

# Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

## The Thing About ArtFields

I'm breaking my rule about not mentioning ArtFields in this publication until they come clean on a couple issues, which isn't hard since they don't send us any info on the event anymore. I'm not sure who they send info to other than the local Florence County media. I have a Google Alert set on ArtFields and not much comes up before the events begins. It finds a few more mentions of the event while it's taking place, but after it's over - silence. It's not the best publicized event in light of it calling itself the "largest competition of its kind" - their words, not mine.

On Page 10 of this issue you'll find an article about Kristi Ryba's installation, *Chapel Of Perpetual Adoration*, which will be part of this years ArtFields. We included it because Ryba, of Charleston, SC, is our current Queen of the *Carolina Arts* Facebook page. And, we do all we can to honor our Queens, past and present. Wan Marsh of Charlotte, NC, was our first Queen. Ryba became Queen by receiving over 7,524 views on the *Carolina Arts* Facebook page which featured one of her works that will be in this installation. It was a painting in the style of Medieval and Renaissance altarpieces which showed President Trump holding court after his election.

That image matched my political feelings at the time and I also liked the fact that an artist expressed their own political feelings in a work of art, something I don't see much from artists in the Carolinas. And, it seems a lot of other folks enjoyed that artwork too. Ryba's image scored over 2,000 more likes than our previous Queen.

And there is another image in this installation that I really enjoyed and I'm including it here for you all to see. I almost considered it for another cover, but that would be



The (top) says, "St. James Comey Martyr" and the (bottom) says, "I Just Fired The Head Of The F.B.I. He Was Crazy, A Real Nut Job". D. Trump May 29, 2017

breaking another rule and two rules broken in one month - no no, can't do that.

What's my beef with ArtFields you ask? First off, they are using an attendance figure of 20,000 people that was gathered from a hired firm in Columbia, SC, for the first event. There's no way to do that with ArtFields as there is no admission ticket or gate that people have to pass through. It's a made up number they paid to have. Now they use it every year.

Second, they refuse to give out info about the voting process. Since this is a competition, I think the artists and public should know how many votes winners received. The first year I was told over 5,000 people registered to vote and then only 2,500 actually voted - out of 20,000 in attendance. Spread that out among 400 artists and it's logical to think that the winners might have gotten between 100-500 votes or even less.

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