

2010 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

ArtsGram

October 18-24, 2010 in La Crosse, Wis., by the Tomah VA Medical Center

Hosted by the Department of veterans Affairs, the American Legion Auxiliary and Help Hospitalized Veterans

Friday, October 22, 2010

Coming back home

by James Theres, Public Affairs Officer, Tomah VA Medical Center

“This is God’s country, so I am very glad to be here again,” said Thad Holloway.

Holloway and four other Veterans (Dearlo Williams, John Prather, Rick Stang and Michael Slatton) are repeat performers and attended the Festival when the Tomah VA hosted it in 1997, also in La Crosse, Wis. Although some things have changed, the spirit of the Festival remains the same.

“It was a lot colder then, I remember,” said Williams. “I recall that, but coming back here is like coming home.”

In '97, the Festival was held in early November with 2,200 Veterans entering the national competition representing 95 VA Medical Centers. Eighty-five Veterans attended to the Festival. In those days, there were two event presenters, the Department of Veterans Affairs and Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV).

“I remember going up to Jane Powell and telling her how pretty she was,” remarked John Prather who founded the Salty Dogs singing group in 1999. Powell served as the Master of Ceremonies in '97.

Fast forward to 2010, some things have changed, (the American Legion Auxiliary came on board in 2001), but again the spirit is the same.

“The accommodations are great. Everyone really went all out,” said Rick Strang, who is attending his 16th Festival.

“All out” is how we want our Veterans to remember their time spent in La Crosse in 2010, because they are the “Cream of the Crop” and have earned their way to the Festival with their talent and hard work.

Added Holloway, who has performed at The Apollo and Uptown Theatres, “It’s like presents under the Christmas tree being around all my fellow Veterans. It’s the closest we can get to one another and to those who couldn’t be here.”

Of Special Interest Today

- * Artists, completion of your first art workshops, basket making and wool felting, will be held in the Radisson Art Center Building from 9 – 11:30 a.m. and 1 – 3 p.m.
- * Artists, join the National Art Committee for an informal Q&A session at 1 p.m. in the Minnesota Room, 2nd floor of the Radisson Hotel
- * CEU session – “Compassion for the Caregiver” by Boon Murray will be held in the Radisson Art Center Building from 3:30 – 5 p.m.
- * Performers, tech rehearsals at Viterbo University Fine Arts Center are from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- * Performers, enjoy a “Cranberry Country Tour” from 1:30 – 5 p.m. Visit Wisconsin Cranberry Discovery Center, in Warrens, Wis., and watch cranberries being harvested in a cranberry bog.
- * Performers, buses leave at 6:15 p.m. to prepare for your dress rehearsal are from 7:30 – 10 p.m. at Viterbo University Fine Arts Center.
- * Artists, Art Workshop: HHV Craft Workshop – Radisson Art Center Building, 6:30 – 9 p.m. There are two projects available for you to make this year - the 2010 NVCAF cheese board with an eagle you can paint and a Festival leather pouch.

What our Performing Artists have to say...

Peter Baldwin, Riverhead, New York
VA Medical Center, Northport, New York
Branch of Service: Army

“I enjoy writing poetry and always hope it touches someone’s heart and soul.”

Lana Gillaspie, Knoxville, Iowa
VA Central Iowa Health Care System, Knoxville
Branch of Service: Navy

“Getting involved with art and music helped my creative side to surface and I developed new interests. No matter what your limitations might be, there will always be some form of the arts that everyone can do.”

Lionel Marcoux, Milan, Illinois
VA Medical Center, Iowa City, Iowa
Branch of Service: Army

“I feel proud being a member of this great family of Veterans and I look forward to the renewal of friendships and making new friends.”

Christine Pointer, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Miami VA Healthcare System
Branch of Service: Army

“Performing has always been a part of my life at a very early age. Music, dance, art, drama, and writing are art forms that I continue to grow in and study. It’s such a great feeling to be among the award winning talent of Veterans around the nation. I feel honored and appreciated as a Veteran and an artist. I’ve learned through the creative arts therapy program that art is not limited by a disability. There are no limits.”

Michael Young, Chicago, Illinois
Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, Chicago
Branch of Service: Army

“The creative arts are a good form of therapy because it gives you a sense of accomplishment and achievement.”

Wisconsin Series:

Wisconsin: The Cheese Head State

by James Theres, Public Affairs Officer, Tomah VA Medical Center

It’s not what the state license plate says, but...ah... close enough. It comes from there anyways. What are we talking about? Well, cheese, of course. And Wisconsinites loooooove it. So that presented us with a dilemma. How do we prove it? Remember in the movie “Forrest Gump” when Forrest’s bestest good friend, Bubba, started describing all the different types of shrimp in Louisiana. Now there’s an idea! Let’s try that. Like to hear it, here it go. We got sharp cheddar, super sharp cheddar, extra sharp cheddar, very sharp cheddar, white sharp cheddar, medium cheddar, mild cheddar, blueberry cheddar, apricots and ginger cheddar, black wax cheddar, smoked cheddar, swiss and cheddar, cranberry cheddar, red wax cheddar and tomato basil cheddar...baby swiss, buttery swiss, medium swiss, aged swiss, smoked baby swiss, smoked aged swiss, swiss gruyere, smoked swiss and cheddar, reduced fat lacey swiss and baby swiss wheels...smoked brick, mild brick, medium brick, full cream brick, Limburger, horseradish and chive havarti, beer kaese aged brick, Wisconsin dill havarti, muenster, pesto havarti, peppadew havarti and jalepeno havarti... colby jack, longhorn jack,

Monterey jack, Colby-wax, vegetable jack, dill jack, salsa jack, habanera jack, buffalo Monterey jack, morel mushroom and leek jack, gouda, aged gouda, smoked gouda, apple jack, apple cinnamon jack and party pack...mozzarella, provolone, aged provolone, parmesan, asiago, winey blue, buttermilk blue cheese, Belmont double cream brie, smoked blue cheese, Wisconsin blue cheese and Gorgonzola blue cheese... marbled cheddar cheese curds, yellow cheddar cheese curds, garlic and herb cheese curds, plain string cheese, string cheese whips and smoked string cheese....there's more, but we ran out of space. Now, why do they call Packer fans cheeseheads again?

Fun Fact Question: What slogan is on Wisconsin's license plate?

A. Wisconsin: America's Dairyland

The Artists Easel

The arts and crafts movement began in America in the late 1800s and continued through the 1920s. During this period, thousands of people discovered interesting crafts that eventually turned into hobbies. The crafts resulted in something productive or ornamental, or both. Some people even made their own houses. Kit houses were produced in the United States beginning in the first decade of the 20th century, and their popularity lasted into the 1950s.

While kit houses may have lost their popularity, crafts in general never have. In fact, another "kit" idea has proven successful. While visiting wounded Marines in a Navy hospital, the founder of Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV) learned that many asked for something to help pass the time and the idea of craft kits was born. According to the HHV Web site, "Craft kits are not to kill time, but to make time." Today, HHV has delivered over 20 million craft kits to veterans and active duty military personnel. Craft care specialists employed by HHV are located in a number of VA medical centers, to help include arts and crafts activities in the overall treatment plans for veterans.

So what, you may ask, do arts and crafts do for you? According to some, arts and crafts activities improve feelings of self worth and self esteem. They improve physical functioning of both fine and gross motor skills. Working on crafts promotes independence, teaches new skills and improves social interaction. It also provides an opportunity to creatively express yourself.

Many current and former participants in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival got their start through a craft care kit. Want to explore your crafty side? If so, come to the HHV craft workshop this evening from 6:30 – 9 p.m. in the Radisson Art Center Building.

The Performers Podium

The voice is probably the most valuable tool for any performer. It carries most of the content that the audience takes away. One of the oddities of speech is that we can easily tell others what is wrong with their voice, e.g. too fast, too high, too soft, etc., but we have trouble listening to and changing our own voices.

There are four main terms for defining vocal qualities:

- **Volume:** How loud the sound is. The goal is to be heard without shouting. Good speakers lower their voice to draw the audience in, and raise it to make a point.
- **Tone:** The characteristics of a sound. An airplane has a different sound than leaves being rustled by the wind. A voice that carries fear can frighten the audience, while a voice that carries laughter can get the audience to smile.
- **Pitch:** How high or low a note is. Pee Wee Herman has a high voice, Barbara Walters has a moderate voice, while James Earl Jones has a low voice.
- **Pace:** This is how long a sound lasts. Talking too fast causes the words and syllables to be short, while talking slowly lengthens them. Varying the pace helps to maintain the audience's interest.
- **Color:** Both projection and tone variance can be practiced by taking the line, "This new policy is going to be exciting" and saying it first with surprise, then with irony, then with grief, and finally with anger. The key is to over-act. Remember Shakespeare's words "All the world's a stage" – and presentations are the opening night on Broadway!

What an Experience

By Sandy Franks, Public Affairs Officer, Shreveport VA Medical Center

On Wednesday night the Military Combat Experience entries in the 2010 Creative Arts Festival national art competition were exhibited. Thirty works of art were displayed, accompanied by a narrative written by the artist. A variety of eras were represented in a range of mediums.

The best of show is a work entitled "Green Faces/Purple Heart." The artist, a Vietnam Veteran, decided one night to create an art piece with the faces he was seeing in his dreams. Doing artwork was recommended to him years ago as a way to express himself and cope.

"Resting – Italy 1944" was painted by a self-taught artist who uses his talent to express his feelings and memories related to his time in the service. He served in the US Army during WW II, fighting three years in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy with seaborne invasions. A member of a 4.2" mortar team with the 84th Mortar Battalion, he was awarded a Presidential Citation for 168 continuous combat days on the front line. The

artist said, “this painting depicts a battle scene painted from memory, with a welcome breathing space after a battle just before the mortar is broken down to be moved, once again, to a forward position.”

As a Korean War Veteran, the artist connected with and personally knew members of the Tuskegee Airmen and attended their conventions as an artist. His work Tuskegee Airmen is a charcoal drawing of the only Ace the Tuskegee Airmen had; he passed away recently. At the convention in Denver, while the artist was creating the work, other members of the Tuskegee Airmen admired it and agreed to sign this legendary work of art.

Genesis in Hell was painted by a Marine that who was stationed in Fallujah during Operation Phantom Fury in 2004. The mission was to clear the city of insurgents. They engaged in house-to-house combat sweeping through the city. Insurgents would hide behind cars, and shoot, causing explosions. The painting depicts the artist’s battalion, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, running from an explosion. It was reported that 38 American and British soldiers died and over 1000 insurgents were killed in what has been described as some of the heaviest urban combat the Marines have been involved in. The artist said, “I paint as an outlet for processing memories.”

The entire exhibition can be viewed on-line by doing a google search for “national veterans creative arts festival/facebook.”

A Day at the Festival with Lonnie Hicks and Johnathan Starks

We have asked two of our Veterans (one an artist and the other a performer) to give us a daily update of their impressions and insights each day of the Festival. Today we read their thoughts about coming to the Festival.

Lonnie Hicks, Artist, Honolulu Hawaii

I really enjoyed the wood chipping class yesterday morning. The instructor was amazing and gave me a lot of guidance. We were each given a knife, thumb guards and a board for our project. We learned how to make some basic cuts - triangles and curves. I am constantly being blown away by how nice and genuinely giving everyone is. After the carving class we had a wonderful lunch and were entertained by a band playing polkas and jigs. Our afternoon rosmaling class was a little more difficult for me, but with practice and guidance by another amazing instructor I was able to learn the basic “C,” “S” and wavy patterns. We were able to mix our own colors for use on our board. One of the wonderful things I have found is that I really do belong in the artist world. When I get home I plan to use the new skills I have learned and continue to broaden my horizons.

Johnathan Starks, Performer, Anchorage, Alaska

I am finding the rehearsals easier and easier. Today we are just doing run-throughs without all of the singing. I think it will be a great change of pace. Karaoke is so much fun. I sang so much yesterday that I got a glass of warm water, honey and lemon for my throat. I just can't miss karaoke each night. Ron, Thad, Mike and I had a special request last night. We were asked by the ALA president to sing "My Girl." It was awesome. It is wonderful being recognized. I am looking forward to the riverboat cruise this afternoon and finally being able to go shopping for some souvenirs with my wife. Ron, Chad, Mike and I plan to spend some time practicing our song for the show this afternoon, too. I think the greatest thing has been mingling with the other Veterans and making a lot of great new friends.

Things you need to know:

► The Hospitality Room, sponsored by the ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary, is open today from 10 a.m. - 11 p.m. in the Radisson Hotel, Mississippi Suite #823. Snacks will be served. Don't hesitate to stop by, as the only meal being served today is the Opening Banquet.

Today – 9 a.m. - Midnight

Saturday – 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Sunday – 10 a.m. - Noon, 10 p.m. - Midnight

► The Medical Room is located in the Iowa Room, second floor of the Radisson Hotel.

- Daily hours are: 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

- Use ext. 459 inside the Radisson Hotel, outside of the hotel please call (608) 784-6680 and ask for ext. 459.

- After 10 p.m. call room 214 for 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 accompany Veterans on all trips and tours.

► The Festival Internet Café is once again sponsored by HP and is located in the Radisson Hotel, Minnesota Room on the second floor.

Day	Times
Today	7 - 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.; and 7 - 9 p.m.
Saturday	7 - 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Sunday	7 - 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Thank you, HP, for providing this valuable service to our Festival Veterans.

NVCAF Web site: www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov

Festival Menu

Friday Meal Times:

Breakfast

Artists and Performers —

7 - 8:30 a.m.

Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Lunch

Artists — 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Performers — Noon - 1:30 p.m.

Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Dinner

Artists — 5 - 6:15 p.m.

Performers — 5 - 5:45 p.m.

La Crosse Center Ballroom, second floor

Breakfast Buffet

Fluffy scrambled eggs; home-style fried potatoes: bacon and sausage; fresh seasonal fruit; assorted baked goods: assorted low-fat; yogurt with home-made granola; assorted cereals/oatmeal; assorted juices; coffee, herbal teas, milk

Lunch Buffet

Soup du jour, broth based; assorted croissant sandwiches including veggie croissant; seasonal fruit; home-style potato salad; chocolate layered fudge cake; coffee, iced tea

Dinner Buffet

Garden greens salad; breast of chicken duxelle; leeks and wild mushroom sauce; five grain pilaf; buttered red potatoes; fresh steamed vegetables; dinner breads; caramel apple pie; coffee

Today's Festival Schedule

Artists

Friday, October 22

Time	Event
7 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
8 a.m.	Team leader and team support meeting with Paula Moran - Minnesota Room, second floor, Radisson Hotel
8:30 a.m.	Team leader and team support meeting with artists
9 a.m. – Midnight	Hospitality Room Open – Mississippi Suite #823
9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Art Workshops: Basket Making and Wool Felting-Radisson Art Center Building
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch at hotel – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
1 – 3 p.m.	Art Workshops: Basket Making and Wool Felting Completion – Radisson Art Center Building
1 p.m.	Q & A with National Art Committee
3:30 – 5 p.m.	CEU session-Compassion for the Caregiver with Boon Murray Radisson Art Center Building
5 – 6:15 p.m.	Dinner – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
6:30-9 p.m.	Art Workshop: HHV Craft Workshop – Radisson Art Center Building

Time	Event
9 - 11 p.m.	Karaoke - Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
9 a.m. – Midnight	Hospitality Room Open – Mississippi Suite #823

Performers

Friday, October 22

Time	Event
7 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, 1st floor Late Registration – Wisconsin I, Radisson Hotel, 1st floor
7:45 a.m.	Team leader and team support meeting with Amy Kimbler – Zielke Suite, second floor
8:15 a.m.	Team leader and team support meeting with performers
9 a.m. – Midnight	Hospitality Room Open – Mississippi Suite #823
9 – 12:30 p.m.	Tech rehearsal at Viterbo University Fine Arts Center – All solo and group act performers needed
Noon – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch at hotel – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
1:30 – 5 p.m.	Cranberry Country Tour
3:30 – 5 p.m.	CEU session-Compassion for the Caregiver with Boon Murray Radisson Art Center Building
5 – 5:45 p.m.	Dinner at hotel – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
6:15 – 6:50 p.m.	Prepare for dress rehearsal at Viterbo – Solo & Group acts into costumes. NO make-up and NO white shirt/black pants needed. Sound check for orchestra.

Time	Event
7:15 – 10 p.m.	Dress rehearsal with orchestra for all performers
10 - 11 p.m.	Karaoke - Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Artists and Performers:

Please check with your team leader and/or the posted schedule outside of the Radisson Hotel Ballroom for any changes or updates to your daily schedule.