

Arts Paper

Fall 2021

News &
Information on
the Arts from the
Huntingdon County
Arts Council

Holiday Shoppe Reopens November 17

Members Save 10%

Have you started shopping for gifts for the holiday season yet? Pottery, jewelry, paintings, and other items from local artists make wonderful presents, and you can purchase items like these from the Art Council's annual Holiday Shoppe.

This year we are featuring a large number of local artists, including Eileen Butchkoski, Bill Crownover, Carolanne Currier, Gretchen Eichensehr, Holly Foy, Jeanne Peterson, Harlin Ritchey, Kari Roslund, Terri Smith (Barron Hill), Jack Troy, and Betty Walters. Items from the Redbud Quilt Guild also will be available.

The Holiday Shoppe starts on Wednesday, November 17, and will be open Wednesdays through

Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Christmas week. (Note that we will be closed on Thanksgiving Day.) During Christmas week, we will be open Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (December 20–22). We also will be open one day after Christmas, Monday December 27.

This year the Holiday Shoppe is located at The Playhouse at McConnellstown—the same venue as last year. The address is 11680 Raystown Road, only a 10-minute drive from downtown Huntingdon.

When you purchase items from the Holiday Shoppe, you have the satisfaction of supporting local artists as well as your Arts Council. You will find that our offerings are not only of high quality but also reasonably priced. So don't forget to include some local art in your holiday shopping this year. Santa would approve.



The Holiday Shoppe will open on November 17 and is located at The Playhouse at McConnellstown (Wednesdays through Sundays, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Mail Campaign Begins

The Huntingdon County Arts Council conducts a mail campaign every fall. Although memberships are very important to us, we can't survive on membership fees alone. That is why we need to ask everyone, members as well as nonmembers, to contribute a little something extra as the year draws to a close.

We could provide you with a long list of specific activities and events that we sponsor every year. But if you read this newsletter, you probably are aware already of everything that we do.

Instead, we want to emphasize how critical your support is, not only to us, but to our entire community. Through your contributions, you bring art, music, and culture to Huntingdon County. The Arts Council is simply an organization that turns your goodwill into reality. We work hard, but everything we do starts with you.

We hope that you feel good about making Huntingdon County a more interesting and colorful place to live. When a letter or email asking for help reaches you, please respond generously. Let's work together to make good things happen here!

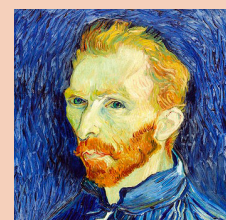


Donate While Shopping

The Arts Council does not endorse or encourage the use of any particular online shopping store. But if you use Amazon.com, you can arrange for a small donation to be made to the Arts Council every time you make a purchase. Just go to Smile.Amazon.com, click on "Get Started," and designate the Huntingdon County Arts Council as your preferred charity. There is no fee to set up an account. Then, whenever you purchase an item, we will receive a small donation at no cost to you. Just remember to start future online purchases at Smile.Amazon.



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The *ArtsPaper* is a publication of The Huntingdon County Arts Council. We are funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, local government contributions and *your* membership.

Memberships and contributions help us fulfill our mission to provide opportunities to experience the arts in Huntingdon County.



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Dear Member:

As we finish up 2021, the Huntingdon County Arts Council is proud to continue to present arts and cultural opportunities in these trying times. From the art exhibits at The Playhouse at McConnellstown we have produced this year, to our music and fiber festivals, we do this so that you can be part of the arts, be inspired, be creative, and take pride in building a better community.

We have loved having the opportunity to continue our mission with the help of the great folks of The Playhouse at McConnellstown who have given us a temporary home. We thank them for their wonderful help and look forward to returning to a new home in the new year.

Of course, we cannot do all of this without your support. Please respond to our annual fundraising letter so that we can continue to bring you these great art and music activities.

You can also support us by shopping at our annual

Holiday Shoppe at The Playhouse at McConnellstown. Your visit to us in McConnellstown supports both our local artists and the Arts Council and gives you chance to acquire some wonderful and unique art.

As we look forward to a hopefully better and brighter 2022, know that your Huntingdon County Arts Council is continuing to bring arts and cultural exhibits and events to Huntingdon County.



John Kearns
Executive Director

Event Updates



Painting Pumpkins at Art Walk

The most recent Art Walk Huntingdon was held on October 21, and it would be fair to say that the event generated a good deal of seasonal spirit. Activities were held at multiple venues in Huntingdon, and attendance (assisted by the warm fall weather) was good.

At Standing Stone Coffee, children and adults painted Halloween pumpkins in the courtyard with the assistance of Susan Wentzel and John Kearns from the Huntingdon County Arts Council. While people painted, an open microphone was available for locals who wished to share their talents with the crowd.

The Juniata College Museum of Art opened its doors to the public for the current exhibit, *Internal Landscape: The Artist's Signature*, which featured the work of two



October Art Walk—Painting Pumpkins: (left) Cecilia Elder; (above, l to r) Greta McLane, Shawn Brubaker, the Art Council's John Kearns & Susan Wentzel

contemporary Polish artists. In addition, the Huntingdon Area High School provided a dot-painting activity, and the Juniata Brewing Company hosted a Trivia Night.

Art Walk was curtailed in 2020 because of the pandemic. This year the goal was to get our momentum going again. We anticipate that Art Walk Huntingdon in 2022 will return, with more venues and more art than ever!

Annual Meeting Coming Up

Mark your calendars. The Arts Council will hold its annual meeting on Wednesday, December 8 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held at The Playhouse at McConnellstown and is open to all current members of the Arts Council. The meeting will provide an update on Arts Council activities, elect new officers and Board members, and highlight plans for the future. Light refreshments. Info on website to join via Zoom.

Event Updates



Amy J. Bomboy, *Eastern Broad Top Caboose*

Camera Club Exhibit Returns

Our very own Camera Club sprang back into action in October with an exhibit, *Worth a Thousand Words*, at The Playhouse in McConnellstown. The show, which began with a reception on October 15 and ran for four weeks, featured 195 images from 10 local photographers.

Because travel was difficult during the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the photographs were taken in the Huntingdon County area. Consequently, viewers were likely to recognize some local scenes among the many landscapes, buildings, and railroads represented. Many of the photographs (57 shots taken by four club members) were from the recent Folk Event at Greenwood Furnace.

After being forced to skip the show last year, it was a distinct pleasure for members to be able to share their work with the public again. As club coordinator Larry Cloz put it, "This photo exhibit has been a labor of love for the Camera Club."

At each monthly meeting of the Camera Club, members hold a photo contest, based on a different theme, and attendees participate in a secret ballot to select the winner. The winning photos from each month (nine since the previous Camera Club show) were included as part of the exhibit. Topics included orbs, wrinkles, pets, food, stripes, and entropy.

The Arts Council started the Camera Club in 2013, with James Pingry and April Feagley serving as the first co-chairs. Although membership has shifted over the years, the group continues to be very active in our area. In fact, this was the seventh photo show for the club since their first one in 2014.

The Camera Club pro-

vides opportunities for people interested in photography to meet, socialize, and learn from one another. People of all ages in the Huntingdon area are welcome to participate. As Larry Cloz said, "If you are interested in photography, the Camera Club would love to have you join us. Skill level is not important. We are all amateur photo enthusiasts who learn together through our monthly meetings."

The group meets at 7 p.m. on the 4th Thursday of the month between January and October and on the 3rd Thursday in November and December. Meetings sometimes include guest speakers as well as group discussions of photography equipment, techniques, and composition. Usual attendance is about nine or 10 people. The Playhouse at McConnellstown is serving as the current venue for the monthly meetings.

Individuals who would like more information can contact Larry Cloz by email at lclosz@yahoo.com or by telephone at 814-627-6908.



Alpacas are always popular at Fiber ArtsFest

Fiber Artsfest: Touchable Art

Our annual celebration of the fiber arts returned last October 1 & 2 to the Huntingdon County Fairgrounds. Classes on both days focused on weaving, quilting, beading, knitting, and a variety of other topics. Some of our vendors canceled at the last minute because of concerns about Covid-19, but the vendors who participated reported brisk sales. The event also featured demonstrations and live music from Paul Amato, Larry Mutti, and Matt Marsden.

The Shavers Creek 4-H Club sold food and many people took advantage of the warm, sunny day to eat outside. In addition, the Huntingdon County Farm Museum (located nearby at the fairgrounds) was open, and many participants wandered over to enjoy the large collection of farm equipment and memorabilia.

Overall, the event was well attended and included visitors from as far away as Lewistown, Lancaster, and Pittsburgh.

We are planning to make Fiber ArtsFest a bigger and broader event next year, with a wider array of vendors and a larger lineup of musical performances. Stay tuned for updates in 2022.



A busy vendor booth at Fiber ArtsFest's Market Place



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The Huntingdon County Arts Council is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Huntingdon County Arts Council receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



Jack Troy: Memories and Transformations

Jack Troy asked “Why don’t more people write poems?” as he opened a reading from his new poetry book, *Giving It Up to the Wind*. He offered the answer that people are “skilled at practicing inhibition, holding things in,” and added that his purpose is to figure out what elements of his life influenced him to become the person he is. Jack, the well known Huntingdon potter who is also a poet, read poems about his youth in Towanda, PA, being a potter, life in Huntingdon, and many other subjects. The reading took place at the Huntingdon County library on October 22, 2021.

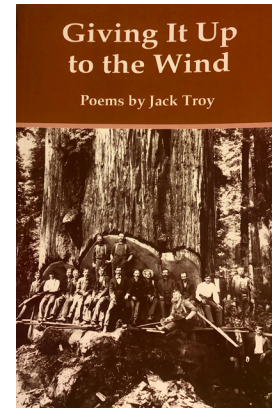
Jack recited from memory some poems from his first poetry book, *Calling the Planet Home*, including “Conversions,” which he wrote for his pottery students. It concludes, “Can you feel in a teacup’s heat / that friction of change? / The combustion of one thing becoming another?” The theme of transformation: of clay into objects, thoughts into words, or anything into anything else, recurs throughout both books of poems.

From *Giving It Up to the Wind*, Jack read “Igloo,” a lyrical description of building an igloo with his brother one winter in Towanda. The sturdy igloo stood until late March when sunlight reached through the thin walls of snow and it collapsed “at daffodil time.” Explaining that certain memories “nag” at him until he makes a poem of them, Jack said, “As we get older, the things that shaped us in our youth become more important.”

“Migration at Jacks Narrows” is a delightful word portrait of hundreds of vultures flying high over the Juniata river: “They figured the wind, made visible / what I had not seen.” Also on the theme of flying high in the air, the title poem of his second collection shows us Jack and his father flying a homemade kite.

“Life seemed such an incredible mystery to me, and still does,” said Jack. As he transforms clay into sculpture and vessels, he transforms amorphous memories into vivid words on the page, inspiring readers to transform the raw materials of our own memories into new creations. Jack’s two books of poetry, *Giving It Up to the Wind* (2021) and *Calling the Planet Home* (2003), are available for sale at the Art Council’s Holiday Shoppe, Boxers Cafe, Standing Stone Coffee Company, or by contacting Jack directly at jgaylorldt@yahoo.com.

Claire Holzner



Folk Gathering Shines Amidst COVID Concerns

As members of the planning team for Greenwood Furnace Folk Gathering contemplated the pros and cons of holding a Folk Gathering event in this second year of COVID, safety for all participants was at the top of the list. Organizers agreed to urge vaccination for all attendees and to insist on masking. Meanwhile, almost all activities were moved outdoors under open-sided tents, to minimize risk of virus transmission. It would seem that formula worked.

The sun certainly did smile on the Folk Gathering as good weather for being outside persisted through the entire weekend (September 10-12), making the tent option not only workable, but pleasant. And the participants were not only cooperative, but enthusiastic.

Though overall attendance was down a bit—not surprising given the recent surge in Delta variant cases—ultimately more than 60 registrants, 14 instructors, and an army of volunteers teamed up to make the Folk Gathering fun and memorable.

Core leadership for the event comes from the Arts Council and the State College-based duo Simple Gifts. *continued on Page 8*



The 2021 Pennsylvania Heritage Musician Jim Knepp, with (left to right) Linda Littleton of Simple Gifts, wife Bonnie Knepp, and Karen Hirshon of Simple Gifts

Ox-Bow, Morning Song

After breakfast, we make the day’s first pots, thankful that sleep has not stolen our knowing how, won from so many yesterdays.

We listen for the first hammer-clang up the hill, that – KANG – that quiets birdsong for a moment when the blacksmith’s iron agrees to change, but only with passion’s color and force.

Our pliant clay touches us back. Later, when we ping their rims, our cups and bowls will sing of vanished oaks and maples; of the improbability that we helped trees give voice to earth with fire.

Jack Troy

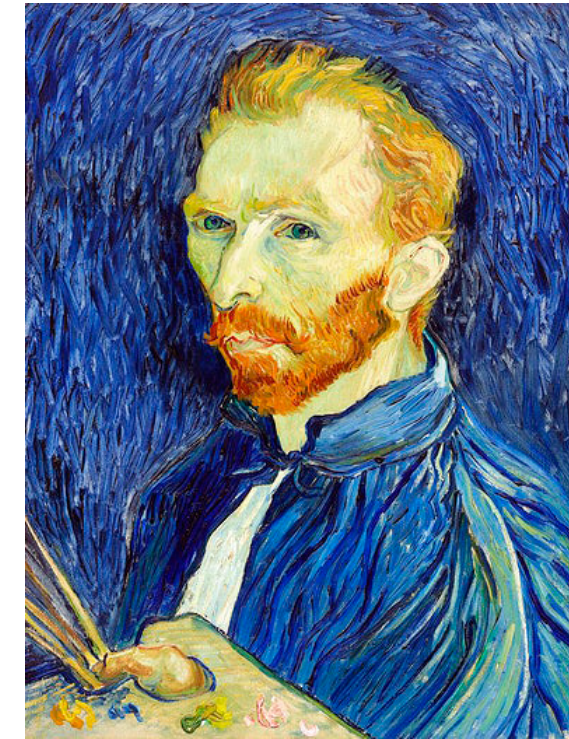


Van Wagner performing at the Folk Gathering

Why We Love Van Gogh

Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890) is one of the greatest—and most popular—artists of the modern era. Numerous books and films have been made about his life, and people regularly crowd around his works in art museums around the world. This year, immersive Van Gogh exhibits resulted in booked out shows in major cities across the United States. But despite universal acclaim and adulation today, Van Gogh received almost no recognition in his own lifetime. Why has Van Gogh become so popular over the years?

When Van Gogh began to paint as a young man, realism dominated the arts. Van Gogh’s early work was in the Dutch realist tradition, and he produced mostly dark



Vincent Van Gogh, Self-Portrait, 1889

canvases covered in shades of brown. But seeing the French impressionists in Paris was a revelation, and he quickly replaced the dark colors with a lighter palette (he loved yellow) and began to focus less on mimicking nature and more on capturing the reality that lies beneath surface appearances.

Van Gogh’s creative period lasted for only a decade, and many of his most famous works were produced in the last two years of his life. But during this short time he developed a personal style of painting that is instantly recognizable. Van Gogh believed that the world was permeated with primal energy—a force that shapes all experience and life—and he tried to capture this energy as it flowed through both himself and his subject matter. Van Gogh’s paintings seem to pulse and throb upon the canvas. This sense of movement, combined with a sumptuous use of bright color, resulted in images that are mesmerizing and astonishingly beautiful.

Another reason for Van Gogh’s appeal involves his troubled personal history. Unappreciated in his time, he sold only one painting, and were it not for the financial support of his brother Theo, Van Gogh would have been destitute. As it was, he often ran short of money at the end of the month and was forced to choose between buying paint or food. In fact, he often went hungry because he found that he could live for days without eating but not without painting. More than anything, Van Gogh was incredibly passionate about his art.

Most people know about Van Gogh’s serious psychological problems. His mental health declined severely during the latter part of his life, and he spent a good deal of time in psychiatric institutions. He never stopped painting, however, and some of his most important work was done while hospitalized. And, of course, Van Gogh took his own life at the age of 37.

The image of the poor, mad, unloved artist, compelled



Vincent Van Gogh, Road with Cypress and Star, 1890

against all odds to create beauty, captures our romantic imagination. More importantly, however, when we view his work, we see the world filtered through a highly perceptive and sensitive consciousness. We love Van Gogh because his work affects us directly—it makes us feel something universal yet deeply personal—and this is one definition of truly great art.

An immersive show based on Van Gogh’s work opened this fall in Pittsburgh and will continue through February, 2022. For details, go to: <https://www.vangogh-pittsburgh.com>. The exhibit follows a strict Covid-19 protocol, and all guests are required to wear masks.



Vincent Van Gogh, Farmhouse in Provence, 1888

ArtistSpotlight

Bluebird on Her Shoulder Bex Brings Art to Bucolic Saltillo

What's it like to make a living as an artist in a small town in rural Pennsylvania? Just ask Rebecca Reck (Bex to her friends). She currently operates Bluebird Designs—an art studio in Saltillo (population 346) in Southern Huntingdon County.

“It’s been a blessing as well as a curse,” Bex said. Saltillo is a long way from the major art capitals of the world. But people in her small community have been interested in and supportive of her work, for which she is grateful. Moreover, small towns can present opportunities as well as limitations. As she noted, “I would not have been nearly as successful as I am now if I had stayed in Baltimore.”

Although Bex has been making art all her life, she never thought of becoming an artist while growing up. As she said, “I didn’t know any professional artists at the time, and that goal seemed as unrealistic as becoming a famous actress or a supermodel or an astronaut.” But in 2010 she set up a booth at a local festival and sold some of her

paintings. Later she had an opportunity to illustrate a children’s book, and she eventually branched out to giving private lessons and holding painting parties for children and adults. Bluebird Designs, her personal studio and office (not open to the public), was named after a song by Nick Cave—one of her favorite musicians.

Bex was surprised when she saw the demand for services in her area and realized that she could survive financially as an artist. As she said, “It was pretty overwhelming for a gal who just kinda jumped into this thing on a whim.” Of course, the Covid-19 pandemic created serious challenges for small businesses everywhere, and her in-person art events had

to be curtailed for a while. But she survived on commissions for portraits, logos, and other art works, and she used the downtime to create a spacious art studio in a building adjacent to her home.

The market for in-person events has improved this fall, and with the holiday season approaching, Bex’s services are in demand again. Now she can afford to be selective about the commissions that come her way. Although busy, she finds time to paint for pleasure several days a week. She especially enjoys painting people and animals, often in the form of whimsical caricatures with vibrant colors. As she said, “I have many ideas swirling around in my brain. I just hope I have enough time to get them all out there.”

A highlight of Bex’s career was a recent painting workshop she attended with Michael Carson—her favorite portrait artist. In addition to working with him for several days, she was able to visit the California coast for the first time and dip her



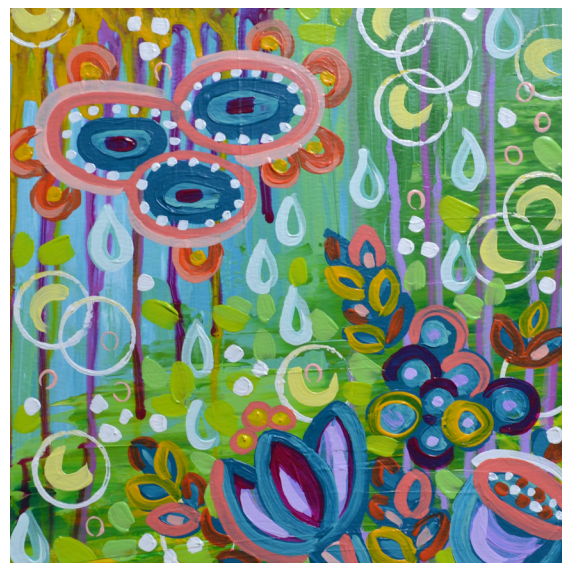
Rebecca “Bex” Reck at work

toes in the surprisingly cold Pacific Ocean.

Although Bex loves being an artist, she admits that teaching painting classes has a downside. “I’m painfully uncomfortable in large groups,” she said, “and I am definitely not a fan of being the center of a large group’s attention.” A favorite quote of hers is from Donald Woods Winnicott: “Artists are people driven by the tension between the desire to communicate and the desire to hide.”

Despite the occasional anxiety attack, going outside her comfort zone has brought many rewards, including the pleasure of helping other people to express their creativity. As she said, “If I can get over my fear of teaching,

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Rebecca Reck, *Intuition*

ArtsCalendar

The Huntingdon County Arts Council is the hub for local arts and cultural activities. Check here to see what’s coming up. Have an art activity? Send details to info@huntingdoncountyarts.com and we will put it on our website arts calendar.

November 2021–January 2022

When	What	Where	Details
Wednesday, September 22 to Wednesday, November 24	<i>Internal Landscape: The Artist’s Signature Exhibit</i>	Juniata College Museum of Art	Artists Magdalena Janota-Bzowska & Joanna Stasiak from the Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw, share works on paper and silk.
Wednesday, October 27, 2021 to Saturday, February 19, 2022	<i>Mining the Museum: Historic Collections Exhibit</i>	Juniata College Museum of Art	Sampling of historic art and cultural objects
Late fall, 2021	<i>From Our Walls to Yours</i>	Juniata College campus & community installations	Look for images of works in the JCMA collection in locations across campus and the community.
Wednesday, November 10 to Wednesday, December 8	Kids Corner at Shavers Creek	Shaver’s Creek Environment Center	Every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Wednesday, November 17 to Monday, December 27	Holiday Shoppe	The Playhouse at McConnellstown	Artwork for sale from local artist, see page 1 for days & hours
Friday, November 19	Sketching Open Studio Event, part of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art Community Creates Together series	Huntingdon Dance Academy 501 Penn St, Huntingdon	Bring your materials and sketch dancers, costumes, the studio, or whatever interests you.
Thursday, December 2	A Christmas Carol	Stone Church Fellowship Hall	Juniata College student theatre
Friday & Saturday, December 3 & 4	Hometown Holiday Celebration—Christmas in Candyland	Historical Society House & Gallery and Huntingdon County Library	Standing Stone Garden Club’s annual holiday festival
Thursday, December 9	Southern Huntingdon County School District High School / Middle School Concert	High School Auditorium	Student Christmas concert, 7 p.m.
Tuesday, December 14	Mount Union Area High School Concert	High School Auditorium	Student Christmas concert, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, December 15	Huntingdon Area High School Concert	High School Auditorium	Student Christmas concert, 7 p.m.
Friday, December 17 & Saturday, December 18	<i>The Nutcracker</i> , Huntingdon Dance Academy	Rosenberger Auditorium, Juniata College	www.huntingdondance.com
Tuesday, December 21	Juniata Valley High School Concert	High School Auditorium	Student Christmas concert, 7 p.m.
Saturday, January 15	Snowfest & Polar Plunge at Greenwood Furnace	Greenwood Furnace State Park	Live music, ice harvesting, bonfire on the beach

Bold = Huntingdon County Arts Council activity

Bluebird on Her Shoulder

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hopefully new artists can get over their fear of painting and trying something new.”

Around the world, the bluebird is regarded as a symbol of beauty and happiness. Let’s hope that the one in Saltillo continues to bring colorful images to our corner of the world for many years to come. For more on Rebecca Reck and Bluebird Designs, including information on painting parties, private lessons, fundraisers, and special requests, visit her website at bluebirddesignsbybex.com.



Rebecca Reck, (left) *Curious Cat*; (above), *But First . . . Coffee!*



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Shop the Holiday Shoppe at The Playhouse at McConnellstown



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Folk Gathering Shines Amidst COVID Concerns continued from page 4

But a host of folks were involved in pulling the event off, including a tent crew, an amiable and safety-conscious food crew working under the watchful eye of Maria Pettinger, logistical and tech support folks and an active promotions and communications committee.

The weekend began with a cluster of intensive workshops aimed at elevating participants' skills in their own particular instrument or style. What followed was a succession on Saturday and Sunday of hour-long workshops with six running concurrently in any time slot. Special features of this year's event were the annual honoring of a PA Heritage Musician (this year Jim Knepp of Clearfield County), the evening concerts featuring Danville singer/songwriter/re-enactor Van Wagner, and a new track offering adventurous or novice musicians the opportunity to try their hand, at a reduced registration price, in Try-A workshops featuring ukulele, mountain dulcimer, autoharp, hammer dulcimer, mandolin, and melodica.

The food was terrific. The assembled crowd of students, instructors, volunteers, and listeners was enthusiastic and energized. The mood was supportive, cooperative and glad to be back together again, live. As one participant said on their evaluation form, "gee, we had perfect weather, no rain, great instructors, well organized, reasonably priced, great food. I can't think of a thing to do better!"



Evening concert with Van Wagner at Folk Gathering

Planning is underway for next year's event as well as the Arts Council-Simple Gifts collaboration of Folk College, to be held on the Juniata Campus over Memorial Day weekend

2022. We sure hope to see you at these coming attractions either as a musician or as a concert-goer.

Larry Mutti

WHY WE COUNT THE BIRDS

I once thought we wrote about leaves and trees and the creatures that run at night because the politics and the wars and the culture bristling with fright all stunk so richly of their time. The people, the movies, the sound bites would all pass. And then the bees' buzz murmured, I read the ladybugs are fewer, the rivers rise and take with them a park bench, a precarious house, a morsel of land no longer to appear on a map. I thought we wrote about timelessness to share our hurt and joy anchored in something rooted thick, something dependable. I thought we wrote a place that always would grow, that nothing so permanent could die.

Gabriel Welsh

First appeared in *Moon City Review* 2021, Spring 2021