

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

No April Foolin'

I'm not posting any April Fool's Day jokes this year, it was enough trouble last year - some people just can't take a joke.

The month of April used to be the get ready for May and June month, but these days April is a pretty big month. There was always Columbia, SC's Artista Vista - the Midlands' most celebrated gallery crawl, taking place Apr. 23-25, with the big night happening Apr. 23, from 5-9pm, in Columbia's Vista area. I'm not sure what goes on those other two days, but you can check for last minute details with the Vista Guild at their website (www.VistaColumbia.com). And, I mean wait until the last minute as they never have details ahead of time.

And then we have ArtFields© in Lake City, SC, taking place Apr. 24 - May 2, 2015.

What's that you say about overlapping events? Well that's a tradition in SC. There's no central calendar of art events so people just keep programming events at the same time. I think some people do it so their local folks who love the arts don't stray too far from home.

This will be ArtFields©' third year and I think people should see a lot of improvements. I've heard the level of works submitted have gone up a notch or two, but you'll have to be the judge of that, I thought it was pretty good last year. Of course after you've finished going through this issue of *Carolina Arts* you can head over to the ArtFields©' website at (www.artfieldssc.org) and check out the competitors. Images of accepted works and info about the artists who made the 400 cut was to be posted Apr. 1st. I'll be checking it out - after I do my launch duties of the day.

One thing you might notice when you go to that website is that ArtFields© has a new slogan. I'm not going to mention the old one, but the new one is:

Small Town - Big Money - World Class Southern Art

I like the way that sounds, in fact it sounds like something I've said about ArtFields© in the past. You could also add in - *Genuine Southern Hospitality*. Now if I could just get them to drop the "life-changing" description of their awards, \$50,000 is a lot of money, but it's not exactly life-changing these days. But, believe me - any artist who wins it will be thrilled. I know I would.

Another new addition to the competition for artists is the ten Honorable Mention \$1,000 cash prizes selected by the jury panel from the entire 400 works. These are also non-purchase awards so the artists selected for these awards will keep their works - that's if they didn't get sold during ArtFields©.

That's another factor that hasn't sunken in for artists and visitors to ArtFields© - a lot of works are sold during this event. Most of the works are for sale. So if you see something you really like you could take it home with you after the event or even have it sent home to you.

Visitors to ArtFields©

ArtFields© 2015 will also see improvements for visitors too. The new The Inn at the Crossroads, a 57-room boutique hotel, is now open on Main Street in Lake City. The Hotel is less than a block away from the Jones-Carter Gallery and the Green where many events take place. Plus, Main Street is where many of the stores displaying artworks are located.

Lake City is just a few hours away from

most of SC and just 20 minutes off of I-95. For folks who live even further away, now the new Inn will make an extended stay possible - if it's not already booked up during the run of ArtFields© 2015.

A couple of new events that got my attention include: Arts + Drafts, a celebration of the art of craft beer with live music by The Whiskey Rebellion out of Virginia, where visitors will be invited to sample several craft brews and browse the art market featuring a diverse selection of artwork from original work to prints; The Art of 'Que, an event showcasing the art of Southern BBQ featuring live music by popular Americana group, The Blue Dogs.

Other events include the Color Me 5K race, the Portrait Contest, tours at Moore Farms Botanical Garden and Competition Artist Talks - there is plenty to do in addition to looking at art. Check out the events being offered at (www.artfieldssc.org).

But, the most important thing that visitors can do while attending ArtFields© is voting for their favorite works on display. Voting by the public not only helps select the People's Choice Awards for two of the awards, but also determines which works the Jury Panel can select the top award from. The people have most of the power in determining the winner of this competition.

Of course the majority of visitors are just lookers, they don't want to get involved, and it's so hard to register to vote. Wait a minute - I registered to vote, so it can't be that hard. You might have to give a phone number or e-mail address.

You're thinking, "Oh no - not my e-mail address, now I'm going to get tons of junk e-mails." Not a worry - I've never gotten an e-mail from ArtFields© that wasn't directly related to a request on my part.

When you register you'll receive a full color catalogue of the competition entries and where they are located, as well as other important info. If you don't register to vote, you still get to look.

Haven't Gone Yet

If you haven't made the trip to Lake City

yet you need to make that trip - especially if you are an artist who keeps wondering what it's all about. Once you see what it's all about you'll enter the next year.

If you're just someone who enjoys the visual arts, this is the biggest, most diverse show you'll ever see in the South. And, if you're that rare person who actually buys works of art - this is like making a trip to the Mall of America and all the stores are art galleries.

I'll tell you how important and interesting this show is. The dates of ArtFields© comes at the most inconvenient time for me. It takes place during the week that I have to pull together one of our biggest issues of the year - our May issue. With that in mind I plan on visiting Lake City at least twice. That's going to hurt. That means burning a lot of midnight oil to make my deadlines. I know last year I felt as if I was burning my candle at both ends. So what's your excuse for not going?

The Critic and the Cheerleader

Anyone who follows my commentary on a regular basis knows I've been a critic and a cheerleader for ArtFields© from its beginning. I offer my 2 cents worth on what is good and bad because I want the event to get better, grow, and go on for a long time.

Not being an artist, I only see the outside view of ArtFields©, although I do receive feedback from a few artists. And, I'm still hearing a few complaints from artists about the entry process and some who complain that it is too costly to enter in that they have to make at least two trips to Lake City. I'm not really sure those are valid problems or just artists being artists. It's impossible to please everyone in any group. I've never heard a complaint from an artist who won one of the cash awards. But, if you are an artist who has a complaint, you can tell the folks at ArtFields© and if you're not comfortable with that you can tell me and I'll pass it on. And, I've never revealed a name in 28 years of doing this.

The management of ArtFields© listens, as they want to make the event better also.



BRAC GALLERY 111 E South 2nd Street Seneca SC 29678
www.blueridgeartscenter.com
(727) 457-5274

Gallery Hours: Tuesday & Friday 1-5pm Saturday 10-2pm
We Are A Non-Profit All Volunteer Organization-volunteers welcome

Call For Artists \$500 First Place

ANY ARTIST WORKING IN MATERIALS "FROM THE EARTH":

Clay, Ceramic, Glass, Fiber, Textiles

Metal, Wood, Paper, Basketry

Includes Quilting and Jewelry

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May 15, 2015- June 19, 2015

Art Intake: Friday, May 7 & Saturday, May 8, 2015

Renown Wood Artist Warren Carpenter - Juror

Opening Reception and Awards:

Friday May 15th 5:30-8:00pm

Annual Juried Art Exhibit 3/13/2015 - 5/1/2015

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