

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

Happy Anniversary

This month we mark our 24th year of producing an arts newspaper in the Carolinas. We started doing an all arts newspaper in Charleston, SC, and then just a visual arts newspaper covering South Carolina and eventually moving into North Carolina. Up until last year we were a print publication.

This all started because of Apple launching the desktop publishing revolution - making it much cheaper to produce a publication for print. I would have never imagined that our paper would eventually be an online only publication.

Now Apple didn't invent the Internet - we all know Al Gore did that - according to FOX News. But here we are - creating an e-publication, blogging, and participating in social media. What's next? Who knows? I just know my next deadline is July 24th. Hey, that's your deadline too.

Our Cover Art

I figured if we're going to feel this hot in the Carolinas and be as dry as we are here in Bonneau, SC, the headquarters of *Carolina Arts*, we might as well look like it on our cover. Thanks to the photography skills of John Byrum, you can see how we feel here on Lake Moultrie. Byrum's works will be on view at the Artists' Guild of Spartanburg's Guild Gallery at the Chapman Cultural Center in Spartanburg, SC, from July 1 - 30, 2011.

We've gotten very little rain in the last couple of months although areas all around us - some less than 20 miles away seem to get it on a regular basis. You would think our lake would be drying up, but it is full to the brim - due to rain falling up river.

Sometimes when I look out at the lake

I think it's a mirage. Is it really there, all full of water, when no rain falls in the area? How can that be?

That's the way I figure a lot of folks in the visual art community are looking at the art market. Is there anyone out there still buying art? Yet, there are a lot of art galleries out there - some have closed, but new ones are opening. And, there are a lot of exhibits being offered - all over the Carolinas. Is it just dry here or what?

Even the non-profits out there are probably wondering - is there no one in the public sector willing to support the arts? Where will funding come from?

Well, like all people dealing with a drought, you do one of several things: you move to another area where there is water; you travel further, back and forth, to water resources; you find alternative sources; you share resources with others; or you just dry up and die. The ones who die are usually those unable or unwilling to adapt to change.

You can spend your days crying for rain, blaming others for the drought, or adapt to change.

We're in a dry spell in the Carolinas, as far as the arts go, yet there are a lot of opportunities out there for life sustaining water. You might not find water in the places you were used to finding water, but it doesn't mean that water isn't out there - somewhere. Perhaps all you need to do is let people know - you have art for water.

Perhaps it's time to make that sign - Art for Water! And, start holding it up.

Following the Numbers

It's officially Summer - a time when the arts usually take some time off, but not so much in the visual arts. Yes, most universities and colleges close down for a break, and institutions schedule exhibits

that last the entire Summer, but most of the visual arts community is still offering exhibits - not as many when the weather is more user friendly, but the shows still go on. We expect a slow down - we've learned that over our 24 years of producing an arts newspaper. So, we also expected our download numbers to be down.

The raw figures are: we had 50,017 downloads of the June 2011 issue; the "others" category has showed up again as our leading category with 65,197; our cult favorite, the March 2011 issue saw 11,400 downloads, bringing in a total of 77,602 downloads since it was first launched in on March 1, 2011.

For a time I thought that May would over shadow March - starting out with 61,199, but since interest in it just dropped off the charts - I don't know any more. It's a real puzzle.

Now, 50,017 for June is a lot less than the 61,199 for May, but a lot better than I expected for a Summer issue. Our famous March issue only had 45,298 downloads during March and in April there were only 31,408 downloads. So, I feel pretty good about our Summer showing.

The "strange factor" of the month award goes to the fact that downloads for the April and May issues fell of the stats chart this month. Looking through thousands of stats listings - I just couldn't find any sign of them. Kind of strange considering how popular the May issue was in May - just a month ago.

Out of the blue our February issue attracted 2,118 downloads and the January issue came in with a respectable 378 downloads - not much, but way ahead of April and May.

Also in June, the "others" raised their nasty head again after taking May off. They are out in front with 55,342. These are figures for unknown stats. Our server doesn't know who or what they are, but they say they could be downloads - they just came from a source that is not known. I'm still scratching my head over that explanation.

Summer did have its effect in that most of the downloads for June came in the first

five days and then the numbers trickled in during the rest of the month. Early in June, people were still in Spring mode, but eventually the Summer doldrums moved in.


Now, my expectations for July are lower than June's - as the heat of Summer will have worn people down. But, I'm hoping those dog days of Summer will draw people back to their computers after vacations are over and long forgotten.

In the back of my twisted mind, I'm waiting for the month when the numbers at the end of a month show that more people downloaded our March issue than the current month. I'm not saying that will ever happen, but when it comes to the folks who keep downloading that issue - anything is possible.

Carolina Arts News

This is our blog which presents news of all sorts about the visual art community in the Carolinas - fundraisers, call

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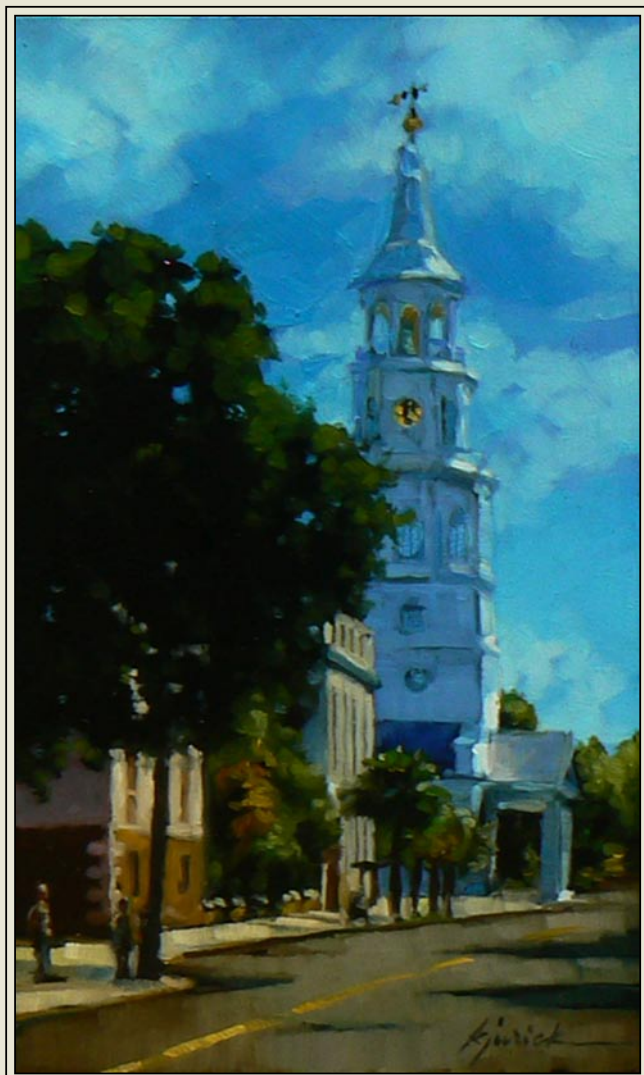


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