

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

Saturday, October 23, 2010

Women Veterans – She Also Served

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

Women have served the United States and the cause of freedom as far back as the Revolutionary War. Many women served as nurses bringing comfort to the wounded while others like Mary McCauley brought water to the soldiers during drill and battle. During the fighting the cannon barrels became very hot and a bucket of water was kept next to the cannon had to be constantly filled with water to cool down the barrel. When her husband was wounded at the Battle of Monmouth, Mary took his place and continued to “swab and load” the cannon. Mary and other women who served as “water girls” earned the generic name “Molly Pitcher” as it was believed the soldiers who needed water would call “Molly! Pitcher!”

Women also served during the Civil War, again as nurses but also as spies. They often smuggles messages through enemy lines sewn into their hoop skirt petticoats. The only female Medal of Honor recipient was Dr. Mary Walker, a surgeon in the Civil War. She delivered care to the sick and wounded in the field, hospitals and as an assistant surgeon in charge of female prisoners at Louisville, Ky. She also endured hardships as a prisoner of war for four months in a southern prison.

These women and many more like them are the legacy of today’s women Veterans. Currently there are 1.8 million female Veterans in the United States.

There are 109 Veterans participating in the 2010 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival; 16 are women.

Vicky Bade, an Army Veteran from San Antonio, Texas, is attending her first Creative Arts Festival. Vicky enjoys working with the craft kits but always puts her personal touch on the project. She won Gold for a sun catcher entitled “Soaring in the Wind,” a bald eagle soaring through the mountains. She also works with wood, ceramics and leather and enjoys giving her artwork to friends and family.

Navy Veteran, Lana Gillaspie, is participating in her fifth Creative Arts Festival. Several years ago, during a hospitalization at a VA medical center, Lana was given a beaded heart flag craft kit to help occupy her time. The design was very intricate but she enjoyed the work and the staff convinced her to enter the competition. She was very surprised and honored when she won and was invited to the Festival.

Maureen Howell, who lives in La Crosse, is a “Veteran” of the Creative Arts Festival. Howell, who served in the Army Reserve and the US Air Force is participating in the Creative Arts Festival for the fifth time. Howell began working with craft kits but has expanded her artistic horizons, winning this year with two visual arts projects in ceramics and leather. She is also a singer and songwriter and will perform in the 2010 Creative Arts Festival stage show.

Gulf War Veteran, D. Lautere, served in the Army from 1985 to 1992. A native of New York City who now lives in Temple, Texas, she has always had a love of “Broadway” tunes and musicals. She is participating in her fourth Creative Arts Festival. She sings with the VA Central Texas band and enjoys entertaining in the community. D. is excited, humble and grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Creative Arts Festival and enjoys seeing old friends at the Festival and making new ones. She is especially moved by newcomers to the Festival who arrive with nervousness and self doubt about why they are here, but by the end of the week they are amazed at what they have done.

T.J. Rivera, an Army Veteran, was a mechanic and a drill instructor in the military. After leaving the service she was a correctional officer, mortician and Director of Health Force, a non-profit organization benefiting women. She receives her care at Bay Pines VA Medical Center and has entertained the Steps of Life program members there. As a first-time participant at the Creative Arts Festival, she is amazed by the whole experience. She said, “I have always wanted to do something like this and I am impressed by all of the different races from all across the country who are here. Everyone has a smile and they are so uplifting and talented. I feel honored to be here.”

Of Special Interest Today

* Artists, your trip to Sparta, Wis., for demonstrations on glass blowing demonstration at the Southern Fried Glass Company and soap making at the Green Flower Soap Works is from

9 – 11 a.m.

* Performers, meet Michael Peterson your stage show emcee in the Zielke Suite, second floor from 10-10:45 a.m.

* The Festival Sponsor Luncheon starts at noon in the La Crosse Center Ballroom, second floor.

* Artists, enjoy a “Cranberry Country Tour” from 1 – 4 p.m. Visit Wisconsin Cranberry Discovery Center, in Warrens, Wis., and watch cranberries being harvested in a cranberry bog. While out, enjoy a special lunch at Ginny’s Restaurant in Sparta.

* Performers, depart for Viterbo University Fine Arts Center for the final dress rehearsal at 12:30 p.m.

* The Festival Oktoberfest Dinner and Entertainment starts tonight at 6:30 p.m. in the La Crosse Center Ballroom, second floor. Festivities last until 10 p.m. (See more details on page 6.)

Wisconsin Series: Oktoberfest, USA

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

When you see someone in traditional German lederhosen and hoisting a beer stein, chances are you’re at an Oktoberfest somewhere. If not Munich, Germany then maybe right here in La Crosse, Wis. The event recounts the marriage of Prince Ludwig I and Princess Therese of Bavaria in 1810. It featured days of horse racing, beer, food, music and dancing. Oktoberfests have been held ever since.

In the United States, the largest Oktoberfest outside of Bavaria, is held in “Zincinnati, Ohio” where up to one million people crowd the streets to celebrate. In La Crosse, 2010 marks the 50th anniversary of the carnival-like atmosphere known as Oktoberfest, USA. Flush with a Royal Family, Festmaster, Miss and Mrs. Oktoberfest, Parade marshals and grenadiers, Oktoberfest was one of the achievements which helped La Crosse earn the All-American city designation in 1961.

The growth of Oktoberfest, USA, in La Crosse since that first year has been nothing short of remarkable. In 1962, the name “Oktoberfest” was registered with the State of Wisconsin. In 1963, “Oktoberfest, USA” was registered and listed as a trademark with the federal government. Every year since, thousands of revelers from all over the country have descended on La Crosse, Wis., in late September and early October to share the spirit of friendship or Gemutlichkeit, tap a keg (in our case-of golden root beer) and turn up the oom-pah.

If you find yourself one year within dancing distance of an Oktoberfest, stop in and enjoy!

Fun Fact Question: Who is the official ambassador to La Crosse?

A. Crazy George Schlitz

The Artists Easel

Saturday Tours are Tempting to your Senses

Today you will travel to Sparta, Wis., to learn how to make soap and candles and watch a professional glassblower at work.

At Green Flower Soap Works you will learn the ins and outs of making homemade soap and candles. The company is currently expanding their line of pure essential oil soaps and aromatherapy candles. All products are handmade with the utmost care and concern for quality and integrity - healthy for the body and our world.

Southern Fried Glass artist Chad Moriarty makes it look easy as he blows and sculpts liquid glass that has been heated to approximately 2000 degrees. Patience is the key to creating the beautiful glass pieces you will see in his gallery.

Enjoy your trip and become inspired to create something beautiful and tempting.

The Performers Podium

Relaxing after a hectic schedule at the Festival

Have you been feeling those muscles tense up in your shoulders following a long rehearsal schedule? Try these ideas to help you relax and enjoy the beautiful state of Wisconsin to the fullest!

1. Sit on a chair.
2. Place both feet flat on the floor.
3. Put your hands around the arm rests (gripping them gently).
4. Place your back flat against the chair.
5. Keep your eyes open and focus on a spot in front of you, at eye level.
6. Do not look at the ceiling or floor.
7. Breathe in - pause - breathe out - pause - (slowly and evenly).
8. Now, say out loud (if possible - if not - then say in your mind): "I see 5 things ..." (i.e. the wall, window etc.)
9. "I hear 5 things ..." (i.e. radio, footsteps, etc.)
10. "I feel 5 things..." (i.e. my fingers clenching, the chair, my toes, etc.)
11. Continue Exercise by saying "I see... I hear...I feel...4 things then 3, 2, 1."

Then you should be fully aware of your surroundings, calmer, more relaxed and ready to rehearse some more.

Oktoberfest Festival Style

By Lana Shuman, Public Affairs Specialist, Dallas Regional Office of Public Affairs

Get ready for an evening of Festival fun - Oktoberfest style. In typical Wisconsin fashion, you will experience all the highlights of a true La Crosse Oktoberfest. The evening will start off with your emcee, "Crazy George" Schlitz, the Crazy Accordion Man, and his four-piece band at 6:30 p.m. "Crazy George" serves as ambassador to La Crosse along with the Oktoberfest Royal Family. Schlitz and his band will be playing the whole evening for your polka enjoyment.

Be prepared to toast good friends and dance the "Chicken Dance." Also on the agenda are the Royal Oktoberfest Family who will be here to meet you and "tap" the golden keg of root beer. Their goal is to welcome you to La Crosse and help you enjoy La Crosse hospitality at its best.

A true German menu is also planned, including hot German potato salad, bratwurst, sauerbraten, spaetzel, Black Forest cake, apple strudel and much more.

Finally, the local organizing committee have collected a great selection of Wisconsin memorabilia that will be given as door prizes. So be sure to hold onto the ticket you will be given when you arrive at the event. The fun continues until 10 p.m. See you there!

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

Basketweaving was so fun yesterday. The instructor encouraged us to keep our materials wet so that they didn't break. Even though we all had the same pattern all of our baskets looked different because we could choose our own colors. I made mine for my angel wife, Yvonne. I loved the riverboat cruise. We loved the beautiful fall foliage. I also saw an eagle and had my photo taken with it. It was so beautiful. The speaker who provided the fireworks was such a great speaker. His comments about what made a true hero really touched me. It meant so much to hear a fellow Veteran emphasize that a true hero was one who sacrificed for his country. The fireworks were outstanding. I watched them from the Hospitality Suite. The size of the show and the reflection over the river made them so impressive and made them the best fireworks I have ever seen.

I want to thank the wonderful ladies in the Hospitality Suite for their warmth and caring this week.

Johnathan Starks, Performer, Anchorage, Alaska

I really enjoyed yesterday, it was such a nice break from our heavy rehearsal schedule. My wife and I had a blast on the riverboat ride - it was cold, but nice. We even saw two eagles flying above us! During the cruise some of the Veterans started singing over the microphone. Was it the Salty Dogs? This is such a wonderful start to my honeymoon. My wife and I plan to go to Florida to see some of my family after this week to finish out our honeymoon trip. I can't think of a better way to spend it. We also really enjoyed the fireworks last night. They were so much better than any we have seen in Alaska. We have a tech rehearsal this morning where we learn our positions and let the tech staff learn our mic and light settings. This evening is a full dress rehearsal. The cranberry tour sounds interesting. I am looking forward to my first time singing with a live orchestra. Unbelievable!

Festival Statistics

Service	Number
Army	55
Air Force	14
Army and Air Force	3
Coast Guard	2
Marine Corps	19
Navy	12
Marine Corps and Navy	2

We have a total of 93 men and 16 women Veterans.

Combat Veterans Statistics:

Period of Service	Number
World War II	1
Korean War	1
Vietnam	30
Grenada	1
Bosnia, Kosovo & Operation Enduring Freedom	1
Operation Iraqi Freedom	2
Gulf War (Operation Desert Shield/Storm) & Operation Enduring Freedom	1
Vietnam, Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom	1

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. - 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.
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

Saturday Meal Times:

Breakfast

Artists — 7 - 8:30 a.m.

Performers — 7 - 9 a.m.

Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Lunch

Artists — 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Ginny's Restaurant in Sparta

Performers — 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Dinner

Artists and Performers — 6:30 p.m.

La Crosse Center Ballroom, second *floor*

Breakfast Buffet

Eggs benedict with hollandaise; fluffy scrambled eggs; pancakes with maple syrup; potatoes O'Brien; fresh seasonal fruit; assorted baked goods; assorted cereals/oatmeal; assorted low-fat yogurts; assorted juices; coffee, milk, orange juice

Lunch Buffet

Chicken and wild rice soup; sliced turkey, roast beef, and smoked ham; smoked chicken salad; assorted Wisconsin cheeses; assorted fresh baked breads, rolls and wraps; steakhouse potato salad; field greens salad; whole fruit; kettle potato chips; cup cakes; coffee, hot tea, iced tea

Dinner Buffet

Seasonal fruit; caraway coleslaw salad; hot German potato salad; sliced beer bratwurst with onions and peppers; sauerbraten; hazelnut-peppercorn crusted pork in brown butter sauce; spaetzle; green bean and baby carrots; apple strudel, black forest cake; root beer, coffee, iced tea

Today's Festival Schedule

Artists

Saturday, 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. – 6:30 p.m.	Hospitality Room Open – Mississippi Suite #823
11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Lunch at Ginny's Restaurant in Sparta
1 p.m. – 4 p.m.	Cranberry Country Tour
Noon	Sponsor Luncheon - La Crosse Center Ballroom, 2nd floor
6:30 - 10 p.m.	Oktoberfest: Dinner and Entertainment – La Crosse Center Ballroom
9 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Hospitality Room Open – Mississippi Suite #823
11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Lunch at Ginny's Restaurant in Sparta
1 p.m. – 4 p.m.	Cranberry Country Tour
Noon	Sponsor Luncheon - La Crosse Center Ballroom, 2nd floor
6:30 - 10 p.m.	Oktoberfest: Dinner and Entertainment – La Crosse Center Ballroom

Performers

Saturday, October 22

Time	Event
7 – 9 a.m.	Breakfast – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
8 a.m.	Team leader and team support meeting with Amy Kimbler – Zielke Suite, second floor
8:30 a.m.	Team leader and team support meeting with performers
9 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Hospitality Room Open – Mississippi Suite #823
9 - 10 a.m.	Chorus Rehearsal – ALL participants needed – Zielke Suite, 2nd floor
10 – 10:45 a.m.	Meet Michael Peterson, Stage Show Emcee – Zielke Suite, 2nd floor
10:45 - 11:30 a.m.	Stroll downtown La Crosse
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, 1st floor
Noon	Sponsor Luncheon - La Crosse Center Ballroom, 2nd floor
12:30 p.m.	Depart for Viterbo University Fine Arts Center for final dress rehearsal
6:30 – 10 p.m.	Oktoberfest: Dinner and Entertainment – La Crosse Center Ballroom

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.