



# Arts Gram

The Official Publication of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

First Edition • October 17, 2011

## Your Moment Awaits



*Arts in the Ozarks* Fayetteville, Arkansas

Hosted by the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks

# WELCOME

from National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Director, Elizabeth Mackey

Veterans gathered this week in Northwest Arkansas are all national competition medal-winners from over 50 VA facilities nationwide. They are part of a total of 3,857 Veterans from 122 VA facilities who originally entered categories within the divisions of art, creative writing, dance, drama and music during the local level competition phase this past winter. Following the local judging, their entries advanced to the national level where they achieved medal status in their specific category. These Veterans have definitely experienced a remarkable journey to the Festival, which continues as we come together in Rogers and Fayetteville.

Over 70% of the Veterans joining us this week are first-time participants at the Festival.

A special welcome to you!

The week ahead will be filled with rehearsals, workshops and alternate activities. It's a wonderful time to get to know people from around the country who all share a love for the arts. It's also a chance to demonstrate to the communities of Northwest Arkansas the depth of artistic talent and skill that our nation's Veterans possess, and how artistic expression promotes healing and enhances quality of life.

Thanks to the staff and volunteers of the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks and the surrounding community for your warm hospitality. And special thanks to our co-presenters, Help Hospitalized Veterans and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Everyone, be sure to get to know and express your gratitude to these wonderful sponsors as well as to the other gracious sponsors who will be joining us later in the week.

Congratulations Veterans! We are here because of you, and we thank you for allowing us to share this part of your journey. You represent all of the Veterans who participated in the 2011 competition and are extremely worthy of the recognition you are receiving this week. Best wishes for a rewarding and artistically inspiring experience in the days ahead.



Elizabeth (Liz) Mackey

# It's an Honor... WELCOME

from Veterans Health Care Systems of the Ozarks Acting Medical Center Director, Johnny Henley, MD

Welcome to Northwest Arkansas and the 2011 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival! We are honored to have you here with us to celebrate your artistic achievements and accomplishments. The staff at the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks have been working throughout the year to create a wonderful Festival experience for you and to show you the best of what Northwest Arkansas has to offer.

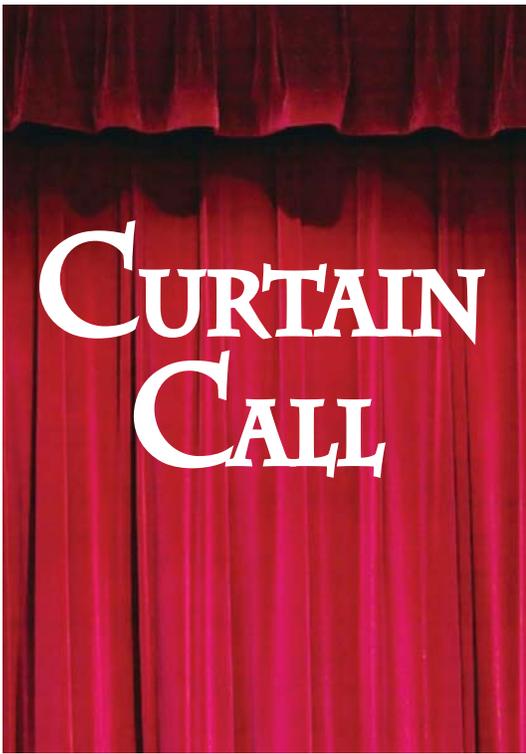
From hunting and fishing to hiking and biking, from arts and architecture to historical monuments and military history, Northwest Arkansas has it all. We hope that you will enjoy a trip through history as you take a ride on the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad, visit the Pea Ridge National Military Park, and tour the Walton Five & Dime that paved the way for the first Wal-Mart store to open in Rogers, Ark., in 1962. Visual Artists will enjoy art workshops at the Fayetteville Underground, Terra Studios and Fly Tying.

In addition the area boasts numerous state parks and Beaver Lake, a popular water destination. Fayetteville is home to the main campus of University of Arkansas and the Arkansas Razorbacks, providing the community with rich academic and athletic support. The highly anticipated Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is also set to open its doors on Veterans Day 2011 in Bentonville, Ark.

Thank you to all of our nation's heroes, our Veterans, for your service to our country and for travelling to Northwest Arkansas to share your artistic talents. I hope that you create many lasting memories and friendships during the Festival. I look forward to spending time with you throughout the week, it is truly an honor!



Dr. Henley



Welcome! Tonight is the Opening Ceremonies of the 2011 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, and it is the first official chance to get together and celebrate with fellow winners.

Arrive early for tonight's celebration, with pre-ceremony music beginning at 6:30 p.m., in the Grand Ballroom, provided by Jeff O'Brien. At 7 p.m., the Opening Ceremonies festivities and banquet will begin.

The program starts with a welcome from our hosts and introductions, followed by dinner. Master of Ceremonies for the evening is Ken Hatfield, former University of Arkansas football coach. Country music recording star Michael Peterson returns this year, and will be on hand during the banquet, and will stay throughout the week of the Festival. Medical center leaders and national sponsors will also offer their welcoming remarks. Participants will then be introduced to this year's team leaders and national steering committee members.

Following the formal ceremony, all artists and performers are asked to remain in the Grand Ballroom for the first meeting with Festival team leaders and fellow team members. Important information about the upcoming week will be shared at that time.

So come early and enjoy the music and tonight's other activities. See you this evening!

## Opening Ceremony

Master of Ceremonies, Ken Hatfield

Ken Hatfield is a native Arkansan. Graduate of the University of Arkansas, he starred at defensive back for the 1964 national championship football team.



Ken Hatfield

Hatfield began his college head coaching career at the United States Air Force Academy in 1979. He coached at Arkansas from 1984 to 1989 where his teams won two straight Southwest Conference Championships. He also coached at Clemson and Rice Universities.

He served almost three years in the U.S. Army; his honorable discharge was with a rank of Captain. Hatfield gives back to our Veterans in Northwest Arkansas as a volunteer at the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks with his pet therapy dog, Margo.

Hatfield is an inspiration and mentor to our VAVS volunteers, especially our teen volunteers. And he is with us tonight to honor you by serving as our Master of Ceremonies.

We are pleased to welcome multiple Grammy and Country Music Award nominee, Michael Peterson as the Master of Ceremonies for this year's National Veterans Creative Arts Festival stage show on October 23. Peterson is the 2008 recipient of the distinguished Bob Hope "Spirit of Hope" award for his service to the nation and the servicemen and women of the Armed Forces. Recognized by Billboard magazine as the top selling new male artist and top new airplay artist in 1997-1998 in country music, he burst on the scene with five consecutive Billboard and Rock and Roll top twenty hits between 1997 and 2001. Three top five singles and three number one Country Music Television (CMT) music videos including "From Here to Eternity" were recently chosen as some of Great American Country's top 100 greatest love song videos of all time.

- Meet Michael Peterson on Sat., October 22, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., in the Hammons Convention Center Foyer.

# Artistry in Motion



by Diane Keefe, public affairs officer, VA Boston Healthcare System

Welcome everyone to the 2011 Veterans Creative Arts Festival! It has been a long road to Fayetteville, but with all the activities planned for this week, it will be well worth the trip.

This year's Festival boasts an attendance of 43 visual artists from 32 different VA facilities around the country, from Alaska to Florida and everywhere in between. Artistic works from 53 categories are represented this week and we hope you are able to enjoy as much of this as possible.

The week will be full of activities, in addition to the actual Festival happenings. The week begins with a visit to the Fayetteville Underground art galleries, where artists will participate in a two hands-on art projects as well as tour the gallery. The next day will be a visit to Terra Studios, a wonderful community of artists that focuses on glass and pottery; here you will take part in a pottery class and do some creative tile painting. The tiles created during this activity will become part of a permanent display to be enjoyed by visitors to Terra Studios for many years to come.

It's off to the railroad and a trip through the Ozark Mountains on Thursday, followed by a visit to the Walton Five and Dime and Museum of Native American Artifacts in Bentonville on Friday. Other activities will include working on craft kits creating duck models and a visit to Pea Ridge National Military Park.

Veterans Healthcare System of the Ozarks is honored to host this year's Veterans Creative Arts festival and we sincerely hope you enjoy your week of "art in the mountains."



## Center Stage



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

This week, we expect to be dazzled by the 22 acts we have and we are thrilled that you are here in the heart of the Ozarks!

The beautiful and historical city of Fayetteville is the center of everything that happens in Northwest Arkansas. Surrounded by the Ozark Mountains, natural beauty is something you come to expect when you're here. Fayetteville offers the small-town feel that Arkansas is known for, while always having something exciting going on.

This week is sure to be both fun and rewarding as you prepare for Sunday's stage presentation at Baum Walker Hall at the Walton Arts Center in Fayetteville. In addition to coaching, costume fittings and rehearsals, you will get to experience Northwest Arkansas at its best. Northwest Arkansas has a thriving arts community. Galleries, museums, theaters, music venues, fairs and festivals enrich the region with educational and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages and interests.

A great week lies ahead!

As you prepare for the stage show, here are a few tips to remember:

- Always be on time for your rehearsals
- Work hard to improve by listening to critiques and suggestions
- Practice on your own
- Encourage other performers
- Keep smiling – no matter what

We hope this week will not only help you become an even better performer, but allow you to meet many other wonderful and talented people as well.

Please get to know as many of them as possible, have a fantastic week and enjoy the excitement of being part of a wonderful show!

# Festival Photos



# The Power of Words

by Susan Hansen, administrative assistant, Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks

Sitting in the library at Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks on a sunny September afternoon, tears come to the eyes of James Littlepage as he recites "Living the Call," the short story that landed him a spot in the 2011 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. "Living the Call" is a vivid collection of the harsh realities of war and a reminder that life can change in the blink of an eye. The piece takes the reader back to the frontlines of Vietnam, to an ambush that turns an ordinary day into one that will never be forgotten, which is exactly the author's intention.

"I wrote this piece because I wanted others to know what it felt like to be in battle, and for those who had been in battle to know that they aren't alone" Littlepage remarked.

For Littlepage writing to express his thoughts, feelings and emotions is nothing new; he has been influenced by a family of writers. As a child he was captivated by the intensity of watching his Grandfather write, and mesmerized as he listened to him recite poetry. "I wanted to be like him [his grandfather]," Littlepage recalls. "He had love and patience and he projected that through his work." As a result of these powerful early influences, he has been honing his writing skills for many years. His gift as a writer was also noticed by a high school humanities teacher, who prompted Littlepage to focus his writing on poetry. Since that time he has received multiple recognitions for his powerful work, including being selected to participate in the 2009 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Even though Littlepage has spent the majority of his life writing, he still finds great therapeutic benefit in the arts. "Writing calms me down in spirit" he remarked. "It makes life more beautiful and projects the beauty of my mind."



Littlepage reciting his winning piece, "Living the Call"

## Connect with VA



The Department of Veterans Affairs welcomes you to the future! We are using new social media tools to provide Veterans with content about the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival you can't find anywhere else!

Follow the links at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), for videos, photos, news and important information about the activities surrounding the Festival.

Have a smartphone? Then keep an eye out for this symbol in the newsletter. It's called a QR, or quick response code. These codes will take you to exclusive Festival videos created throughout the week, as well as other important links.



Search your Android Marketplace, or App Store to download one of the free apps listed below, and then use the app to scan these codes wherever you see them. Hint: Scan the code above to see where it takes you!

### QR Code Scanner Apps:

- iPhone, Blackberry and Palm:  
Neo Reader  
<http://getneoreader.com>
- Windows Phone:  
Microsoft Tag  
<http://tag.microsoft.com>
- Android:  
Barcode Scanner  
Go to Android Marketplace and search for "Barcode Scanner"

## Today's Weather

Mostly Sunny  
High/Low (°F) 76/50



## Internet Cafe

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

The Internet Cafe is available:

Tuesday – 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!

Mon., October 17  
10 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Tues., October 18 – Thurs., October 20  
9 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Fri., October 21  
9 a.m. to Midnight

Sat., October 22  
9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Sun., October 23  
10 a.m. to Noon  
10 p.m. – Midnight

### Ice Cream Social

Wed., 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 Menu



### Opening Banquet

Grand Ballroom 6 - Embassy Suites  
6:30 p.m.

Spinach Salad with Cranberries and  
Dried Apricots, Toasted Pecans,  
and Grape Tomatoes  
Creamy Citrus Vinaigrette or  
Parmesan Cracked Pepper Ranch Dressing

Pecan Crusted Chicken  
with Bourbon Maple Cream

Seasonal Vegetables and Potato  
Warm Dinner Rolls and Butter

- Vegetarian Option -  
(Must present a green ticket)  
Vegetarian Quiche

- Dessert -  
Raspberry Brule Cheesecake  
Diabetic Option - Seasonal Fruit  
(Must present a red ticket)

Coffee and Iced Tea

### Tues., October 18th

#### Breakfast Buffet

Atrium – Embassy Suites  
6 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.



# Schedules for Monday, October 17th



## Artists

### All day arrivals

- 10 a.m. – 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open (Snacks served): Rogers Room, 2nd floor, Embassy Suites
- 12 – 6 p.m. Festival Registration: Hammons Convention Center Foyer
- 5:30 p.m. All team leaders and team support meeting: Commerce Ballrooms, Embassy Suites
- 6:30 p.m. Pre-Dinner Music: Grand Ballroom 6
- 7 p.m. Opening Banquet and Ceremonies: Grand Ballroom 6
- 8:30 p.m. Team Meetings: Team leaders, team support and Veterans

## Performers

### All day arrivals

- 10 a.m. – 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open (Snacks served): Rogers Room, 2nd floor, Embassy Suites
- 12 – 6 p.m. Festival Registration: Hammons Convention Center Foyer
- 5 p.m. Performing Artist team leader/support staff meeting: Commerce Ballrooms, Embassy Suites Hotel
- 5:30 p.m. All team leaders and team support meeting: Commerce Ballrooms, Embassy Suites Hotel
- 6:30 p.m. Pre-Dinner Music: Grand Ballroom 6
- 7 p.m. Opening Banquet and Ceremonies: Grand Ballroom 6
- 8:30 p.m. Team Meetings: Team leaders, team support and Veterans

## Alternate Activities

Fayetteville Underground  
Tues., October 18 - 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
Departing from Embassy Suites



Fayetteville Underground is a non-profit community arts organization whose mission is "to promote the arts in Northwest Arkansas and help establish Fayetteville as a destination city of the visual arts." The Underground is more than just a commercial art gallery. In addition to housing four distinct retail gallery spaces, it is also home to more than a dozen artist studios where visitors may view and interact with resident working artists as they create original works of art spanning numerous mediums—providing an environment where the public and artists can build relationships and share the creative process.

## Arkansas - Did You Know?

The earliest inhabitants of what is today known as the state of Arkansas were indigenous people including several Native American nations. It was not until the middle of the 16th Century that European explorers reached this area. Hernando de Soto of Spain is credited as the first European to reach modern day Arkansas. Arkansas is one of 15 modern day states that were formed as a result of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase.

The name "Arkansas" derived from the combination of the rich Native American presence in the area and the French explorers that founded the first permanent settlement. Arkansas comes from a combination of the Quapaw tribe's word "akakaze" meaning "land of downriver people" and the Sioux word "Akakaze" that stands for "people of the south wind." The pronunciation of "Arkansas" (with a silent "s") versus "Arcansas" resulted from the French influence in the area. The pronunciation was made official in 1881 by an act of the state legislature to resolve a dispute between the two Arkansas U.S. Senators.



### 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.