



Arts Gram

The Official Publication of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

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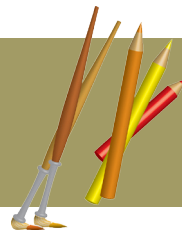
Rehearsals Begin



Arts in the Ozarks Fayetteville, Arkansas

Hosted by the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks

Artistry in Motion



(L to R) Volunteer Driver-Brian Pegouske, Leonard Marcilous, Royal Pollard, Harold Harris, Robert Routley, Sr., and Diana Routley.

It is almost comical in the way it starts out like an exam question from a college prep test:

One van is traveling 750 miles from Battle Creek, Mich., to Rogers, Ark., with four Veteran artists (complete strangers) on board. The trip takes two days with a stopover in St. Louis, Mo. What is the sum...of their knowledge of each other?

The answer, not surprisingly, is that this is a trick question.

Leonard Marcilous, Air Force Veteran, is a performing artist in the Drama category from Kalamazoo, Mich. Royal Pollard, Army Veteran, is a visual artist from Saginaw, Mich.

Harold Harris, Army Veteran, is a visual artist from Benton Harbor, Mich. Robert Routley, Sr., Army Veteran, is a visual artist from Stanwood, Mich. Prior to this trip to the 2011 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, they had never met.

As Marcilous and Harris both pointed out, Veterans are brothers and sisters, so in essence, they started the trip as family. That's common ground to work with. The bonus was that all artists have a kindred spirit and you can see it in the work they produce. What was going to be an intriguing story portraying four total strangers surviving a long road trip

together, turned out to be one of the most delightful conversations this writer has ever had. As a Veteran myself, it was enlightening to me that I was able to join in the conversation, so quickly. Hence, the trick question. As Veterans, who've honorably served this country in all eras, we share a bond that most civilians will never understand. Our relationship to each other was forged by fire and tradition, and a lasting legacy that we'll all never forget. We aren't strangers, we aren't passengers thrown together by circumstance... we are family. Lesson learned, my brothers and sisters...lesson learned.



Generations Bridged

by Darin Farr, public affairs officer, VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System

When one thinks of father and son activities, they generally imagine a day of fishing or even playing a game of catch in the backyard. Most people would not conjure an image of two men giving a dramatic dialogue performance piece with the subject matter being as visceral and moving as "What is a Veteran?"

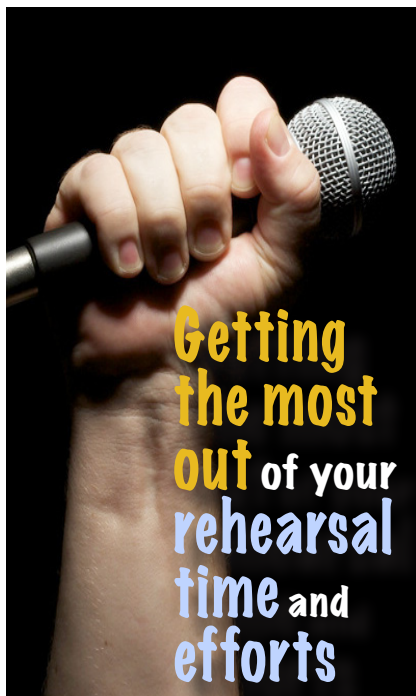
Mike McCann is an Army Veteran of the Vietnam Era. He is also a professional actor who is a veteran of the Creative Arts Festival with six appearances. Stephen McCann, his son, is also an Army Veteran of the Gulf War Era. This is his first Festival.

While the Festival may be self explanatory for those who've served, the message that is given in the patriotic prose the duo performs together is one that we all hope the rest of the public can comprehend. The essential point of the piece is that you can't always recognize a Veteran from their outward appearance at first glance. For example "He is the old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket -- palsied now and aggravatingly slow -- who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come."

Showing that creativity can be a bond even deeper than genetics, as well as being a cathartic aspect of a Veteran's life. Be sure to see the McCanns' performance this week.



Mike and Stephen McCann. Gold Medal winners in the Patriotic Prose category.



- ✓ Show up to rehearsals on time! On-time arrival is of tremendous benefit and importance to everyone and shows that you are respectful of others and serious about your commitment to a successful performance.
- ✓ Rehearsal is for maximizing everyone's performance. The lyrics and music should have been learned prior to the Festival and the rehearsals this week focus primarily on fine-tuning.
- ✓ Pay close attention to what the co-music directors are teaching you during rehearsals. They are experienced professionals and have the last word on musical aspects of the performance.
- ✓ Listen carefully to instructions and tips given by the show and music directors, as well as the chorus leaders. Do not talk or socialize while they are leading rehearsals.
- ✓ Rehearsing is all about "getting good." It can be very exciting, but it can also be tedious and tiring. Think about your individual needs for rest, exercise, etc., and give yourself the best opportunity to have a trouble-free, uplifting week at the Festival. Working together towards a common goal is one of life's most satisfying experiences.

Festival Photos





Artist Sharing with Other Artists

by Todd Greenman, public affairs officer, VA Medical Center, Battle Creek, Michigan

For the past 14 years, the Artist Interaction Session held at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival has provided artists the opportunity to showcase their work and discuss their entries. At Tuesday's session, Veterans were also able to share their personal military stories amongst fellow comrades.

For Vietnam Veteran, Todd Nelson, of Forsyth, Mo., he likes to pass what he has learned on to other people he knows, just as his former college instructors did for him when he attended Mankato State College in Minnesota. "I had some great mentors who encouraged me to grow," Nelson said.

Nelson, who served in the Marine Corps, placed first in the Visual Arts Competition with his glasswork entry, called "Nocturnal Visions." For the past 25 years, he has worked at the Silver Dollar City theme park in Branson, Mo., where his creations are sold. "I've done clay work for 15 years and 10 in glass," added Nelson.



Todd Nelson sharing at the Artist Interaction Session held on October 18.

Question for the Day? Every day this week, we'll go out and ask one question. Here are your responses.

What is your favorite musical and which character would you like to play?



Pam Kelly
Pinellas Park, Florida
Army

"Fame. I have been playing music from the age of four – guitar, keyboard, drums, trumpet, and singing. Glenda from Wicked is the character I would like to play."



Don French
Des Moines, Iowa
Army

"Forrest Gump, although it's a movie, the music was so much a part of it. I would like to play Lt. Dan because of his ordeal and what he had to overcome."



Kip Sorlie
Sioux Falls, SD
Army

"Sound of Music, because I like the mountains, the idea of the musical, and them escaping the repression and running towards freedom."



Dan Krehbiel
Tomah, Wisconsin
Army

"Man of La Mancha. It's one of the best examples of a play within a play. The character tells the story in order to survive the prisoners and through the process they are uplifted to a level of new spirit."



Lana Gillaspie
Des Moines, Iowa
Navy

"Lion King, because I love the music from it and the way they made the costumes look realistic. I would play Simba because he's the young one growing up."

Internet Cafe

The Hewlett Packard Internet Cafe is located in Embassy Boardroom (in the John Q. Hammons Convention Center – left hand side when you come down the stairs from the Embassy Suites Hotel).

The Internet Cafe is available:
Wednesday – Saturday • 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Closed Thursday and Saturday Evenings

Hospitality

The Hospitality Room is sponsored by the Arkansas and Missouri Chapters of the American Legion Auxiliary and is located in the Rogers Room, 2nd Floor, of the Embassy Suites. Be sure to stop by on the following days!

Wed., October 19 – Thurs., October 20
9 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Ice Cream Social
Tonight! October 19
9 p.m. to 11 p.m.



Medical Information

- The Medical Room is located in the Ambassador Suite, Room 220.
- Daily hours are from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Outside the hotel, please call (479) 254-8400 and ask for Suite 220.
- After 11 p.m., call (479) 422-3982 for medical emergencies.
- During the Festival, please let your team leader know of any medical concerns. They will help you.
- Medical personnel wearing bright blue jackets will be seen throughout the hotel and convention center.
- Medical personnel will also accompany each group on activities throughout the week.

Today's Weather

Showers

High/Low (°F) 61 / 37



Today's Menu



Wed., October 19th

Breakfast Buffet
Atrium – Embassy Suites
6 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Lunch Buffet
Grand Ballroom 6
Noon – 1 p.m.

Assorted Relish Tray of Olives, Pepperoncini,
Cherry Peppers, and Pickled Vegetables
Array of Deli-Style Sandwiches
and Wraps with Condiments
Kettle Chips and Pretzels
Fresh Baked Cookies
and Brownies
Seasonal Fruit
Coffee and Iced Tea

Dinner Buffet
Grand Ballroom 6
5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.

Marinated Tomato and Cucumber Salad
Classic Caesar Salad
Meat & Vegetarian Lasagnas
Vegetables and Starch
Garlic Bread
Array of Layer Cakes, Cheesecake and
Seasonal Desserts
Seasonal Fruit
Coffee and Iced Tea



Schedules for Wednesday, October 19th



Artists

- 6 – 8:00 a.m. Breakfast: Atrium, Embassy Suites
- 7:45 a.m. Team leader and team support meeting with Paula Moran: Commerce Ballrooms
- 8 a.m. Team leader and team support meeting with artists
- 9 a.m. – 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open: Rogers Room, 2nd floor, Embassy Suites
- 8:30 a.m. Depart for Terra Studios. Tours and art workshops. (Clay Pinch Pots, Collage and Tile Painting Workshops)
- 11:45 – 12:30 p.m. Lunch at Terra Studios
- 3:30 p.m. Depart for hotel
- 5:30 – 6:45 p.m. Dinner: Grand Ballroom 6
- 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. Caricaturist: Pinnacle Ballroom Foyer
- 9 p.m. Creative Writing Interaction Session: Commerce Ballrooms
- 9 – 11 p.m. Karaoke: Pinnacle Ballrooms 6-8 (Ice Cream in Hospitality Room)

Alternate Activities

Terra Studios

Wed., October 19 - 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Departing from Embassy Suites



Terra Studios is located in the Ozark Mountains near Fayetteville, Ark. Here, artisans produce glass and pottery home wares, gifts, and fine art pieces. Terra visitors can stroll along the wooded paths through the mural garden, explore the pottery showroom, participate in art classes, and watch skilled glass workers create the famous Bluebird of Happiness.



Performers

- 6 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast: Atrium, Embassy Suites
- 8 a.m. Team leader and team support meeting with Amy Kimbler: Ambassador Ballrooms A/B
- 8:30 a.m. Team leader and team support meeting with performers
- 9 a.m. – 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open: Rogers Room, 2nd floor, Embassy Suites
- 9 – 10 a.m. Chorus member photos (wear white shirts and vests): Ambassador Ballroom E
- 9 – 11 a.m. Chorus rehearsal with chorus leader (and sectional assistants if necessary): Ambassador Ballrooms A/B
- 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Rehearsal of solo and group acts with directors as scheduled: Grand Ballrooms 1-5
- 12 – 1 p.m. Lunch: Grand Ballroom 6
- 1 – 5:30 p.m. Complete run-thru in show order – ALL SHOW PARTICIPANTS NEEDED: Grand Ballrooms 1-5
Chorus vests/costume fittings: Ambassador Ballroom E
- 5:30 – 6:45 p.m. Dinner: Grand Ballroom 6
- 7 – 8 p.m. Chorus number rehearsal with music director (ALL SHOW PARTICIPANTS): Grand Ballrooms 1-5
- 8 – 9 p.m. Individual work with production number soloists: Grand Ballrooms 1-5
- 8 – 9 p.m. Chorus rehearsal with chorus leader (and sectional assistants if necessary): Ambassador Ballrooms A/B
- 9 p.m. Creative Writing Interaction Session: Commerce Ballrooms
- 9 – 11 p.m. Karaoke: Pinnacle Ballrooms 6-8 (Ice Cream in Hospitality Room)



Artists and Performers

Please check with your team leader and/or the posted schedule in the Embassy Suites breakfast area or outside of Grand Ballrooms 1-5 in the Convention Center for any changes or updates to your daily schedule.

Newsletters

Extra copies of the Festival's newsletter are located outside the Media Center, Salon D.