



# Arts Gram

The Official Publication of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

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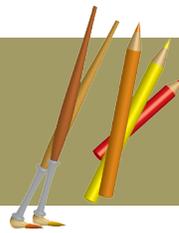
## Women Veterans Shine



*Arts in the Ozarks* Fayetteville, Arkansas

Hosted by the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks

# Artistry in Motion



## Self-Medicating with *Art*

by Susan Varcie, program specialist, VA National Sports Programs and Special Events



Judy Hill with her award winning artwork.

Army Veteran Judy Hill served her country for 23 years as a computer hardware/software analyst in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. While serving, Hill was subjected to sexual trauma, a stalker, and bombings. Hill's husband Danny, also in the Army, was stationed with her and was there to support her through this. Both of her sons Brandon and Scotty were also active duty during this time. "Professional women in Saudi Arabia are an oddity. I had to go on the local economy to purchase items and was frequently subjected to the local Saudi men's actions. You just deal with it and continue doing your job, working 17 hours a day as if nothing was wrong," said Hill. After the stalker was caught, the bombings started – day and night, her husband became ill and her son was on the frontlines, all of this led to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which Hill didn't

even realize she had. "I thought I was fine, but I wasn't."

Hill was seeking help through the Women Veterans Program at the VA facility in Shreveport, La., when her counselors told her she was using her artistic skills to self-medicate. As an artist, she enjoys sculpting, oils, painting, drawing and print-making. Her gold-winning piece at the Festival, "Eight Desert Faces," has been a healing process for her. The faces in the picture depict memories of the bad things that happened to her. "Art is a healing process and has helped me deal with my PTSD," said Hill.

"The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is more fun than I ever thought it could be. I really enjoyed the tour of Terra Studios. It was well put together – calm, relaxing and fun," said Hill. "I have also enjoyed being with my fellow Veterans – we've all been there."

## Writers Read Work to other Veterans

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

While creative writing has been a category for four years at the Festival, this is the first time an interaction session was held where artists were able to share their writings with others. On Wednesday evening, several Veterans gathered in the Commerce Ballroom to hear poetry, short stories, and personal experience essays with topics ranging from military life, recovery, PTSD, humor, patriotism, and life's journey. All entries in the 19 categories of the Creative Writing Division that receive first, second, and third place are published in a bounded book and given to contributors.

Jim Littlepage, an Army Veteran who lives in Ozark, Ark., won second place in the Patriotic Short, Short Story category for his work, "Living the Call," writings that he refers to as "rambling – random thoughts about Vietnam." Sharing his poetry with other Veterans helps him make people feel good.

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*"That's the way I get my welcome home that I never got,"  
said Littlepage*

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"I want to touch people's lives with the gift God gave me," added Littlepage. Attendees at the Stage Show this week will get the opportunity to hear him speak, as he will be one of two narrators talking about the benefits of the Festival.

Veteran John Koelsch of Salem, Va. said for him writing helps to deal with anger and the pain he dealt with from serving several tours of duty. Koelsch encouraged the older Veterans in the audience to reach out to the younger ones now attending the Festival to support them. He placed first in the Monologue/Duologue category with his entry, "Call of Duty."



## Music...A Life Time Journey

"My first choice was Air Force, but I was past the age limit, so Army it was" said Joey Wilson of Austin, Texas. Wilson was a single mom with two young children when she joined the military. A musician since she was a young girl, the military helped her to stabilize her life, her music helped her to make a living.

As a guitar player, drummer, and singer, Wilson had quite a journey through life and now finds herself in a "good place with a good husband." A self-taught drummer during the sixties, she was one of the very few girl drummers of that era, and played in bands in Vegas, Reno, and Lake Tahoe. Music was a way for her to support herself and her kids, but it also gave her a sense of accomplishment, "It was something I could do and do well," said Wilson.

Now Wilson plays guitar and performs because she wants to, not because she has to, and she likes it that way.

While playing at an acoustic jam session in Austin, Wilson met someone who had come to the Creative Arts Festival and talked her into auditioning through the San Antonio VA Medical Center. At the Festival, she will be singing in the chorus, and singing harmony for the songs "Beautiful" and "American Soldier." This is Wilson's first Creative Arts Festival and she is thrilled to be here connecting with fellow Veterans and enjoying the vibes.



Performer Joey Wilson

## The Art of Deception

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



John Spraker at Fly Tying Workshop

They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. The true essence of any art form is its ability to evoke emotion. These emotions can range from humor to profound grief, all natural human emotions. How about hunger? Even better, how about hunger in a fish? Believe it or not, there is an art form for that too.

Fly tying is an art form that requires intense concentration, dexterity and patience; it also has an ulterior motive. As Fly Tying instructor Gary Henderson puts it, "The object is to create something that a fish will believe is edible!" Attendees at the Festival received some very personal one-on-one instruction in the art of fly tying.

Veterans, who learned the techniques, thoroughly enjoyed the class, materials used, and even a few whimsical or comical anecdotes from the seasoned instructors.

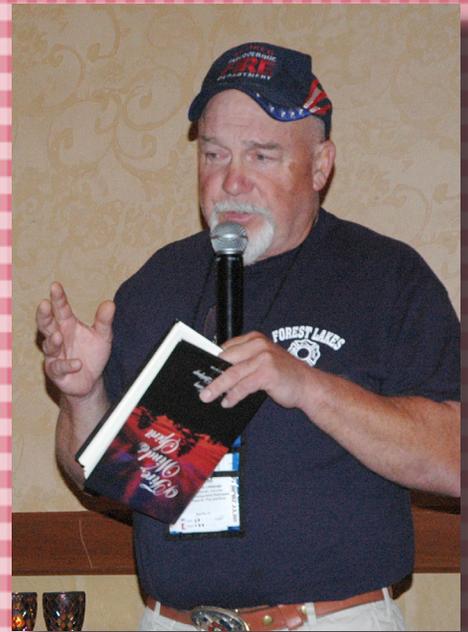
One of the instructors, a Veteran himself, explained that the repetition and concentration involved with fly tying is very helpful to him because it allows him to "push everything else out of his mind." This can be a very therapeutic activity, as the group of instructors from the Bella Vista Fly Tying club know all too well. The group has used the methods to great success from recovering cancer victims to Veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. So, you have a form of art that requires you to use your imagination, create something from ordinary materials, and then it encourages you to get outdoors and commune with nature and present your work. Fascinating concept isn't it? Oh wait, there's a bonus? You might actually catch a fish with your handiwork...well, that's validation and dinner!

# Festival Photos





Country music artist Michael Peterson visting Veterans at the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks.



# Thanks to Our Presenters!

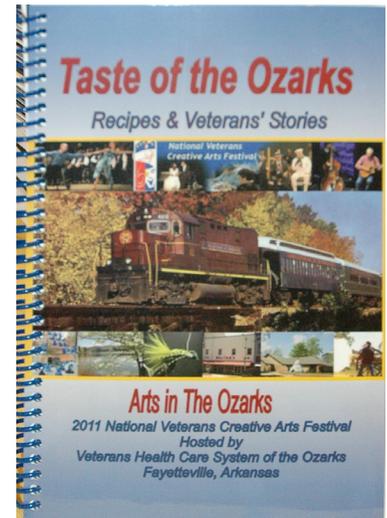
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV) and the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), are the three co-presenters of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival each year. All three share a strong commitment to America's Veterans, dedicated to promoting creative arts therapy for their health, rehabilitation and recovery.

VA has supported art and music therapy programs for more than 20 years, recognizing how this event demonstrates to the public the multiple talents of our nation's Veterans. Of course, VA could not support an event of this size without the committed support of both HHV and the ALA.

Help Hospitalized Veterans has supported both active duty military as well as Veterans with art therapy since 1970, having distributed more than 23 million craft kits to VA medical centers and military hospitals across the country. HHV will host their **Annual Craft Kit Workshop today at 1 p.m., in Pinnacle Ballrooms 1-5.**

This is the American Legion Auxiliary's eleventh year supporting the Creative Arts Festival with countless dedicated volunteers who help with event logistics and day-to-day operations. Among other areas, ALA provides volunteers for the costume room and also furnishes the refreshments and volunteers in the hospitality room.

Thank you to all of our co-presenters for supporting our Veteran artists and performers, and for helping them learn, grow, heal and create.



National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Commemorate Cookbooks are available for sale in the Headquarters Center, Salons F/G/H. Cost is \$10 each. Sponsored by Fayetteville VA Employee Association. Proceeds benefit the Festival.

## Question for the Day?

Every day this week, we'll go out and ask one question. Here are your responses.

What is your favorite book or who is your favorite writer and why?



William Quinion  
Schenectady, NY  
Navy

"Jules Verne, author of 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. He opens people's minds to change and many inventors have been inspired by his writing."



Paula Litch  
Issaquah, Wash.  
Army

"The Bible. It helps me get through life and gives me hope and encouragement for the future."



Brian Card  
Westhaven, CT  
Air Force

"Oh, the Places You Will Go, by Dr. Seuss. It is a clear illustration of what lies in the years ahead and the choices we need to make, including waiting around for something to happen and waiting for one more chance."



John Koelsch  
Salem, Virginia  
Army

"Time Enough for Love, by Robert A. Heinlein. Brilliant overview of the realities and truth in life set into a science fiction setting that is a really fun story that talks to all of us."



Michael McCann  
Long Beach, Calif.  
Army

"Play write Murry Schisgal's 'LUV'. A play that is a comedy and a force at the same time depicting the meaning of love. It helps me develop my skills as an actor especially in comedy."

## 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:  
Friday – 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!

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

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

**Sunny**

High/Low (°F) 66 / 43



# Today's Menu



Fri., October 21st

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

**Lunch Buffet**  
Grand Ballroom 6  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Mexican Slaw  
Tortilla Chips with Assorted Salsas  
Build-Your-Own  
Taco and Burrito Bar with Shredded Beef and Chicken  
Shredded Cheese, Lettuce, Olives, Tomatoes,  
Guacamole, Sour Cream  
Tortillas – Hard and Soft Shell  
Beans and Rice  
Sliced Fresh Fruit  
Sopapillas with Honey  
Coffee and Iced Tea

**Mediterranean Dinner Buffet**  
Grand Ballroom 6  
5 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

Antipasto Platter  
Romaine Lettuce, Croutons, Parmesan Cheese,  
Black Olives and Cherry Tomatoes  
with Creamy Caesar Dressing  
Italian Herb-Rubbed Pork Loin  
Baked Ziti Marinara  
Tri-Colored Tortellini with Creamy Pesto Sauce  
Fresh Seasonal  
Vegetable Medley  
Dinner Rolls and Cheese-Stuffed Breadsticks  
Tiramisu, Cheesecakes,  
Layer Cakes  
Coffee and Iced Tea



## Schedules for Friday, October 21st



# Artists

- 6 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast: Atrium, Embassy Suites
- 8 a.m. Team leader and team support meeting with Paula Moran: Commerce Ballrooms
- 8:30 a.m. Team leader and team support meeting with artists
- 8:45 a.m. and 9 a.m. Two buses will load and depart for tour
- 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. Tour Walton's 5 & 10 in Bentonville, Arkansas
- 9 a.m. – Midnight Hospitality Room Open: Rogers Room, 2nd floor, Embassy Suites
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch at hotel: Grand Ballroom 6
- 1 p.m. Art Workshop #4 – HHV Craft Workshop: Pinnacle Ballrooms 1-5
- 1 p.m. Q & A with National Art Committee: Commerce Ballrooms
- 3:30 – 5 p.m. Creative Writing Session – Journaling: Commerce Ballrooms
- 5 – 6:15 p.m. Dinner: Grand Ballroom 6
- 7:30 – 9 p.m. Presentation of the Military Combat Experience entries (electronic images) from the 2011 national art competition: Commerce Ballrooms
- 9 – 11 p.m. Karaoke: Pinnacle Ballrooms 6-8

## Alternate Activities

Walton's 5 & 10

Fri., October 21

9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Departing from Embassy Suites



The location of Sam Walton's first "5 & 10," which laid the cornerstone for Wal-Mart, Walton's 5 & 10 is a step back in time chock full of retro toys, candies, souvenirs, and actual memorabilia for sale. From wax lips to Ol' Roy coloring books and sock monkeys, you'll get a taste of what it was like to shop back in the dime store era.



# Performers

- 6 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast: Atrium, Embassy Suites
- 7:45 a.m. Team leader and team support meeting with Amy Kimbler: Ambassador Ballrooms A/B
- 8:00 a.m. Team leader and team support meeting with performers
- 8:30 a.m. Load and Depart for Walton Arts Center
- 9 – 12:30 p.m. Tech rehearsal at Walton Arts Center – All solo & group act performers (shuttle bus departs each hour for those who are finished and wish to go back to hotel)
- 9 a.m. – Midnight Hospitality Room Open: Rogers Room, 2nd floor, Embassy Suites
- 12 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch at hotel: Grand Ballroom 6
- 1 p.m. Art Workshop #4 – HHV Craft Workshop: Pinnacle Ballrooms 1-5
- 1:45 p.m. and 2 p.m. Two buses will load and depart for tour
- 2 – 4:00 p.m. Tour Walton's 5 & 10 in Bentonville, Arkansas
- 3:30 – 5 p.m. Creative Writing Session – Journaling: Commerce Ballrooms
- 5 – 5:45 p.m. Dinner at hotel: Grand Ballroom 6
- 5:45 p.m. Load and Depart for Walton Arts Center
- 6:15 – 6:50 p.m. Prepare for dress rehearsal at Walton Arts Center – Solo & Group acts into costumes. NO make-up and NO white shirt/black pants needed. Sound check for orchestra.
- 7 – 10 p.m. Dress rehearsal with orchestra for all performers
- 10 p.m. Depart for hotel
- 10 – 11 p.m. Karaoke: Pinnacle Ballrooms 6-8



## 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.