

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

America Celebrates Craft

This month America will celebrate craft with American Craft Week, held from Oct. 2 - 11, 2015. It might go unnoticed in the Carolinas as it seems, at least from doing an arts publication for 28 years covering the visual art community in North and South Carolina, that folks in the Carolinas have been celebrating our craft artists since the beginning of time - as we know it.

North Carolina definitely takes the lead when it comes to crafts, while South Carolina has done little to support craft artists. You can read all about the activities planned in North Carolina during the week on Page 35 of this issue. But in going through this issue you'll notice there are lots of exhibits and events dealing with craft throughout the month - as is the case every month in the Carolinas.

You can learn more about the national event at the American Craft Week website at (<http://americancraftweek.com>). There you'll find about seven listings taking place in SC and forty-two in NC. But that doesn't mean we don't have excellent craft artists in South Carolina. It just means they're not organized. But, of the two states, North Carolina is the undisputed leader when it comes to crafts in the Carolinas, the region, and beyond.

Now craft sometimes has an image problem in that many people associate craft with items they might find at a local flea market. That's not the kind of arts and crafts I'm talking about and deal with every month in *Carolina Arts*. And that image problem was probably what got the organizers at American Craft Week going six years ago. I'm sure they wanted to create events which would educate folks about fine art craft.

I know my impression of craft has changed since coming to the Carolinas forty-one years ago from Michigan.

In Charleston, SC, it was yearly visits to the Piccolo Spoleto Outdoor Crafts Fairs that got Linda and I started in collecting pottery. A visit to One Eared Cow Glass in Columbia, SC, got us hooked on art glass. Now we're the most popular gift givers to friends and family.

I remember window shopping in Asheville, NC, for the first time and just being amazed at what I was seeing. My first trips to the Folk Art Center and to one of the Southern Highlands Craft Fairs was an experience to remember. And be repeated over and over again.

Then one day I made a trip to Seagrove, NC - the center of pottery in North Carolina. It's a small community with over a hundred working potteries. So small, that thankfully they don't have a Wal-Mart or McDonalds. Of course some of those folks might wish they did from time to time. But, they do have the North Carolina Pottery Center, which offers changing exhibitions and the history of pottery in NC.

Now our cover this month might draw focus to American Craft Week, but I'm still not sure people will take much notice as if anything is different from most any other month. We may not feature crafts on our cover as much as some craft artists would like, but we could. Some folks think I'm a paid lobbyist for crafts on Facebook, but I think if they checked it out they see that I'm an equal sharer of great art as well. It just might be that they're amazed at some of the things they see there. I know I am.

So what will I be doing to celebrate American Craft Week? Well, first I'm sure I'll be processing more articles about upcoming craft exhibits and then dusting.

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