

# Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

## Summer is Here!

We've had a great Spring this year, except for the tornadoes - compared to last year when it seemed the temps started to be 95+ in late April. Of course this month is the start of the hurricane season so one eye will always be trained on the tropics. But, we're southerners and hot air, humidity and hurricanes are all part of life.

I think I can call myself a southerner now after living here for 37 years. I'm 60 - do the math. Of course I'm still a long way from embracing the culture of moon pies, NASCAR, RC Cola and okra.

I came from the frozen tundra of Michigan in November of 1974 and I knew when I heard my first Wet Willie album - I could live here. And to top it off they called Motown - Beach Music.

The point is - although things will slow down some this Summer - the visual art community in the Carolinas will keep on presenting exhibitions - while most of the performing arts take the Summer off.

The population of the Carolinas may be on the move from the middle of these states - to the mountains or the sea, but they can still take in the arts - just check our gallery listings to see all that will be offered in the area where you end up - on vacation or over the weekend. The gallery spaces are usually nice and cool.

## The Numbers - Get to the Numbers

Well, I'd like to say we recovered from our little dip in downloads of the paper in April, but we did more than recover - we jumped to a whole new level.

During the month of March, the paper was downloaded 45,298 times. Which was amazing at the time. But then in April, the downloads dropped to 31,408 - a substantial drop - with very little answers as

to why. May has always been a big issue for *Carolina Arts*, because of the Spoleto & Piccolo Spoleto Festivals taking place in May & June in Charleston, SC. The festivals bring in a big arts audiences into Charleston, but we're not a paper that visitors can pick up any more - in a traditional sense - so I was a little concerned.

In today's smaller world through better communications - those future visitors to Charleston could read all about the Festival's visual art offerings - long before they got here in the comfort of their own homes, or even on the drive to Charleston.

Have I stalled enough to create a little dramatic tension?

I won't be able to get the final two days of the month of May, but by the time we had to finish this puppy and put it to bed for publication, (the stats are delayed) but in May the paper has already been downloaded 61,197 times. Final numbers will be reported a few days into June at *Carolina Arts Unleashed* - my main blog.

As Martha Stewart would say - That's a good thing! But since I'm more of a study for Homer Simpson - I'll say - Woo Hoo!

But that's just part of the amazing news this month. Unlike some newspapers who want to charge you a fee to look at parts of their old issues - by the article in most cases, we have offered back issue of *Carolina Arts* on our website - free - articles since June of 1999 and whole issues (page by page) since August of 2004 - which accounts for the popularity of our website with search engines. We have a lot of content available. And, people search through it on a daily basis.

Sometimes it's a little strange to see what interests people - stuff that took place years ago, sometimes a decade ago.

What's been interesting since January when we went totally online is to watch how much people download each issue of

the paper - long after the month it initially came out. A point in case is our ever popular March 2011 issue.

As I said before, during the month of March the paper was downloaded 45,298 times, but then in April, it was again downloaded 7,776 times. During the month of May the March issue was at times being downloaded more than the May issue - its total, with a few more days, to go is 13,128 downloaded in May.

That's an issue of our paper that is two months old. That's twenty thousand more downloads of that issue - more than we used to print each month when the paper was printed. In total that March issue has been downloaded 66,202 times.

I've been wondering if I could re-bill the advertisers in that issue, but then that sounds like something those big time newspapers would do. As is, some want your e-mail address and your personal history - to sell - just to look at their online versions. They won't get mine.

Well, now we have a race on our hands - March vs. May. March has a growing cult following and May came out of the gate blasting. Who will be leading by the end of June? Or, will the heat of the Summer make June a superstar? Who knows? I know I don't have a clue.

Now where have I heard that before? Perhaps it was an art critic in South Carolina. Can't remember.

## Facebook

What can I say about Facebook? My mother always use to tell me not to say anything if you can't say something nice about someone, but I soon learned there was a way you could sound like you were saying something nice, but you're not. It's like when someone ask me how I liked something and I reply that it was better than a sharp stick in the eye, which is how I feel about Facebook sometimes.

It's better than Twitter, I guess. But I know nothing about Twitter so that could be a false statement.

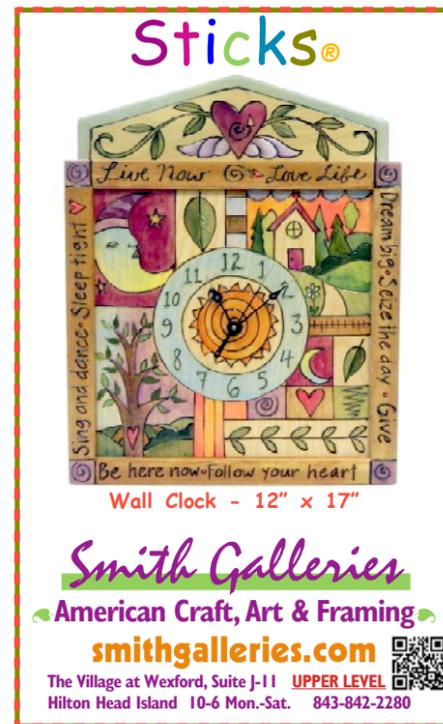
I'm learning a little bit more about Facebook, but there are hundreds of questions yet to be answered and I'm totally lost when some say Facebook will rival Google. I just don't see that.

But I can tell you one thing about Facebook as far as *Carolina Arts* goes. A notice on Facebook is not going to be a substitute for a press release. Something you put on Facebook might pique my interest in something, but I'm not taking it as a replacement for a full press release. Some days I don't even have enough time to get past a few hours of entries. So don't think just because you posted something on Facebook that I saw it and it's going to make its way into the next issue of the paper.

Now, if you want to make Facebook your new arts newspaper - so be it. Just one thing - did you have 60,000 friends last month? If you want to take the chance that in-between the entries about what people are listening to at the moment, the updates on dental appointments, and the photos and links to dogs and cats playing pianos - that someone is going to see your notice for an exhibit - be my guest.

Of course some people say they don't have time to absorb a lot of content these days. I say, get off of Facebook and you'll be surprised how much time you have.

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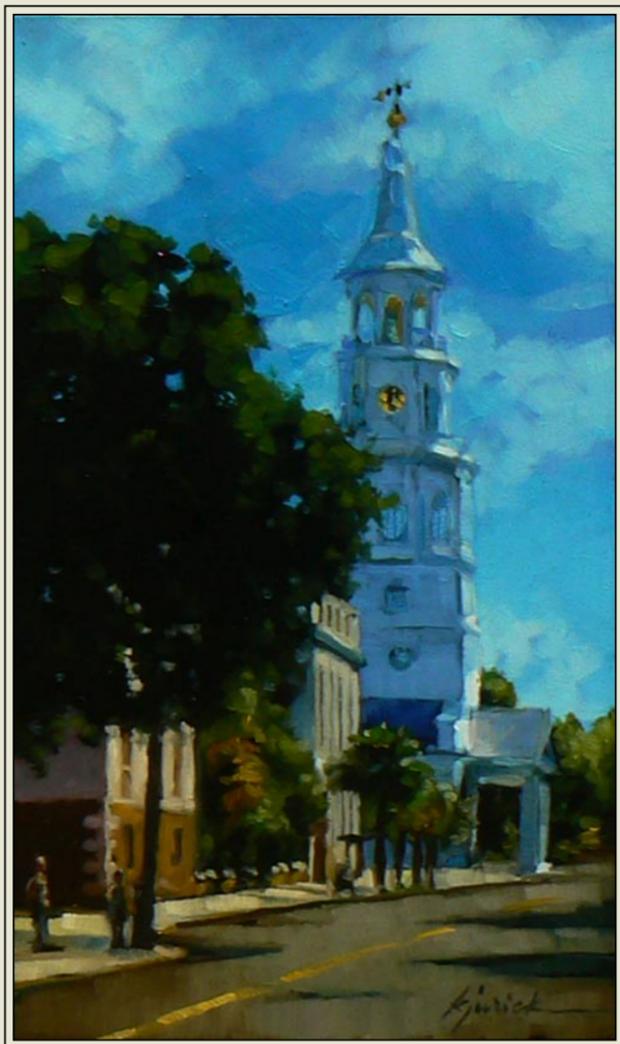


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