises you won’t want to miss. Shows are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, December 10-11, and 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, December 11-12. School shows are available during the day, Thursday, December 9.

**Sleeping Beauty**

“Sleeping Beauty” will headline the Spring Concert, held May 18-19, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. Tchaikovsky’s greatest ballet music is brought to exciting and romantic life by Asheville Ballet’s versatile dancers. The happy-ever-after fairy tale unfolds in pure classical ballet. In addition, a new contemporary work has been commissioned by choreographer Lindsey Kelley.

The Asheville Ballet offers an annual lecture series on dance appreciation. They have generated educational articles on dance for national and local publications, and they compiled a full library of dance-related materials, some rare and otherwise unavailable.

All shows are held at beautiful Diana Wortham Theatre. Ticket information and sales are available at the box office at (828) 257-4530. For more information about the company or the shows, call Ann Dunn, Director, at (828) 258-1028, or visit www.ashevilleballet.com.
**Asheville Lyric Opera’s Thirteenth Season**

The Asheville Lyric Opera (ALO) is pleased to announce its 13th season for 2011-2012 which will feature five main stage events and additional supporting programs throughout Western North Carolina.

**Madama Butterfly**

October 7 & 8, 2011 at 8 p.m.

*Madama Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini – an opera classic – features Jennifer Davis, international soprano, as she makes her debut with the ALO in the title role. Jon Truitt, acclaimed director of last season’s *The Magic Flute*, returns to direct a beautiful new production set in turn of century Japan. An audience favorite among opera fans, *Madama Butterfly* is a breath-taking and moving experience for all.

**Asheville Christmas Show**

November 18, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

A tradition of the ALO, *The Asheville Christmas Show*, now entering its 3rd year, presents seasonal solo and ensemble music on the eve of the 65th Annual Asheville Holiday Parade. This year, ALO welcomes the Asheville Choral Society, Western Carolina Rockettes, and Santa to the stage.

**Cosi fan tutte**

(*All Women Are Like That*)

February 17 & 18, 2012 at 8 p.m.

*Cosi fan tutte*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, includes the return of Dr. C. Michael Porter, former assistant music director for ALO. This Mozart classic showcases an ensemble cast in a battle of Venus vs. Mars, exploring the stereotypes in relationships within the delightful angst of finding true love.

**The Sound of Music**

April 20 & 21, 2012 at 8 p.m.;
April 22 at 3 p.m.

*The Sound of Music*, by Rodgers and Hammerstein, makes its debut at the Diana Wortham Theatre. Produced in collaboration with the ALO Education Opera program, this family favorite combines a cast of children with professional artists from Asheville. ALO adds a Sunday matinee to this production to meet growing audience demands for this popular show.

**Taste of Opera**

June 9, 2012 – Food at 6 p.m.,
concert at 7:30 p.m.

*Taste of Opera*, the fifth main stage event, explores repertoire from opera, operetta and musical theatre. Past and present favorite artists as well as new singers will fill the stage. The evening includes fine wine and gourmet food from 10 or more of Asheville’s finest restaurants. This one-of-a-kind event continues to draw appeal and delight from a variety of audience members throughout Western North Carolina.

**DEBUTS AND STAFF CHANGES**

The 2011-2012 season features the debut of director Pat Heuermann. Ms. Heuermann, now an Asheville local, is a founding member of the Atlanta Opera and former president of the National Opera Association. Ms. Heuermann will direct *Cosi fan tutte*. The Asheville Lyric Opera staff has a new Associate Artistic Director, Kristen Hedberg. Ms. Hedberg will stage direct *The Sound of Music* alongside music director/conductor, Dr. Vance Reese. Ms. Hedberg and Dr. Reese collaborated the previous five seasons on the education opera project, and mounted ALO’s successful production of *Brundibar* last season.

ALO also welcomes new Chorus Master, Andrea Blough. A regular performer with ALO, Ms. Blough was last seen as Susanna in ALO’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

An open audition call takes place for *The Sound of Music* on the evening of October 6 for any local professional artists or students. All roles are open for casting. Interested persons may contact the opera office directly for instructions. All auditions require a reservation.

ALO offers season subscriptions with discounts. Subscriptions are currently on sale through the opera office. In addition to providing discounts, subscriptions allow patrons to choose their seats for the entire season with the option of renewing the following season.

Individual tickets for all productions go on sale September 6 with the prices for *Madama Butterfly, Cosi fan tutte, and The Sound of Music* ranging from $30 – $53. Preview dress rehearsal tickets are available for student and senior citizen groups for *Madama Butterfly* and *Cosi fan tutte*. Ticket prices for the Christmas Show range from $21 – $36. Tickets for the *Taste of Opera* range from $30 – $75. Student rates are available for all productions with the exception of *Taste of Opera*.

In addition to ALO’s five main stage events, the ALO continues to sponsor and support the Metropolitan Opera Live in HD movie broadcasts, shown at Carolina Cinema on Hendersonville Road. Highlighting the season are the Met’s new productions of *Anna Bolena, Don Giovanni, Faust* and the completion of Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring Cycle*), featuring soprano Deborah Voigt.

**HISTORY**

Founded in 1999, the Asheville Lyric Opera is Asheville’s first opera company. It is recognized for its excellent artistic productions of operatic repertoire that entertain and inspire audiences, featuring world-class operatic talent performing fresh, new productions. The ALO is also a leading touring opera company, endeavoring to bring this fine art form to communities in the Southeast.

For information on season subscriptions, tickets, auditions, or to request a season brochure, please contact ALO at (828) 236-4670, or visit www.ashevillelyric.org.

Single tickets are sold solely through Diana Wortham Theatre beginning September 6, 2011. Phone the box office at (828) 257-4530 or visit www.dwtheatre.com.
Enter the rustic iron gates of Grovewood and discover a magical experience of art, craft, history, and Old World charm.

Grovewood Gallery was opened in 1992 to revitalize the Homespun Shops that once housed the famous weaving and woodworking complex of Biltmore Industries. Located next to The Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa in a 1917 English-style cottage, the gallery exhibits traditional and contemporary crafts by more than 500 artists from around the United States.

Grovewood is noted for its beautiful sculpture gardens and its impressive second floor studio furniture collection of handcrafted furniture, lighting, and decorative accessories for the home. Grovewood also presents rotating solo and group exhibitions in their downstairs Spotlight Gallery, including special exhibitions of regional importance, turned and carved wood, jewelry, fiber art, paintings and more.

Unique garden sculptures complement the beautiful natural setting of the eleven acres that surround Grovewood. Stroll the meandering ivy-bordered pathway and the immaculately maintained lawn and enjoy the panoramic views across the valley to the nearby Blue Ridge.

Beginning the first Saturday in June and going through December, Grovewood hosts their annual Sculpture for the Garden exhibition. This outdoor sculpture invitational features contemporary sculptures by nationally-recognized artists, perfect for the home or corporate installations.

Also located on the Grovewood grounds are: The Estes-Winn Antique Car Museum, The NC Homespun Museum, Grovewood Studios, and the Grovewood Cafe.

**Call for Artists: The Artery**

**Deadline: September 1, 2011 at 5 p.m.**

The Asheville Area Arts Council (AAAC) announces a call for visual artists for one-month exhibits January-June 2012, at the Artery, a multi-purpose exhibition and event facility serving as headquarters for the AAAC.

Proposals for exhibitions are juried by rotating panels of creative professionals representing various disciplines. Their selections are based on artistic merit and pursuant to the AAAC’s intent to illuminate the breadth and depth of Asheville/Buncombe’s creative sector.

Applicants must have an Alliance membership to the AAAC.

The Artery is open to artists and artist teams of all disciplines who are 18 years or older. Youth proposals are welcome with a sponsoring member. Extra consideration will be given to programs and exhibitions that serve disadvantaged or under-served populations.

For more information, or to apply, please contact the Asheville Area Arts Council, 346 Depot Street in Asheville’s River Arts District. Visit www.ashevillearts.com or email info@ashevillearts.com. Hours: Tuesday-Friday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
16 Patton Fine Art Gallery

Patton Fine Art Gallery features original work by regional artists presented in an intimate gallery setting. We specialize in fine art for residential and private collectors, including paintings, sculpture, glass, ceramics, and more.

2011 EXHIBITS

*Vol. 14, No. 12 — RAPID RIVER ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE — August 2011*

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Haywood Arts Regional Theatre

Noël Coward’s
Delightfully Witty Comedy

HAY FEVER

Haywood Arts Regional Theatre
Western North Carolina’s Award-Winning Theatre

Upcoming Productions!

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
Weekends, September 30 - October 16, 2011
Auditions: August 7 & 8

* Ah, Wilderness!
Weekends, November 11 - 20, 2011
Auditions: September 25 & 26

- Coming in 2012 -

Look Homeward Angel
Weekends, April 27 - May 6, 2012
Auditions: March 11 & 12

* The Marvelous Wonderettes
Weekends, May 25 - June 10, 2012
Auditions: April 1 & 2

* La Cage au Folles
Weekends, July 6 - 29, 2012
Auditions: May 6 & 7

* Lost in Yonkers
Weekends, August 24 - September 2, 2012
Auditions: June 24 & 25

* The Light in the Piazza
Weekends, September 28 - October 14, 2012
Auditions: August 5 & 6

* August, Osage County
Weekends, November 2 - 11, 2012
Auditions: September 16 & 17

For More Information:
www.harttheatre.com
“Mountain Groove”

Painter Marsha Hammel captures the musical personality of Western North Carolina

When the music’s playing, movement and sound are all the energy Marsha Hammel needs to take her pencil or brush in hand…and Asheville’s music scene provides plenty of that action. For decades, Hammel has portrayed musicians and dancers in her classic modernist style, but with a feel for the music that few painters can match. She describes “the groove” as it applies to both music and art:

It’s that state wherein the body, mind and brain are in equilibrium. Imagine a group of people harmonizing their voices and weaving the tones of their instruments into a flowing fabric of sound. Their listeners are experiencing this groove, too. It gives me shivers just to think about it.

The groove in painting is balance of movement and rhythm, color and form, line that engages the eye in a graceful dance. Texture and surface are part of the sound of a painting, too. The tone of the painting is the picture plane that should be holistic in its presentation to the viewer. “The line is the form” is an old mantra of mine. Each brush stroke must have purpose…the groove is pure. There is no deceit in balance or equilibrium. Trying to fake it or trying to express something that you don’t feel doesn’t work.

A confessed non-talent when it comes to music, Marsha’s skill with the brush tells the truth of her musical heart. Inspiration has come from Muses as diverse as the jazz musicians of New Orleans’ French Quarter, Miami’s Latin rhythms and the classical strains of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Now, several years after returning to her childhood home state, Marsha has turned her interest and considerable talent to the developing local music scene.

In a style all her own, Marsha has captured much of the region’s musical flavor, a collection of paintings that say as much about the place and the people who live here as the music itself. All the characters in her paintings are familiar faces, all caught up in the music and, like the artist who paints them, feeling the Groove, whether it’s bluegrass, old-time or Asheville’s familiar drum circle.

The paintings will debut at a reception on Friday, August 12 at Blackbird Frame & Art. Violinist/fiddler Natalya Weinstein will set the mood with some lively music. Be among the first to experience these unique portraits, captured on canvas by one of the best artistic talents of the mountain region.

Opening Reception on Friday, August 12, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. On display through September 10, 2011. Blackbird Frame & Art is an independent art gallery and custom frame studio owned by Pat and John Horrocks and located at 365 Merrimon Avenue in Asheville.
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36 Haywood Street • Downtown Asheville • (828) 258-2353
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Elizabeth Foley is the general manager and part owner of The Chocolate Fetish, which she owns with her parents Bill and Sue Foley. 2011 is an exciting year for The Chocolate Fetish as they celebrate their 25th year in business. This family owned business has come a long way since its humble beginnings as a small boutique chocolate shop in downtown Asheville.

Last fall they held a grand opening for the expansion of their business. The new space, adjacent to their flagship store, gives them more room to display their chocolates and offers more “elbow room” for their guests to relax and browse. They have also expanded their kitchen and shipping areas so they can keep up with demand more efficiently.

Elizabeth, a second generation chocolatier and local Asheville artist, took some time to speak with us about her chosen medium.

Rapid River Magazine: Your chosen medium requires you to create work using four of the five senses (taste, sight, smell and feel) to completely enjoy your creations. Tell us about meeting those challenges and why you chose such a difficult medium to express yourself as an artist.

Elizabeth Foley: Since I was a little girl I have wanted to be an artist. I studied art throughout high school and college and went on to work professionally as an artist in a variety of different media. I’ve always been drawn to 3-dimensional design, so when I returned to Asheville to work at my family’s shop, I began to incorporate those skills and learn how to sculpt with chocolate. It was like a light bulb turned on when I realized that I could pursue my passions for great food and art at the same time.

When I sculpt with chocolate I do face challenges because I am dedicated to using high quality chocolate and making sure that every sculpture or showpiece tastes as great as it looks. Every medium including chocolate imposes it restrictions on the artist but I find that having limitations actually encourages me to think outside the box and develop new solutions to overcoming those challenges. Being able to include taste and smell in my final products is exciting for me because very few media allow an artist to delve into these senses. It just opens up new doors and avenues for inspiration.

RRM: What sets your showpieces apart from others?

EF: A major difference between my sculptures is that I am committed to making mine completely edible and as delicious as they are beautiful. Many times people will use products like modeling chocolate or gumpaste. These products are edible but they don’t really taste good. None of my sculptures have any sort of non-edible supporting forms and they are all made of the same high quality chocolate you’ll find in the rest of the products at The Chocolate Fetish.

RRM: What kind of training have you had?

EF: Since finishing Art School I have strived to continue my education. I did an internship with a professional potter and sculptor and more recently have been studying with some of the world’s top chocolatiers including Chef Jean-Pierre Wybauw (named Chef of The Year by the Culinary Institute of America in 2002), Chef Donald Wressel (Pastry Chef of The Year by The National Pastry Team Championships in 2005), and Chef Elaine Gonzalez (Author of The Art of Chocolate). This spring I attended a course at The French Pastry School in Chicago with Chef Stéphane Leroux, who is considered to be the world’s foremost chocolate sculptors.

RRM: Tell us a little bit about your sculptures and what they are used for in people’s lives.

EF: Much of my chocolate artwork can be enjoyed as part of more everyday products such as handmade flowers that adorn our Smash Cakes™ (A Smash Cake is a cake of thin layers of chocolate that is smashed with a hammer and the pieces are shared with guests). People also enjoy chocolate sculptures as centerpieces for table settings and showpieces at special events.

I make a series of sculptures that include hand sculpted chocolate flowers and it’s great fun to break off the petals and dip them in a sauce for dessert. I also heard a great story the other day from a young girl that had purchased a chocolate high heel shoe and, after shattering it because she tried to walk in it, she ate and enjoyed it anyway.

RRM: How long does it take to make a centerpiece and how long do they last?

EF: All of this work is very time consuming. There are moments that I have to just stand with my chocolate and hands in the freezer waiting for it to set up. It probably takes a couple hours to create just the flowers that adorn some of the centerpieces. How long do they last? I guess it just depends on how long you can resist the temptation to devour them.

RRM: How has your work changed over the years and has it become more or less difficult to acquire your desired results?

EF: When I began working with chocolate I was mostly making abstract more modern art type pieces and recently I have been more focused on recreating things from nature like flowers and leaves. It has become more difficult to achieve my desired results because as I continue to learn more I continue to improve and set higher goals for myself.

RRM: Do you do custom work and do you work in any other mediums?

EF: A lot of the work I do is custom work, whether it is designing a cake for someone’s wedding or a unique sculpture for a special event. I am even working on a custom design to be displayed in the lobby of a local hotel. I have worked extensively with ceramics and also installation art. I hope

‘Chocolate Fetish’ continued on page 25
Susan West is a visionary. She has been making custom, one-of-a-kind jewelry at blue in Biltmore Village for sixteen years. She began her career as an artist in design school, where she was an apprentice for a blacksmith, an artistry she shared with her great-grandfather. Susan progressed from a blacksmith to a silversmith, and eventually to a goldsmith. Not only are each of blue’s pieces completely individual, but the customer can rest assured that the materials used were obtained in a socially and environmentally conscious manner.

Each one of Susan’s designs is completely unique: she never uses molds or repeats designs. This allows Susan to grow as an artist, and is equally rewarding for her customers who appreciate their original piece. blue’s uncompromised mission is to create exclusive, breath-taking designs that are environmentally and socially responsible.

Susan’s designs are modern, simple, and elegant. She is inspired by everything from architectural elements to nature, which allows her to offer a vast array of spectacular designs. Susan’s studio is on the second floor of blue’s gallery, in a historic cottage in the heart of Biltmore Village, and it is where all of the magic happens.

Susan and her two apprentices, Ethan and Nicholas, transform the rough hunks of metal to smooth, shiny, and/or textured pieces of art using a lost wax casting method late at night. While downstairs in the gallery, customers often ask if renovation is underway as there is so much banging and noise coming from overhead. No one ever expects the process of making beautiful, small pieces of jewelry to be so loud or dirty! Often times, someone in an apron emerges from the studio with a magnifying headpiece and a blackened face, looking much like a chimney sweep.

While there is always a huge selection to choose from in blue’s jewelry cases, many customers decide to do a collaborative design with Susan to make a custom piece. True to blue’s mission, Susan is always thrilled to use a customer’s sentimental gold and family stones to make a one-of-a-kind modern heirloom.

For years, Susan would not use diamonds in her work. It was not until she could ensure that the diamonds were truly conflict-free that she added them to her repertoire of precious and semi-precious stones. Historically, conflict diamonds have fueled devastating civil wars resulting in the loss of millions of lives. These conflict, or “blood,” diamonds are closely associated with human rights atrocities including genocide, exploitation, and children’s rights violations. Additionally, the process of acquiring diamonds can contribute to irreparable environmental damage.

blue’s diamonds are from a known and trusted single source. Many diamond retailers claim that they offer conflict-free diamonds. However, many are mistakenly misinformed about the true origin of their stones. The money exchanged in blue’s purchase of stones goes directly to the communities where they are mined.

Susan puts so much love and attention into the metal work in each piece that she is hyper-critical of the quality of stone used. She does not accept stones that are not graded as top of the line, “AA grade, natural.” Susan works with a variety of natural, hand-cut colored stones, ranging from the seven natural colors of sapphires to natural alexandrites that are free of heat or flame treating. Just as with the diamonds, the colored stones are also conflict-free.

In many areas of the world, stones are a form of currency. This means that not only were people not harmed in gathering process of the stones, but the money goes directly to the people who harvested them. This helps boost the local economy, provides money for healthcare and education in mining communities and guarantees job security for a population where a job might not be easy to come by.

In order to produce enough gold for a single gold ring, twenty tons of ore must be mined. blue’s gold is 100% recycled and comes exclusively from post-consumer sources. Many mines are also associated with the release of mercury and cyanide into local water sources, showing a clear reckless disregard for local ecosystems.

Susan works in fourteen karat white, yellow, rose, and green, as well as eighteen karat yellow and green gold. Many of Susan’s designs sport details in solid, twenty-four karat gold which allows her customers to experience the ultimate in opulence. The alloys used to create each color of gold are the highest quality, never containing sub-par “fillers” like nickel, which many are allergic to. Because of this, Susan is able to achieve the most impressively rich shades of white, yellow, rose, and green gold.

Not only does blue have a working studio that produces exquisite jewelry, but it’s gallery features some of the foremost fire artists in North America. Proudly displaying the southeast’s best selection of functional glass, Susan is constantly looking for artists who use fire to create cutting-edge work. With pieces ranging from 18” wide hand-blown cobalt vessels with a base of crystallic thorns to 24 karat gold infused champagne flutes and decanters, blue is sure to have the perfect gift for the person with everything.

blue is passionate about giving back to the community that gave so much to them. They are proud to have contributed to the American Cancer Society, the Climate Ground Zero, NC Equality, and many more local and national organizations whose missions resonate with blue. For more information about blue’s contributions, check out their “giving back” link on their website, www.bluegoldsmiths.com.

blue is also active in the local animal rights movement—a passion that runs deep through blue’s hands and into the bowls of the furry, four-legged friends who live at the store. The gallery is protected at all times by one or more of Susan’s many animals who love to watch, get in the way, and greet customers to are delighted to get their “pet-fix” while they’re on vacation and away from their own.

blue has been located in historic Biltmore Village for fourteen years. It was originally owned and occupied by the German sculptor Karl Bitter, who carved the friezes in the fireplaces at the Biltmore Estate. Through extensive renovations (and one big flood), blue still stands at 1 Swan Street surrounded by giant hand-blown glass balls, sounds of happy shoppers enjoying the deep history, and fantastic shopping that the Village has to offer.

Blue can be found online at www.bluegoldsmiths.com, which showcases their entire inventory of jewelry that is available at the gallery.
Happy Hill Restaurant
A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE SINCE 1967

The best way to tell a good restaurant is by the parking lot. If it’s full then you can pretty much assure yourself that the food is good,” says Martin Coleman a visitor of Asheville from South Carolina. “When you’re new to or visiting an area you just have to drive around and the restaurant that has the filled lot with local (license) plates is the one that not only will be serving the best food, but usually offers better and faster service than the slower ones.”

I interviewed Coleman a little over a year ago for an article on tourism and the performing arts. The above quote never ran but did stay with me because when I travel I do the same. Truth is, the locals always know where the good food is.

In West Asheville the Happy Hill Restaurant fits this description. It is a charming diner with incredible food and even more incredible service. The owners and staff greet everyone who comes in with a warm hello, and a lot they know by name. The business is family owned and was founded in 1967.

George Poulos came to Asheville from New York City looking to start his own restaurant and opened the Happy Hill just west of Asheville on Patton Ave. At the time this part of Patton Ave. was residential. There were no gas stations, no supermarkets in the area. Poulos bought an old house just off of the then two-lane road (now a four-lane road and usually bumper to bumper just after five) and turned it into a small drive through diner. He would later add on an additional dining room and purchase the house next door so he could build a parking lot.

Poulos ran Happy Hill for 14 years before leasing it to another family that kept it as Happy Hill for about another decade, before it became a Mexican restaurant for a while.

In 1985 George Poulos’s daughter Emily and her husband Mike opened Georges’ Deli in Leicester a few miles away. “Our regulars followed us to George’s,” Mike says. “And we built up a lot of new regulars. We had a wonderful time.”

The Lawrences kept George’s Deli for 24 years until they had “outgrown that location” and decided to renovate and revive Happy Hill at 1400 Patton Ave. where it all began.

“The funny part was we didn’t know what to call our new restaurant,” says Mike. “I kept hearing from our regulars and old friends (is there really any difference?) ‘So what are you going to call Happy Hill?’ ‘I don’t know,’ I told them. They kept asking and we kept trying to come up with a new name that would give people in, that would suggest what we are as a restaurant. Then one night it occurred to us that everyone including us kept referring to the place as Happy Hill. There you go.”

In 2010 Happy Hill reopened and has been an even greater success than the Lawrences even thought possible. “We’re just so grateful for all the support and love we have received from this community,” Mike says.

Happy Hill offers daily specials and if requested they will send you an email updating you on these specials. Happy Hill serves a variety of sandwiches; home style food including meatloaf or fish or chicken dishes.

Bandidos in West Asheville
INcredible lAtin InSpIred diShes

Bandidos in West Asheville is locally owned and supports local agriculture to ensure the freshest seasonal ingredients. Everything is made from scratch, in-house, daily, with the utmost care for quality and consistency. They feature their ever-changing menu on their website as to not waste paper.

Bandidos started as a local food cart selling scratch-made tamales and quickly had to move into a brick and mortar restaurant to keep up with the growing demand for quality Latin food.

“We are not a Mexican restaurant,” says Bandidos owner Justin Smudde. “We simply use Latin inspiration in all our dishes which reflect many different styles of cooking and preparation. We only carry local beers to support our local breweries.”

Before Bandidos, Smudde was best known for selling great Mexican street food downtown at the Wedge and at the Green Man Brewing Company. Smudde has been a chef for nearly 20 years and fell in love with Latin food.

“Blackened Shrimp Tacos with Mexican street corn and sides of rice and beans,” says Smudde. “Our restaurant is well known for its tamales and we also offer a variety of street tacos with a mix of meats and veggies.”

“We also offer catering for private parties, festivals, and any other special event in which we can better serve our customers.”

The menu changes frequently. All of the salsas are made fresh daily. There’s also a small selection of local beers on tap and plenty of vegetarian options.

Locals always know where to find the best food.

Happy Hill Restaurant
1400 Patton Ave
Asheville, NC 28806
(828) 258-0736

Bandidos Burritos
697 Haywood Road, Asheville, NC 28806
Dine-in, Take-Out, & Delivery
(828) 250-8681

Tuesday – Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday & Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Sunday, full menu and brunch noon to 5 p.m.

Next month Rapid River Magazine will interview Justin Smudde, owner of Bandidos.

Vol. 14, No. 12 — RAPID RIVER ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE — August 2011 25
Brews Cruise – Building Beer Communities One City at a Time

Many cities and towns across the nation have vibrant beer scenes with craft breweries, beer dinners, beer festivals, beer stores, etc. But few have what Asheville has—a community of beer enthusiasts who take pride in the beer scene, seek and share knowledge, and appreciate the social aspect it encourages. There is no better beer community than Asheville’s, which has won the Beer City title three years in a row and dominated in this year’s vote.

The “Brews Cruise” is one of the pillars of the Asheville beer scene and a driver (figuratively and literally) in its beer community. Started by Mark Lyons and his wife Trish about 5 years ago, the cruise is a guided tour of our local breweries. The idea for the business and its name came to Mark early one morning when he woke with the idea for a beer tour that focused on beer education and a more personal connection between the participants, the brewers, and their breweries.

A native of New Jersey, Mark, at age 5, moved with his parents to Shelby, NC, later served in the Air Force as a military police officer, and then earned a degree in recreation management from Appalachian State University. His travels around the world with the Air Force, coupled with the desire to drink locally (German beer in Germany, Mexican beer in Mexico, Japanese beer in Japan, etc.) clearly demonstrated beer could and should be delicious. He became a true beer enthusiast, drank primarily local craft beers, and sampled the unusual and unique. His employment in the resort/spa industry in Arizona ultimately led to a position at the newly opened spa in the Grove Park Inn.

In Asheville he and Trish enjoyed the local brews, (they’re both beer enthusiasts), witnessed the growing beer scene, and decided to start a business to complement or participate in the exploding popularity of the local craft beers. When Mark awakened that “historic” morning and shared his idea, they both knew a beer tour could be a winner.

The Brews Cruise began slowly as most businesses do, but, when tours began to fill quickly, more were added and filled almost faster than guides could be hired and trained. With this success they decided to take the business concept to other cities. To that end, the business entity Brews Crew Inc., (bruisecrews.com) was created. The (now) Asheville Brews Cruise license was sold to Joe Sollazo (their first employee), and the Charleston Brews Cruise License was sold to partners Brent Horner and Meg Williams. Mark and Trish then moved to Bend, OR to focus on the beer scenes in cities on the west coast.

New owner of Asheville Brews Cruise Joe Sollazo’s first visit to Asheville was to attend a Brewgrass Festival. Additional visits gave him a deeper appreciation of our beer scene and the Asheville area. He moved to Asheville shortly after retirement from the Tampa police force. A self-titled “beer guy” Joe loved the taste of good beer from the start and is an avid home brewer.

As a beer scene regular, Joe met Mark at the French Broad brewery at about the time he found retired life “just a little too slow” and Mark had found he needed a guide to help with the Brews Cruise. Joe was hired, trained, became increasingly busy, and had a lot of fun. After Mark sold the Asheville Brews Cruise license to an individual who quickly lost interest, Joe knew he had to buy it. He had ideas to build on Mark’s success and improve the experience for the customer and the brewers.

His first change was to the website ashevillebrewscruise.com (it is a beauty – descriptive, easy to navigate, and fast). Customers can conveniently book tours on-line. The tour schedule was tweaked to better accommodate the brewers’ business schedules without affecting customer experience. Joe has added new tours, walking tours, and tours that include Jack of the Wood, the Thirsty Monk, and breweries outside the Asheville area.

Tours include lots of beer samples, information, a gift, and a grand time for all.

Joe is very focused on an informative, fun experience for his customers with continued support for the beer community. His manager Shawna Brown, and seven guides, are well trained, (some even work at local breweries), and know all the area breweries, (their beer, their history), as well as local restaurants, attractions, and taprooms that focus on craft beer, good food, and good times. A Brews Cruise presented the chance to support a local beer scene, help create a beer community, and make Charleston a beer destination.

The Charleston Brews Cruise offers a variety of tours that include beer samples, education (both production and styles), and a “goody bag” that contains coupons for local businesses. The tour ends at a local restaurant. Along the way discussions on beer-related topics entertain guests. Since many of the breweries are outside of center city, the tour not only quickly submerges the cruiser into the beer scene; they’ll see parts of the city unfamiliar to many.

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The Asheville Wine & Food Festival

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

Tickets are on sale now for the WNC Magazine Asheville Wine & Food Festival taking place August 12 and 13, 2011.

The weekend begins on August 12 with Sweet, a fun fête showcasing decadent treats and drinks from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Grove Arcade in downtown Asheville. For $35, guests can sample an array of locally sourced desserts, as well as champagnes, specialty cocktails, spirits, wines, and more. There will be live entertainment and the opportunity for after-hours shopping, as many of the Arcade shops will remain open.

Participats of the inaugural Sweet event are Battery Park Book Exchange & Cigars, Craggie Brewery, Asheville Brew Pub, Big Ed’s, Seven Mountains Brewery, Riverbend, and Tyrrell’s. The proceeds will benefit the Grove Arcade and Grove Arcade Community Foundation.

On August 13, the Grand Tasting takes place from 1-5 p.m. in the WNC Expo Center adjacent to the Asheville Regional Airport. Nearly 100 vendors will be in attendance offering pours of regional, national, and international wines and samples of an array of foods from local restaurants and food producers. There will also be live entertainment, food and wine workshops, the WNC Chefs Challenge Finale, and more. All wines and many of the food products will also be available for purchase. Parking for the event is free.

General admission tickets to the Grand Tasting are $40 and include a complementary wine glass and wine carrier tote bag. VIP tickets are also available for $60 each which allows entrance to the Grand Tasting at noon and access to a private catered lounge.

The Asheville Wine & Food Festival is an organization devoted to enhancing the culinary reputation of its namesake city. A portion of the proceeds from the festival benefits F.E.A.S.T. — a nonprofit that teaches children to grow, cook, eat, and enjoy food that is fresh, easy to prepare, affordable, and sustainable. The program serves families in public housing communities, the YMCA and YWCA, and schools. F.E.A.S.T. is a program of Slow Food Asheville.

By Ayana Dusenberg

Photos by Jennifer Haynes

August 2011 Events at the Weinhaus

Tuesday, August 23
Fine dining at The Corner Kitchen. Join us for an evening of presidential quality in Biltmore Village at 7 p.m. Chef Owner Joe Scully and staff will craft a five-course feast for your enjoyment. The Weinhaus will choose wines to pair with each of the courses. This is a dinner which sells out, so be sure to make your reservations early. Held at The Corner Café. Price: $75 all inclusive. Please call the Weinhaus for reservations at (828) 254-6453.

Friday, August 26
Friday night flights at the Weinhaus will feature an Italian tour. From the island of Sicilia to the vertical walls of the Dolomiti, Italy is covered in the wine that has been the friend of man over the centuries. Join us as we sample the liquid splendors nurtured by the warm Italian sun. The wine will be accompanied by light hors d’ouevres. The price is $10. Time is 5:30-7:30 p.m. Held at The Weinhaus, 86 Patton Ave. Asheville.

The Weinhaus, 86 Patton Avenue
Asheville, NC (828) 254-6453

For more information and to purchase tickets to the Asheville Wine & Food Festival, visit www.ashevillewineandfood.com or call WNC magazine at (828) 210-5030.
HART PRESENTS
Hay Fever

August is a time for a good comedy, and no one writes them better than Noel Coward. HART’s next production, “Hay Fever,” directed by Jeff Bachar, is one of Coward’s early successes. From the 1920’s until his death in 1973 he was the most popular British playwright of his age. “Hay Fever,” written in 1924, opened on Broadway with Laura Hope Crews in the role of Judith Bliss, the matriarch of a very odd family. The story is simple. Each eccentric member of the family has invited an unsuspecting guest for a weekend. Crews is best remembered as Aunt Pittypat in “Gone With the Wind.”

If you go
HART presents Hay Fever, August 19, 20, 25, 26, 27 at 7:30 p.m., and August 21 and 28 at 3 p.m. Tickets: $18 Adults; $16 Seniors; Student/child $8.

The Haywood Arts Regional Theatre, founded in 1985, is a volunteer-based community theatre showcasing the talents of the people of the region. HART, under the leadership of Executive Director Steven Lloyd, has grown into one of the most active theatres in the Southeast, producing a year-round schedule of plays and musicals.

HART’s main stage performances take place in the James Auditorium, a 255-seat theatre that operates April through November. In the winter, productions shift to the 75-seat Feichter Studio Theatre for a second season of more experimental work.

HART 2011 Season

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
Weekends, September 30 - October 16.
It is time for the annual spelling bee and this year’s contestants are all out for the big prize with no holds barred. This hilarious show is full of heart and went on to become one of Broadway’s biggest hits. Audition dates: August 7 & 8.

Ah, Wilderness!
Weekends, November 11 - 20.
O’Neill is possibly the greatest American playwright, winner of three Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize for literature.

“Ah, Wilderness!” is his only comedy. Audition dates: September 25 & 26.

HART 2012 Season

Look Homeward Angel
April 27, 28, 29, May 4, 5, 6.
By Ketti Frings. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize. This classic drama, based on the book by Thomas Wolfe and set in pre-WWII Asheville, is one of the theatre’s greatest adaptations. Auditions March 11 & 12, 2012.

The Marvelous Wonderettes
May 25, 26, 27, and June 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10.
Hit off-Broadway musical by Roger Bean. The Marvelous Wonderettes takes you to the 1958 Springfield High School prom where we meet the Wonderettes: four girls with hopes and dreams as big as their crinoline skirts with voices to match. Classic ’50s songs. After intermission the girls’ ten-year reunion. The Wonderettes perform classic ’60s tunes. Auditions April 1 & 2, 2012.

La Cage Aux Faux
July 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29. Tony Award-winning best musical! This smash Broadway production by Jerry Herman, based on the French film “The Birdcage,” is shocking, daring, and hilarious. Auditions May 6 & 7, 2012.

Lost in Yonkers
August 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, September 1, 2.

NC STAGE 10TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

NC Stage is Asheville’s only professional Equity theatre, and since 2002 it has produced a Mainstage season of four to six plays, as well as providing educational programming. For its 10th Anniversary Season, NC Stage has pulled out all the stops with a line-up of some of the best contemporary American theatre.

Subscriptions start at just $75 for a four-play FlexPass. The theatre is also offering a “Super FlexPass” for just $12 per month, which allows patrons to see every ticketed event in the theatre (including special events and second stage offerings) for one monthly price.

Hedwig and the Angry Inch
Music and lyrics by Stephen Trask
August 24 - September 25, 2011

Angels in America: Millennium Approaches and Perestroika
By Tony Kushner
October 12 - November 13, 2011

Live From WVL Radio Theatre:
It’s a Wonderful Life
Adapted by W.V.R. Repoley
November 16 - 27, 2011

Love Child
By Daniel Jenkins and Robert Stanton
February 15 - March 18, 2012

Circle Mirror Transformation

In the Next Room (or the Vibrator Play)
By Sarah Ruhl
May 9 - June 10, 2012

‘Charlie Flynn-Midvwr continued from page 6

My feeling is, if your performers are: a) mainly people who have now or in the past been involved in theatre as their vocation, which includes mostly union members; b) mainly people with extensive training and professional experience in theatre; c) mainly people who sustain the highest expectations of a professional workplace and performance; then, as part of your business practice as a producer you: a) hold those performers to a very high standard; b) compensate those performers with a reasonable, guaranteed salary, and safe rehearsal and performance space; and, c) pay payroll taxes and unemployment insurance for your employees, THEN you are running a professional theatre.

If not, then it’s something else. And there’s nothing wrong with being something else. But professional is a word that many people use without really thinking about what it means. The audiences simply don’t care. You know who cares? The person saying they are professional. That’s it.

RRM: How can we get the government/people to believe in theatre and that it is worth supporting?

I think we have to continue making the point to lawmakers and the general public that theatre is a valuable commodity in our community. But we also need to work hard to make theatre a valuable commodity in the community. There are already important ways that the arts impact our daily lives (see copy of speech I gave to Arts Day 2011 participants in Raleigh this year, attached) but we need to find other ways that theatre becomes important to others than just the usual suspects.

We need theatre and arts as part of the education process in schools. We need the arts as part of the correctional system in the prisons. We need the arts to be a daily part of everyone’s lives and theatre has to find a way to do that without having to get people to pay a lot of money and come to a theatre somewhere. I don’t know how this is done per se but this is what has to happen.

To be continued in the September issue of Rapid River Magazine.
Ron Rash’s Poetry

DEEPER MEANINGS LURKING QUIETLY WITHIN

The recognition that author Ron Rash has received to date for his literary output is impressive by any standard, yet closer inspection of his many literary awards and honors reveals that they have been almost exclusively for his work as a novelist or short story writer, not for his poetry.

Two of his fictional works, for example, have been selected as a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction — for his 2008 short story collection Chemistry and for his 2009 novel Serena. More recently, his collection of short fiction, Burning Bright, received the Frank O’Connor International Short Story Award. Indeed, Rash is today among the most recognized writers of serious “regional” writing in the U.S.

Many readers, though, don’t know that Rash is a widely published poet, having produced four books of poetry thus far: Eureka Mill (1998), Among the Believers and Raising the Dead (2000), and a new collection of poems, Waking (September 2011).

The relative neglect of Rash’s poetry may be a result of the fact that his first three books of poetry had already been available for some time before the publication of the specific fictional works that earned him acclaim; or his poetry books may be overshadowed by his books of fiction simply because of the comparatively marginal status of poetry in the contemporary American publishing world. Regardless of the reasons for such an oversight, now is a good time to revisit his poetry given the imminent publication of his first collection of poems in a decade.

Rash’s new book Waking is being issued by the Spartanburg, South Carolina-based Hub City Press, which also reissued his debut poetry collection Eureka Mill. That Rash chose to work with that particular press at this point in his career rather than with a national publisher makes perfect sense, as he has strong personal connections with that section of the Palmetto State, having been born in the South Carolina piedmont textile town of Chester.

Eureka Mill featured a series of related narrative poems that collectively explored the lives of some Appalachian migrants who moved to the piedmont to work in the cotton mills. Rash’s next two poetry collections, Among the Believers and Raising the Dead, both published by the Oak Ridge, Tennessee-based Iris Press, contained a range of poems set in the Carolina mountains, with the latter book including poems that specifically focused on the social impacts of the Jocassee Valley flooding by Duke Power Company.

Waking, on the other hand, collects thematically unlinked poems on a range of subjects, most of which relate in some way to Rash’s childhood in the western North Carolina Blue Ridge (though a few of the book’s poems reflect upon the legacy of the American Civil War or somewhat generally explore the Celtic influences on Appalachian culture).

The majority of the poems in Waking can be characterized as narrative poems, and these poems recreate and interpret Rash’s early experiences in Watauga and other western North Carolina counties (such as the revelatory poem “Price Lake”) or to represent that region’s historical memory (“Rebecca Boone”), material culture (“Trout in the Springhouse,” “Tobacco Barn”), and human characters (“Charley Starnes”).

Other poems in Waking accentuate emotion over storyline and thus can be considered lyrical poems. All of the poems — whether primarily narrative or lyrical — employ regionally authentic yet strikingly employed images and metaphors to communicate to the reader a real and moving sense of place.

A representative poem from Waking, “First Memory,” typifies Rash’s lucid and insightful evocations of the past. Rash enlivens the past by imagining it in the present (note the use in “First Memory” of present-tense verbs), and the result is pure clarity, even when the memory is all about nature’s profound mystery:

Dragonflies, rise. Their backs catch light, purple like church glass.
Gray barn planks balance on stilts, walk toward the pond’s deep end.
A green smell simmers shallows, where tadpoles flow like black tears.
Minnows lengthen their shadows. Something unseen stirs in the reeds.

The poet’s work is, to quote from (and perhaps somewhat liberally interpret) William Blake, “to see the world in a grain of sand / to see heaven in a wild flower” — that is, we expect poets to identify and to celebrate the elusive spiritual transcendence that humans can experience living harmoniously in and with natural places.

Many of the poems in Waking grow out of Rash’s vision of the deeper meanings lurking quietly within, and waiting to be conjured from, the quotidian world, as in, for instance, “Woodshed in Watauga County,” one of the 58 powerfully alert revelations offered in Waking.

Leaking in the one window, candle shallow, then deepened, caught-light gathered on gray planks like a bowl filling slowly, a simmer of late summer distilled to dull yellow glow, thickening air like honey as mud daubers and dust moths drifted above like moths unmoored from time, and the world and the sun aligned, grew still.

By Ted Olson

Poets who would like for their poetry to be considered for a future column may send their books and manuscripts to Ted Olson, ETSU, Box 70400, Johnson City, TN 37614. Please include contact information and a SASE with submissions.
For the Love of Beer, it’s Hops

Remember that Thomas Jefferson grew both hops and hemp in his garden. Last month we read about hemp and now it’s the turn of hops. According to the Flora of Japan (published by the Smithsonian Institution), there are two kinds of hops: Japanese hops (Humulus japonicus), which is an annual vine and common hops (H. lupulus) which is a perennial.

The first is a valuable ornamental plant often growing 30 feet in a good year. The second is the commercial source of hops and while not as attractive in the garden, perennial hops is a must, at least when beer consumption comes around. Humulus is from the Latin word humus, or ground, the place these plants will tumble to, if lacking support.

Admittedly the annual Japanese hops can be a rambling terror, and if kudzu is a Toyota truck, then this plant is a two-door Mazda, not only wild enough to cover an unwanted trash pile but able to climb the garage in a single bound.

The leaves are rough to the touch, deeply divided into five to seven lobes, and the stems are serrate — a nice word meaning covered with saw-like teeth — allowing them to cling to shirt sleeves and garden gloves. The flowers are very small, green, full of pollen, and not particularly attractive and usually hidden by the leaves anyway.

Perennial hops are known scientifically as Humulus lupulus. The species is from the Latin lupus or wolf, because as Pliny said, it strangles others by its climbing embrace, as a wolf does to a sheep. The English name hop is derived from the Anglo-Saxon hoppan, to climb.

Lupulus is a native of Europe and has naturalized in moist soil, especially along river banks and waste places and ranges from Nova Scotia to Manitoba, Montana and California, and south to North Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky, much of New York and some in northern New Jersey. But most importantly the fruits are used in brewing beer. Yellow glands secrete the bitter chemical lupulin and are found in many parts of the plants but chiefly on the fruit.

A fast grower, this vine has been known to clock 30 feet in one season. Plants are dioecious with the greenish-yellow male flowers hanging in panicles on one plant while the female flowers, which produce the fruits called hops, grow in axillary spikes. There is an attractive yellow form ‘Aureus’ with yellow foliage.

The Romans raised hops using the young shoots as a luxury food. In 1566, Dodonaeus, a European herbalist called hops a kitchen herb and wrote: “Before its tender shoots produce leaves, they are eaten in salads, and are a good and wholesome treat.”

But for beer, hops have been around since antiquity. In central Europe, cultivation dates from the middle of the 8th century. Hops were introduced into England from Flanders in 1524, but not used in making brew until 1530, during the reign of Henry VIII.

In 1919, hops were still found in London’s Covent Garden, tied in small bundles for table use. The shoots were chopped very fine and dressed with butter or cream.

C. Pierpont Johnson in The Useful Plants of Great Britain (a title of masterful understatement) wrote: “...before the use of hops, the beverage always went by the name of ale... brewed either from malt alone, or from a mixture of the latter with honey, and flavored, not with hops, but with heath-tops, germander, and various other bitter and aromatic herbs.” Long after hops entered England brews were still flavored the old-fashioned way and called ale. The German or Dutch word Bier was only used when hops were employed to produce the characteristic taste. The hops and leaves were once also used when dried as a pillow stuffing to treat insomnia.

But back in the garden, Robinson wrote: “H. lupulus, a well-known vigorous twining perennial is admirable for bowers, especially when vegetation that disappears in winter is desired; and will soon run wild in almost any soil, among shrubs or hedges... A slender plant climbing up an apple or other fruit tree, near the mixed border, looks well.”

At the Herb Garden of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, tall tripods made of bamboo stakes and intertwined with hop vines and make an attractive summer display. So whether you are growing hemp or hops, here’s to success in the garden.

A new fall festival will take place on the banks of the French Broad River featuring a few of the area’s best resources: craft brew, great music, and beautiful scenery.

Just north of Asheville, Hot Springs is a destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Festival-goers can enjoy music, craft beers, and food, camping included.

More than 12 area breweries will be on-site and festival-goers will receive a commemorative souvenir glass for sampling beer. The musical lineup is outstanding, featuring: The Lee Boys, Yarn, Josh Phillips Folk Festival, Eyes of the Elders, Aaron “Woody” Wood, and the Sons of Ralph.

Camping is included with private campsites, rv sites and cabins available on the festival grounds. Lodging is also available within walking distance at one of the hotels or B&B’s in town.

In addition to the festivities, festival-goers can also enjoy the 100 acre resort and spa’s modern Jacuzzi style hot tubs, and a staff of massage therapists.

Tickets are $75 and include a 5 oz. commemorative souvenir sampling glass, unlimited beer samplings in the exclusive Brew Tent, camping, and nearly 12 hours of music. $60 ticket for music and camping only (no beer sampling).

FRENCH BROAD FALL FEST – AREA BREWERIES & MUSIC

If you go...

French Broad Fall Festival will be held September 24, 2011 at Hot Springs Resort and Spa in Hot Springs, NC. Beer tastings from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Visit www.FrenchBroadFallFest.com for details and ticket purchase info.

Go to www.nchotsprings.com for information about the campground, spa reservations, and directions.
Awakening

“When you become you, Zen becomes Zen. When you are you, you see things as they are, and you become one with your surroundings.”
—Shunryu Suzuki

People ask me if I’m a Buddhist. My writing and my teaching contain a lot of references to Buddhist masters, philosophy and meditation, so people expect me to be a Buddhist. I always answer that I am not a religious Buddhist, but I believe Buddhist philosophy and psychology are the best insight into the human condition and the best path to psychological and spiritual health ever conceived.

 Actually, from my take on Buddhism, it doesn’t seem particularly Buddhist to attach ourselves to any religion— even Buddhism. Buddhism is about waking up to a natural sanity and spirituality inherent in every person. That is all. So, I’m not interested in being a Buddhist. I am interested in what Buddhism says about being me — at one with my surroundings. “When you become you, Zen becomes Zen.” I’d just as soon leave it at that.

 Twenty-five hundred years ago, a young prince from the kingdom of Sakya in India, named Siddhartha Gautama, set out to understand and overcome human suffering. After leaving his sheltered and luxurious life, he spent time as an ascetic, totally rejecting any association or identification with society and convention, totally rejecting even the most meager of human comforts. But he did not find what he was looking for.

 He could not find the answers he sought in either his princey life of unlimited comfort, nor in the ascetic path of rejecting comfort. So, in unwavering determination, he sat to meditate on the nature of human existence. He focused his mind with illuminating single-pointedness and experienced an awakening, and his quest was answered. Siddhartha became known as “Buddha”, meaning “awakened one”. So to understand Buddhism, you have to know that it means the study and practice of waking up.

 This awakening teaches that happiness and suffering are mental states to be mastered, that a “middle way,” of life, neither materialistic nor ascetic is best for this practice, and the core teaching is traditionally passed on to us as the “Four Noble Truths.” It says that to be human is to experience a unique kind of suffering caused by being attached to, identified with, and grasping after the aspect of the human mind that is built around a storyline of “me,” past, present and future, that wants to control life, wants life to be the way we want and emotionally need it to be.

 We suffer because we want everlasting life with everlasting satisfaction, but, of course, it isn’t to be had. Life keeps being unsatisfactory. We can never completely get what we want. We can never be completely free of what we don’t want. We experience loss, hurt, anxiety, anger, frustration and failure. We get sick, we get old, and eventually, we die. So, we suffer.

 The teaching goes on to say there is a way out of this suffering through learning to understand this grasping nature of the mind and by releasing our identification with it, to discover a deeper, completely wise and compassionate dimension of mind. Put more psychologically, Siddhartha uncovered the human ego, and the mesmerizing hold it has on humans as the source of suffering. In his intense meditation, he saw the truth of who he was, the nature of the human condition, and how humans become out of harmony with life. He then prescribed how to restore the harmony.

 He saw that, in truth, he was, we are, awareness — that it wasn’t just Siddhartha, with all his ideas about how things ought to be, that sat meditating. He saw that it was awareness that sat - with the body and mind of Siddhartha - but was beyond any identification. Awareness was witness to all the ideas, thoughts and emotions that flowed through his mind, but these contents of the mind couldn’t be the limit of who he was because they all came and went, and so could only be a very superficial dimension of self.

 He realized that he must be, we all must be, at our essence, awareness — that which does not come and go. He realized, beneath the noise of mind, an immensity of quiet and stillness, and that this dimension and the Universe are one, far beyond reactivity, complaint and suffering. He realized that things are what they are, and that when he was truly who he was, he and the circumstances — whatever they were — were one, and there is no suffering in this.

 To “awaken” means we realize we live in two dimensions, both an egoic personal dimension, inside our historical story, where events and circumstances need to be dealt with, and also, we exist in the ultimate or spiritual dimension where everything is just what it is — what, in fact, it has to be — because all the conditions of existence have led to it.

 “When you are you (both dimensions of you), you see things as they are, and you become one with your surroundings.” You are both active in the personal dimension — seeking to shape events and circumstances as you see are needed — and you accept that, in a macroscopic perspective, all circumstances are perfect just as they are, even the difficult and tragic ones. You wake up into the truth of the paradoxical circumstance of Human Beingness.

 You “become one with your surroundings” and you are not only the personal you, you are also the ultimate you, an aspect of the Universe unfolding. You can do what needs doing; live a relatively normal social life, even fight injustice — while being largely immune to insults to your person and unwarranted attacks on your point of view. Failure is a nonsensical concept. There is only what you do and how it turns out. You can shape your life towards meaning, comfort and happiness while dealing with the problems of your life without being caught up in believing that if things do not turn out the way you want them to that it will be a catastrophe. Both the personal and ultimate worlds are present for you, and the ultimate begins shaping the personal towards ever deepening enlightened compassionate living.

 So, as the Buddha said that to be human is to experience suffering, and this suffering is caused by what we attach ourselves to, does this mean to attach ourselves to nothing? No. Remember, the teaching is that to be human is to experience this suffering, and we are, and the Buddha was, quite human. (There is a statue of the Buddha weeping that I am particularly fond of.) No, I believe the teaching is reminding us that the quality of our humanity is in the choices for attachment that we make.

 If you dedicate your attachment to love, simplicity, wisdom, compassion, justice and peace, these will be the meaning of life for you. Injury to, and assaults on, these valued states-of-being are worthy of your tears, even your anger, and certainly your action — but still, you do not have to suffer — if suffering means you feel diminished and defeated, thrust into reactive negative emotion.

 There is no fear of feeling and expressing sadness or measured and appropriate anger, or of confronting destructive behavior in others. On the other hand, if you allow your attachment to be in getting your way, indulging your ego, to exceptionalism for yourself and those you identify with, in vanity and materialism, you will inevitably cause and experience much suffering and reactive negative emotion, and it will detract from your humanity and the totality of humanity in the world.

 This capacity for enlightened living does not, however, come about by intellectual understanding alone. To awaken requires that, just as Siddhartha, we strengthen and focus our skill for illuminating awareness, that we penetrate the hypnotic hold that our egoic mind and its extension, human society and culture, have on us and become free of it.

 We must wake up! There is the world as you experience it, and the world as it is. Do you know the difference? Do you know how they are connected and where there is disconnect? Can you bring about their harmony? Meditation will help you discover the clarity of awareness that sees and knows. “When you are you... you become one with your surroundings.” This is Zen. And the end of unnecessary suffering.

Bill Walz is a private-practice meditation teacher and guide for individuals in mindfulness, personal growth and consciousness. He holds a weekly meditation class, Mondays at 7 p.m., at the Friends Meeting House, 227 Edgewood in Asheville.

He will present a Meditation Intensive, “Awakening into our Full Human Potential” — Sunday September 11, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Black Mtn. Unitarian Universalist Church, 500 Montreat Rd. Black Mountain (828) 669-8050.

Info on classes, talks, personal growth and healing instruction, or phone consultations at (828) 258-3241, e-mail at healing@billwalz.com. Visit www.billwalz.com
Christians and Their Health – Why Be Healthy?

Why be healthy? It seems like an obvious answer – to live longer and happier. But to those who already think that they are planning to live forever in heaven – why be concerned about health now – here on earth – before the “forever” starts? Won’t our bodies be changed “in a twinkling” into immortal bodies at the Second Coming of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:51-52)? What’s the Biblical basis for advocating a healthy life style for the Christian in the “here and now”?

Christian schools have been advocating for a healthy life style for a long time. Harvard University, founded in 1636 on the library and estate of a young, Puritan minister; Oberlin College, begun in 1833 by a Presbyterian minister; Earlham College, begun in 1847 by Quakers, these all institutions of higher learning which at their founding emphasized healthful life style principles in addition to academic excellence. Why the necessity of a healthy physical body to accompany a sharp mind and a pious spirit?

From the beginning, Man was created as a whole being; body, mind, and spirit. Modern science confirms this “whole being” concept in recognizing that whatever illness affects one part of the human has an impact on all other parts of the human. Heart disease affects the brain. Depression affects spiritual thought. Spiritual malcontent affects blood pressure and mental function.

Expressed as a positive, the Bible says that “a merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Prov. 17:22). Even the growth of the child Jesus is described in terms of a whole person: “And he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Expressed in medical terms, the human body exists to house and nurture the brain, through which Man communicates with his God and his fellowman. Any defects in the physical body will adversely affect the brain and the functions subserved by that brain.

This kind of health information applies to anyone – keep your body healthy, and it will keep your mind healthy and your relationships healthy.

But Christians do not live unto themselves. Since the time of their baptism, they have lived in a special relationship to “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). Taking the “whole person” concept into this relationship, the instruction of 1 Cor. 6:19 takes on enhanced meaning: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit . . . and you are not your own.” The Christian is not free to do whatever he chooses with his body; it doesn’t belong to him, but to God. More directly to the health of the body are the instructions of 1 Cor. 10:31: “Whether, then you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

For the Christian, the power that resides in him to enable him to be a Christian is affected, good or bad, by such simple things as drinking enough water, eating a balanced diet, getting adequate exercise. For the Christian, the decision to learn and implement healthful living principles is as important as the decision to read the Bible or to pray or the decision to “love his neighbor as himself.” Being a complete and effective Christian means giving attention to the health of the “whole person” – body, mind, and spirit.
I Never Needed Marriage For My Identity!

For this month’s column I decided to share a few thoughts and opinions on certain subjects in the local news. Kinda like my friend, John Boyle, who writes for the Citizen Times. I was really worried about John recently when he took on the subject of gay marriage in his column.

He almost drowned in words before he got to the end and I guess for a straight man writing about issues that apply to certain special people, very different from the world he lives peacefully in, it was the hardest task of his life. Somehow he managed to pull it off as gracefully as he could.

It is impossible in my mind to imagine the discomfort he suffered through. John is, from what I know of him, a nice family man and a talented journalist when he sticks to city and county issues, like the incredible amount of money we city dwellers pay for water service and the amount of money the Buncombe County Commissioners make.

Next time the subject comes up, why not ask some one who is gay to write it. It will be easier on you and there will not be any beating around the bush on the issue. Gays will tell you without hesitation what it means to them. Give a gay person a guest editorial for a change. There are plenty of gay writers in Asheville that would enjoy the privilege.

Leave out the slogan traditional marriage between a man and woman. In my day, we all had that drilled into our heads forever by our own parents. Allow us to write our own amendment to the constitution. Why not? Aren’t we all supposed to be equal in this country? Doesn’t each and every single person have the right to do what they damn well want to? In my world they do.

Do we need another label? No we do not. I do not think like many younger generations of gays do. I do not think it is necessary to be married to a straight person or a gay person in order for me to be happy in the time I have left on this earth.

I never wanted to be married even when I was naive and young in high school. It was not because I did not have a chance to marry. I had many chances to marry the guy in the community my parents picked for me, but I stood strong and rebelled. I told my parents in the fifties that I was going to college and I did not want marriage. That would have been totally boring, I said to them.

So, that was that and to college I went head-on into my dreams and loved each and every person as much as I loved the other. It did not matter what the gender was. We were the generation that wanted to live free and love “the one you are with,” as the late Janis Joplin sang in those days.

I was a free spirit in life’s candy land in those days. I did not give one thought to feeling bad about my life or what I did in the name of being a free spirit. I never regretted not marrying nor did I have the desire to and still do not at 71. I will not be forced by some group into accepting something I do not want in my life.

That is the way I have lived and most likely the way I will die. Still chasing the dreams of my life only a little slower this time.

No state legislature has the power to legislate people or lifestyles. What is the point in marriage? If two people can not have a commitment that is lasting, what is a piece of paper going to do for you? What is that going to enable you to do? Not many people gay or straight are going to stay in a marriage that makes them unhappy. When you are tired of it and ready to leave after a few years, then what?

There is one way to look at things that I think most people do not, when you love spending time with someone, you love that person. It’s easy. Who goes by instruction guides when they pick who they want to date? Wonder if he or she has benefits? Normally we go by instruction guides when they love that person. It’s easy. Who goes by instruction guides when they pick who they want to date? Wonder if he or she has benefits? Normally we fall in love in many wonderful ways.

There are many gay women who love the men in their lives, including their brothers and fathers and friends. They are in our lives forever. Lesbians do not say to straight men or women, “I can’t be your friend because I am gay.” That is crazy!

Each person lives the way they want and with whomever they may desire to share intimacy. It is each person’s right to choose. Lots of gays already say they are married and they do not have a piece of paper to prove it. That is the way it has always been in my life. You do not need marriage to prove you love somebody or you are staying with a certain person.

The way the world is today there are so many important issues to be concerned with. Some days, it like the whole world’s population is mad.

All we ever wanted in the 60s was free love and peace. All of us who survived those days are here to tell you how it was or how it used to be. How could things now have gone so wrong? There needs to be a whole new attitude and if not, the world is truly MAD!

Do we need another war? No. Do we need to see parts of this country homophobic and racial. No. What we need is a good laxative that works and one that makes people wake up. John Boyle, do not blame the Feminist or some women’s support group. Feminism did not create Lesbianism.

I think if everyone would be sensible and try to love every one that you meet each day, things would be a lot better. I spread love to people just by taking up time with them and listening. I do that each day wherever I go.

Marriage is not superior to people who choose not to marry. As a country we should all know by this time that leaving a certain segment of the population out of decisions or laws is wrong. We do not need another political fight and we do not need to label people any longer. In my profession as a journalist, I used to say, “Well, I never felt respect until I hit 50.” Now, I am 71 and I do think that I have to explain my lifestyle to anyone. Whatever happens with the gay marriage clause will not make one bit of difference in my life as it is today. It is too late for many of us who are now in our 70s.

I never wanted marriage and I still do not. I do not need marriage to make me be a better person. I am happy with my life just as I have made it. Sometimes we need to create our own little nest. I do not need another label to identify who I am. I especially think, I don’t have to explain anything more about the life I chose to live.

Writer Judy Ausley has been a reporter with newspapers in NC for 40 years. She retired in 2005 and continues to freelance at her home in Asheville. She can be contacted by emai at Judyausley@aol.com. If you know a character in Asheville who has not had a conventional life, put them in touch with Judy for an article in this column, Southern Comfort.
August 4-6
Mountain Dance and Folk Festival
This three-day event showcases the best of the region’s old-time and bluegrass musicians, mountain dance groups, cloggers, and ballad singers. Thursday through Saturday, 7 p.m. nightly at Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place in downtown Asheville. Tickets $20, children 12 and under $10. Three-night package $54. (828) 257-4530, www.folkheritage.org.

August 4-7
I Killed My Mother
Theatre Y presents a play by Anders Wolsky at North Carolina Stage Company. The story of a teenage girl who was abandoned at birth by her mother, a gypsy woman. Directed by Karin Coonrod and starring Melissa Hawkins and Andrew Hampton Livingston. Tickets are $15. $10 student rush tickets available the day of the show. Performances are Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday at 2 p.m. Call (828) 239-0263 or visit www.ncstage.org. NC Stage, 15 Stage Lane, Asheville.

August 5-21
The Honky Tonk Angels
This rollicking and touching journey follows three very different women with the same dream – to become a country singer in Nashville. Written by Ted Swindley, directed by Eric Mills. On ACT’s Mainstage. Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2:30 p.m. Tickets: $22 adults, $19 seniors/ students, $12 children. (828) 254-1320, www.ashevilletheatre.org.

Saturday, August 6
Stories on Asheville’s Front Porch
Becky Stone serves up a smorgasbord of stories to delight people of all ages. Free event begins at 10:30 a.m. at Pack Place next to Diana Wortham Theatre, rain or shine.

August 7
Village Art and Craft Fair
This high quality craft fair, sponsored by New Morning Gallery and Bellagio, takes place on the grounds of the Cathedral of All Souls in Historic Biltmore Village. Fair hours are Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, noon to 6 p.m., rain or shine. Free admission. Concessions available. For more information call (828) 274-2831.

August 11-13
Summer Music in Flat Rock
Nashville singer/songwriter Sally Barris will perform beginning at 6 p.m. This free outdoor concert is held in Flat Rock on Little Rainbow Row’s back deck (behind the colorful shops, corner of Greenville Highway and West Blue Ridge Road) from 6 to 8 p.m. For further information, call Hand in Hand Gallery at (828) 697-7719 or visit www.flatrockonline.com.

Friday, August 5
Colorful Abstractions of Intuitive Gestures
“Spirals & Arches” a show of recent paintings by local artist Neil Carroll. Opening reception on August 5 featuring the Twilite Broadcasters as musical guests. Exhibit at Ananda Hair Studio, 22 Broadway in downtown Asheville. On display through September 15, 2011.

Saturday, August 6
UNTITLED (as of yet)
Black Mountain College Museum + Art Centers presents UNTITLED, an evening of collaborative performance, poetry, music and dance. Co-ordinated by Jason Andrew (NYC/North Carolina), and Alice Sebrell (BMCM+AC), the event features artists from Asheville and New York City, including director/choreographer Julia K. Gleich (NYC/London), and Aun Dunn (Asheville Ballet). Performance held at the Masonic Temple, 80 Broadway in downtown Asheville at 8 p.m. Tickets are $12 / $10 for BMCM+AC members and students with ID. For tickets or more information phone (828) 350-8484 or visit www.blackmountaincollege.org.

Friday, August 12
Gigi Dover & The Big Love (Americana), plus the Bob Sinclair trio (new standards).

September 2
The Firecracker Jazz Band (music from 1890-1940)

Summer Tracks in Tryon’s Rogers Park
Concerts run from 7-10 p.m. The concert is free, however, a voluntary donation at the gate is encouraged. Gardins wood fired pizzas, water, and soft drinks will be for sale.

Friday, August 19
Sanctum Sully
Tight and crisp 3-part harmonies light up the stage, while blues-based guitar and mandolin riffs set them apart from other bluegrass bands. Asheville’s Sanctum Sully performs with Papa’s String Band at MoDaddy’s, 77 Biltmore Ave. in Asheville. Phone (828) 258-1550 or visit www.modaddysbar.com

Friday, August 19
HAY FEVER
A bright witty comedy set in the English countryside in the 1920’s. The play focuses on the Bliss family, an eccentric bunch, each of whom has invited a guest for the weekend. The outrageous behavior of the hosts finally drives the guests to flee. Directed by Jeff Bachar. HART Theatre, 250 Pigeon St. in Waynesville. Visit www.harttheatre.com or call (828) 456-6322.

Saturday, August 20
John Paul Keith Concert
Presenting songs from his new CD “The Man That Time Forgot.” Songs so timeless and well crafted you’d swear they were obscure ’50s or ’60s B-sides. Concert begins at 7 p.m. at Broadway’s, 120 Lexington Ave. in Asheville. $5 cover.

Friday and Saturday, August 26-27
Fines Creek Blue Grass Jam
A wholesome family event, the Blue Grass Jam will take place on the festival grounds behind the old Fines Creek School on Fines Creek Road, just off I-40 at exit 15. Tickets are $15 for adults, $10 for ages 16-18. Tickets for both nights are $25 for adults, and $15 for ages 16-18. Children under 16 will be admitted free with a paying adult. Parking is free. Refreshments will be available. For more details, (828) 627-1912, or visit www.finescreek.org.

Sunday, September 11
Meditation Intensive
Bill Walz will present “Awakening into our Full Human Potential,” from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Black Mtn. Unitarian Universalist Church, 500 Montreat Rd. Black Mountain, (828) 669-8050.

HART’s Annual Trip to Broadway
Steve Lloyd leads a trip to New York to see the best Broadway has to offer. There is a limit on the number allowed to travel. The trip includes 4 days, 3 nights at the Hotel Edison on West 47th St. in New York, air from Greenville, transfers to the hotel in New York, and tickets to two new Broadway musicals.

The cost is $1250 per person based on double occupancy. For more information contact HART at (828) 456-6322 or visit www.harttheatre.com.

How to place an event/classified listing with Rapid River Art Magazine
Any “free” event open to the public can be listed at no charge up to 30 words. For all other events there is a $14.95 charge up to 35 words and 12 cents for each additional word. 65 word limit per event. Sponsored listings (shown in boxes) can be purchased for $18 per column inch. Deadline is the 19th of each month. Payment must be made prior to printing. Email Beth Gossett at: ads@rapidrivermagazine.com Or mail to: 85 N. Main St, Canton, NC 28716. Call (828) 646-0071 to place ad over the phone.

Disclaimer
Due to the overwhelming number of local event submissions we get for our “What to Do Guide” each month, we can not accept entries that do not specifically follow our publication’s format. Non-paid event listings must be 30 words or less, and both paid and non-paid listings must provide information in the following format: date, time, brief description of your event, and any contact information. Any entries not following this format will not be considered for publication.

August Events ~ Announcements ~ Openings ~ Sales
Arts Directory

Deadline: Friday, August 26, 2011
The Arts Council of Henderson County is seeking applications from visual, performing, and literary artists from Henderson County and surrounding areas. Artists living outside Henderson County may apply only if they are members of the Arts Council of Henderson County. There is no cost to be included in the directory. Applications are available online at www.acofhc.org.
For more information please contact Barbara Stock at (336) 510-0502 or the Arts Council at (828) 693-8504.

Scrapbooking 101

New scrapbooking classes at Mountain Home Crafts Collection taught by Debby Hills, a certified SDU Scrapbooking Instructor.

Turn your pictures of special events, photos of friends and family, and shots of scenic beauty into beautiful, cherished milestones along life’s path.

Learn to protect those precious pictures, compose pages, journal the all-important stories behind the photos, and add the finishing touches that make each page a work of art.

The first class takes place Saturday, August 6, from 10 a.m. to noon. The first crop, or scrapbooking workshop, will take place on Saturday, August 20, from 1 to 5 p.m.

Other classes will follow, including cardmaking, Cricut 101, and tips and tricks. Sign up in the store or call (828) 458-1566 to reserve your place.

Mountain Home Crafts Collection, 110 Miller Street in Waynesville, NC.

ZaPow Gallery Seeks Artists

The region’s only gallery and work space focusing on illustration, books, and Pop Art. Opening at 21 Battery Park in downtown Asheville in the fall.

The ideal artists will have an eye towards visual narrative, illustrative, and pop aesthetic. Send a portfolio of your work, between 6-10 images or a link to your website to Lauren@ZaPow.net.

Visit www.zapow.net

WCU’s School of Stage and Screen 2011-12 Lineup

“I Hate Hamlet,” October 5-8 at 7:30 p.m. in Hoey Auditorium.

“Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street,” November 10-12 at 7:30 p.m., and November 13 at 3 p.m.

“Music Is,” February 4, 2012 at 7:30 p.m., matinee February 5 at 3 p.m.

A modern retelling of “The Taming of the Shrew,” March 22-24 at 7:30 p.m., with a matinee on Sunday, March 25 at 3 p.m.

To order tickets, or for more information call (828) 227-2479 or visit bardosartscenter.wcu.edu.

Best in Show

by Phil Juliano

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To order tickets, or for more information call (828) 227-2479 or visit bardosartscenter.wcu.edu.

Callie & Cats

by Amy Downs

“Hey, Cal, how was your day?”

“Hectic! I had a tight schedule—”

And I’m guessing our furry friends on the couch had an equally hectic day?

Donna for an appointment, (828) 458-1566.

Visit www.zapow.net

Corgi Tales

by Phil Hawkins

Signs of Climate Change...

This dramatization was brought to you by your best friends. Keep us cool, too.

Dragin

by Michael Cole

Black Mountain Music Scene

Covering events at Straightaway Cafe, the Town Pump Tavern, White Horse Black Mountain, the EyeScream Ice Cream Parlor, and more.

www.blackmountainmusicscene.com

Concerts at St. Matthias Church

Concerts start at 3 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

August 7 – The Biltmore Brass Quintet.

August 14 – The Asheville-Tango Orchestra.

August 21 – Mark Yaskey will present a classical guitar concert.

August 28 – Baroque music with an ensemble of period instruments.

There will be a free-will offering for the St. Matthias restoration fund. The church is located in Asheville just off South Charlotte Street at Max Street on the hill across from the Asheville Public Works Building (1 Dundee St.).

Upcycle Artists Wanted

Common Ground Emporium and resource center specializes in upcycled, upscale, whimsical art. We are looking for artists that use at least 50% recyclable materials in their work to join us as vendors. Unusual and creatively elegant hanging art, sculpture, housewares, outdoor/indoor mobiles, and clothing will be featured.

From Asheville, take Merrimon past Beaver Lake. From the lake, Common Ground is on the right just past the Green Outdoors nursery. Drop by any Friday or Saturday between 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. or call Donna for an appointment, (828) 485-1566.

Media Art Project Community Grant

Deadline: Monday, August 15, 2011
Western North Carolina based artists working in the realms of Performance, Multimedia, Sculpture, Installation, New Media, Interaction, Sound, Photo / Video, and Web Art, are encouraged to apply for funding to support a new or current project.

All proposed projects should be realized by March 1, 2012, so they can be shown as part of the (Re)HAPPENING 2012, www.rehappening.com.

For detailed information and to download the grant application visit www.themap.org/grants.

Asheville Gallery of Art Now Accepting Applications

Deadline: Monday, August 15, 2011
The Asheville Gallery of Art, 16 College Street in Asheville, invites area artists to apply for membership. The Asheville Gallery of Art (AGA) is an artists’ cooperative which exhibits original, two-dimensional works by twenty-eight member artists.

For more information, call (828) 251-5796 or e-mail ashevilllegalleryofart@gmail.com.

Classicopia, Asheville’s newest chamber music organization dedicated to the highest quality music in intimate and non-traditional venues, is wrapping up their first annual Summer Sonata Series. The series features a number of great concerts performed on four different solo instruments. Pianist and Artistic Director Daniel Weiser collaborated with the musicians on each program. Fun and interesting educational talks take place before each concert.

Classicopia was co-founded in 2001 by Marcia Colligan and Daniel Weiser in Hanover, NH. They have performed more than 400 concerts in the past ten years in the New England area. Since moving to Asheville in the fall of 2009, Mr. Weiser has expanded these programs into the Asheville area while still continuing the series in New England.

Classicopia concerts use a wide variety of different performers, from strings to singers to woodwinds to brass, and always aim at breaking down any barriers between performers and audience through informal, accessible presentations, and short discussions of each work before each performance.

The Classical Voice of North Carolina has praised Classicopia for the “incredible vitality” of their concerts and the “wonderful programs presented in such a natural and unpretentious way.” For more on Classicopia and a listing of their concerts, visit www.classicopia.org

The Summer Sonata Series continues with a concert for flute and piano featuring flutist Sergio Pallotelli performing music of Mozart, Mendelssohn, Verdi, and more. This concert can be heard on Friday, August 5 at 7:30 p.m. at a private home, Saturday, August 6 at 8 p.m. at the White Horse in Black Mountain, and Sunday, August 7 at 4 p.m. at the Altamont.

The Summer Sonata Series concludes with a concert for cello and piano featuring cellist Anna Wittstruck performing great Sonatas by Edvard Grieg and Richard Strauss. This concert can be heard at the White Horse in Black Mountain Friday, August 12 at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, August 13 at 7:30 p.m. at a private home, and on Sunday, August 14 at 4 p.m. at the Altamont.

The White Horse in Black Mountain, www.whitehorse-blackmountain.com, tickets are $15. The Altamont, www.thealtamont.com, tickets are $5-$20. Reservations are required for the private home concerts, call Daniel Weiser at (828) 505-2901 or e-mail daniel@classicopia.org for details.
All Over the Map: Donna Rhodes’ Unique View of The World

The Haywood Arts Council presents a visual journey that criss-crosses the multi-media landscape of artist, Donna Rhodes. The exhibition opens August 24 at the Arts Council’s Gallery 86 on Main Street in Waynesville, and runs through September 17.

An opening reception will be held Friday, September 2, 2011 from 6 to 9 p.m in conjunction with Waynesville’s Art After Dark. For more information visit www.haywoodarts.org or call (828) 452-0593. The reception is free and open to the public.

Young Artist Concert featuring Award-Winning Russian Pianist Vassily Primakov

The Haywood County Arts Council is proud to announce Russian/American virtuoso, Vassily Primakov in concert on Friday, August 12, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center, 250 Pigeon Street in Waynesville, NC.

Mr. Primakov will be a guest on WCQS Radio with host Dick Kowal on Friday, August 12 at 2pm. Concert tickets are $20 per person with a limited number of FREE student tickets available. A reception follows the concert.

The evening’s program will include:
Franz Schubert’s 14 Waltzes (Suite compiled by Vassily Primakov);
Robert Schumann’s Grand Sonata No.3 op.14 in F Minor (Concert Sans Orchestre); and, Frederic Chopin’s Scherzo No.1 op.20 in B minor, Scherzo No. 2 op.31 in B-Flat Minor, Grande valse brillante in A- Minor op.34-1, Scherzo No.3 op.39 in C # Minor, and Scherzo No.4 op.54 in E-Major.

The concert is sponsored in part by WCQS Radio (88.1FM), John Highsmith, DDS and Sandra Hayes, New Meridian Technologies, and The Windover Inn.

For more information visit www.haywoodarts.org

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Phone (828) 285-0940>
I was in a bit of a slump earlier this year. Had a case of “The Blahs.” (It’s like having bad neighbors. Yawn and Snooze Blah.) I typically encounter this mood around August, when I’m having to mop myself off the one-hundred ten degree pavement, but it’s not always cyclical. Life’s ups and downs can also trigger these odd spaces. But we live in the creative capitol of The South. There’s no shortage of jump-starts for artists and art appreciators alike who may be needing some serious battery recharging.

First, I suggest The Walkabout. Venturing out and wandering all over our fair region yields art, food, music, theatre, nature and interesting people, providing us with some serious creative nourishment.

And walkabouts are enhanced by good company. If I hang out with The Nay-sayers (Nada and Nona - cousins of The Blah’s), I’m starting what should be a fun field trip at a deficit. But friends with similar interests expand the relevance of discoveries. Good friends. Friends who don’t laugh at you (much) when you squeal over Torchwood action figurines.

Conversely, nesting where you’re comfortable is another good method to combat those “off” times. Tucked into a corner at Mountain Java on Merrimor sipping tea, enjoying gluten-free goodies and great 70’s classic hits as they waft over the sound system, I feel energized. Songs like “Diary” by Bread and “Summer Breeze” by Seals & Crofts take me back in sense-memory time, creating instant happiness. I wrote much of this column in this environment.

I’m kind of old school on creative jump-starting. I’ve always, written, drawn and To Do Listed on yellow pads. Defeating to what’s comfortable makes me happy. I also do what I call “The Periodical 5K”. I sort through stacks of magazines and newspapers, noting inspiring art, design and writing. I even flip through dictionaries and old encyclopedias.

Another trick is to mix things up a bit. I’ve been re-watching Star Trek (Yes, again. I know...), but this time in French. At other times, it can be helpful to shut everything out, cut the noise, and just enjoy some peace and quiet. We all de-stress and incubate new ideas in different ways, n’est-ce pas?

For artists, a portfolio sort and review can be useful. Forcing files that often get untidy back into some order can trigger a desire to revisit or expand upon a series, exciting us to get back into art making. For art collectors, sorting through and trading out an existing collection can invigorate both living spaces and minds.

Sage advice I was given long ago was “Be in your space.” If I’m not going to my studio, I’m not giving myself even the slightest chance to work on that next body of work, now am I? It’s such a simple concept. Even if all I do is CLEAN my space, sit in my chair and think about art, going in on a regular basis yields good results.

The main point of all this: Do SOMETHING! Anything! Any attempt to actively counteract Yawn and Snooze is time well spent. Eventually, they move on, and do we, more resolved to work on the Next Thing. At the very least, The Blah’s provide perspective. If we’re lucky, we can even turn them into inspiration and make every season one for creation.

Are You Staying Inspired?
BEATING BACK THE BLAH’S...

by Greg Vineyard

Constance Williams Working Artist Gallery presents new work by on-site studio artist Angelique Tassistro for their “Second Saturday” August opening. Tassistro’s functional wares are about a connection between food and people, and the every day celebration of meals.

Her works are known for breaking the rules of fashion, combining colors, patterns and figures with glazes and decals, evoking the magical times of her childhood memories. Tassistro’s recent interest in yoga and India has led her to develop a new line, influenced by Indian culture, and especially by its architecture.

In Tassistro’s studio there is a chalkboard with the words: “Dream, believe, love,” and “Thoughts become things, so choose the good ones.” You can feel these philosophies as you observe and handle her delightful functional creations. Tassistro is becoming well known for the whimsical glazes that adorn her cups, plates, bowls, serving pieces and special items like cake stands.

More of her work can be seen at www.flycoopstudios.com

Rapid River Arts District 9 Riverside Dr, Open Seven Days www.creativewayfinding.byregion.

Advertising Artwork supplied by the artists.

Angelique Tassistro: Exotic Everyday - A Tabletop View

Angelique Tassistro's whimsical, functional ware.