



# ArtsGram

A Daily Publication of the 2003 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

Saturday, October 11, 2003

## Tapping the Unknown Potential

– Laura Bishop

Tomah VAMC, Tomah, Wisconsin –



Maureen Howell of La Crosse, Wis., adds a personal touch to her painting after the acrylic workshop.

For most of us, we'd be delighted to be good at one thing in the art world. For the artists attending the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, artistic talent seems to run in their veins – and no matter what they are doing, their creativity shines.

"I enjoyed doing the acrylics," said Ron "Doc" Ross, a photographer from Grand Junction, Colo. "I liked it when we had the air brushed statues all lined up at the end of the class. You could see everybody's, and they were all different. They expressed a little of who's here. What I've found at the Creative Arts Festival is that there's a bit of creativity – regardless of the medium – in each one of us. Someone might be a great painter, but they could be a doggone good photographer, too, or vice versa."

"It is surprising how a lot of the artists' untapped artistic talents will come out when they're in the workshops at the Festival and exposed to a medium that is perhaps new to them," said Katie Ryan, creative arts therapist from the Minneapolis VA Medical Center past and National Art Chairperson for the Festival. "It's amazing how multi-talented a lot of these folks are. I've seen some veterans come back the next year and win a gold medal in something they were exposed to at the Festival."

"When the veterans come to the Festival, they're open to trying new things," explained Paula Marks, National Art Chairperson from Prescott, Ariz. "The creativity is already there. Because they're open to trying new things, already have some skills and are willing to step out of their box, they may discover things they didn't know about themselves."



Thomas O'Connor of Chicago utilized a Help Hospitalized Veterans leather kit and then painted his own design on the leather.



Fiber art is the category in which Warren Weldon of Chugiak, Alaska, won gold, but here he tries his hand at air brush techniques. He enjoyed the Festival workshops and hopes to apply some of the things he's learned when he returns home.



Statues completed at the airbrush workshop reflect the unique vision of each artist.



"Hitch your wagon to a star."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Help Hospitalized Veterans Co-sponsors the Creative Arts Festival



Since its inception in 1971, Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV), a not for profit organization, has been devoted to producing and distributing arts and crafts kits to veterans as a way of helping them increase their self-esteem, improve their motor skills, promote their independence and facilitate social interaction. Today, HHV delivers kits to more than 300 facilities worldwide, including VA hospitals, state veterans nursing homes and active-duty military hospitals.

In a moving ceremony at the VA Medical Center in San Diego, Calif., last August, VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi presented the 20 millionth therapeutic arts and crafts kit from Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV) to Jason Wittling, a spinal cord injury patient from Operation Iraqi Freedom.

During the August 25<sup>th</sup> ceremony, VA remembered the beginning of its partnership with HHV. The arts and crafts kits were the brainchild of Roger Chapin, who often visited Vietnam veterans at the Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego. When Chapin asked the veterans what he could do for them, the frequent response was, "Give me something to do with my hands."

In 1990, when San Diego hosted the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, Linda Colletti, Art Exhibit Coordinator, made HHV aware of the program and they became a co-sponsor the following year.

Throughout the year, 25 HHV Craft Care Specialists, working at

VA Medical Centers across the country, promote the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival by encouraging local veterans to enter the competition. This year, five Craft Care Specialists are attending the Festival. HHV sponsored Thursday evening's leather bag and beadwork art workshop, providing materials and instruction to those attending.



HHV volunteer assists Melford Knudson with his craft project.

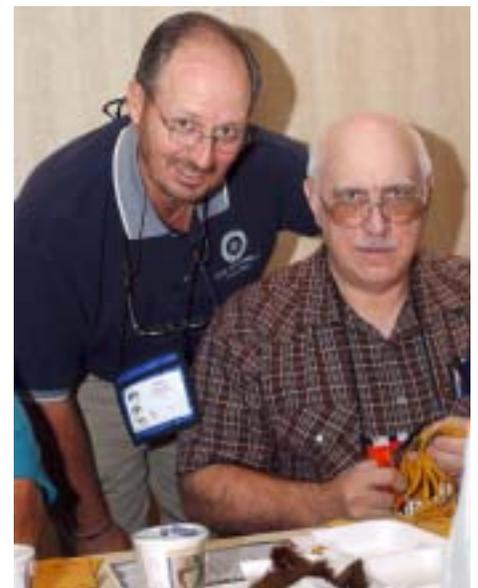
Liz Mackey, Director of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, notes that veterans often discover their talents in different modalities of the arts through the HHV craft program, which provides them with leisure time activities in addition to rehabilitation. Liz notes, "We are very grateful to HHV for their extensive, long-term support of the Festival. If not for HHV, the craft division, which includes 12 categories, would not be part of the competition."

Mike Lynch, Executive Director of HHV, is an avid supporter of the Festival. Along with several board members, he will attend the grand finale art exhibit and stage show at Rose State Performing Arts Center on Sunday.

Veterans at this year's Festival are happy to voice their appreciation for Help Hospitalized Veterans.

"I look forward to craft time," said Cheryl Stiles of Prescott, Ariz., "because it keeps you occupied. You can do something creative and feel like you've accomplished something."

"The kits have really helped me out a lot," said Leonard Adamitis of Milwaukee, Wis. "Without the kits, I'd have to go out and buy my own materials and I really can't afford that. The kits are really instruc-



Mike Lynch and Festival artist Leonard Adamitis

tional, and my wife Marilyn and I really appreciate the people who donate their funds to Help Hospitalized Veterans. Without those kits, I probably never would have participated in the Creative Arts Festival. The kits really help me with my Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. When I'm working on them, I forget

**See "HHV," cont'd on page 4**

# Preparing Lumber for Woodworking Projects



Whether you buy rough or surfaced lumber from the mill, the lumber yard, a home center, or a specialty wood store, you have to prepare the lumber for use.

## Step 1: Cut the board to rough length

The first cut made to a board is a slice approximately a one-inch piece from the end of the board to look for small cracks, called checks, which may not be visible but could ruin a piece. After the cut, try to bend the end-cut piece. If you see a crack or it breaks when bent, cut pieces off the end until no more cracks are found. You may have to cut eight inches or more from the board to eliminate the checks. Allow at least one extra inch of length for each piece. Mark the board for the cuts and use a radial arm saw, table saw, or miter saw to make these oversize cuts.

## Step 2: Flatten the best face of the board

Pick the best face of the board and run it across the jointer. You will probably have to make several passes over the jointer because your wood is never flat to begin with. Even surfaced lumber bought at a specialty hardwood store can be warped. Mark the jointed face with an "X" or an "@" in pencil to designate it as the reference face for later layout work.

*Note: Do not use a planer because it will mirror what is on the other side of the board! If the board is warped, it will now be warped on both faces.*

## Step 3: Flatten one edge of the board

Pick the best edge of the board and run it across the jointer with the reference face flat against the jointer fence. Again, you will probably have to make several passes across the jointer. Before you begin, make sure that the fence is 90° perpendicular to the jointer outfeed bed. Mark the jointed edge with a "V." The point of the "V" faces the reference face.

## Step 4: Flatten the opposite face

Run the board through the planer with the reference face down against the bed (for planers with the cutters on the top side — most are this way). Make as many passes as needed to get the board to the desired thickness. Do not take off too much — leave about 1/32 inch extra thickness to allow for removal of the machine marks by hand plane, scraper, or sandpaper.

## Step 5: Cut the opposite edge to width

Run the board through the table saw with the reference edge against the fence. Leave an additional 1/16 inch for jointing and smoothing.

## Step 6: Joint the sawed edge

Run the sawed edge across the jointer to remove the saw marks. This usually takes just one pass (maybe two, if the sawed edge is rough). The jointer should be set for a very thin cut, maybe 1/64th inch. Leave about 1/32nd inch (1 mm) extra width for final removal of machine marks.

## Step 7: Cut the best end square

Choose the best end first, because you want to take off only a minimal amount, no more than 1/4th inch (6 mm). Cut the end at 90° on the table saw or miter saw.

## Step 8: Cut the opposite to length

Measure and cut to final length on the table saw or miter saw. As before, leave about 1/32nd inch for removal of machine marks and smoothing.

That's it. You should have a perfect board ready for your project.

## Additional Tips

- Allow boards to acclimate in your shop for two weeks before you use them. This gives the board a chance to settle down to equilibrium moisture content with your shop. Most of the wood movement and warping of the board will occur in this timeframe.

- Do not use green wood. Green wood has not been dried and therefore has an unusually high moisture content. Besides causing rust to your machinery, green wood is unstable and after preparation will warp in unpredictable ways. It takes about one year per inch of thickness to air dry.

- Before prepping a board, look it over carefully. Look at the grain pattern. Look for features you want to highlight in your projects or avoid, such as knots. Figure out all the pieces you want to make from the board and mark them in chalk or crayon for cutting.

- Plan to buy at least twenty percent more lumber than the plans for your project requires.



## PRACTICING CORRECTLY

So often our music teachers assign us homework and expect us to go home and practice. However, many teachers don't instruct their students **how** to actually practice, they often only tell us **what** to practice. The following are a few guidelines to make your efforts more efficient.

- √ Dedicate a set amount of time to your instrument. Make a commitment to that time.
- √ When practicing, give it your full attention. Working in front of the TV may still help your "chops," but total concentration on what you are doing will also improve your playing intellectually and creatively at the same time. Why not kill three birds with one stone?
- √ Try to practice every single day. Practice sessions don't need to be long. Working 15-20 minutes every day is much more productive (and usually less painful) than cramming in three hours over the weekend. Repetition is the key to success, especially when first learning.
- √ Try to balance the material. It's important to practice what you enjoy, but it is also necessary to work on everything. Do the stuff you least enjoy first. Get it out of the way.
- √ If you are struggling with a particular piece, try to get all the way through it at first, mistakes and all. Then go back and work on it section by section.
- √ Remember that the key is to have fun. If you become frustrated, don't be afraid to put the instrument down and come back to it later.

Whether you are taking lessons or not, these tips should help you make your practice sessions more productive.

## "HHV", cont'd from page 2

about all of my other worries. It's a really healing experience."

The kits have provided a surprising benefit for some veterans, as well. Marilyn Adamitis and Sally Cordell of Oklahoma City, have become pen pals with some of the HHV donors, keeping in touch with them after an initial thank-you card was sent. Cordell has monthly correspondence with about a half a dozen donors from all over the country.

Occupational Therapist Tim Neidiffer of Louisville, Ky., was quick to voice his appreciation of HHV. "The HHV craft kits are the main source of rehab for our psychiatric patients," he said. "We'd be lost without them. The variety they send us and the esteem that the patients get from completing the projects really benefits their recovery."



## "JOIN THE PARTY"

Re-Creation steps out in a gala celebration on Sunday at the Veterans Appreciation Dinner. Re-Creation presents young, talented performers who take audiences of all ages on a fabulous joyride through the great eras of American music! Enjoy a non-stop party of all your favorite songs, dances and fun... from Country, Swing, the 50's, Broadway, the 60's, the 80's, up to today's top chart hits! Re-Creation presents it all in a glow of stylized pageantry. Everyone will enjoy this magical program that transforms the stage into a wondrous showplace of unforgettable entertainment.

Re-Creation USA, Inc. exists to serve, to encourage, to inspire and challenge, and to entertain. It is a non-profit organization whose main service is to America's VA Medical Centers. Since 1982, Re-Creation has provided the only continuing, live, therapeutic entertainment presence in our nation's VA Medical Centers.

## Medical Support Room

The Medical Support Room is in room 1111. If you have a medical concern or issue, please contact your team leader. Medical support has a registered nurse on duty 24 hours a day. You can call the nurse at extension 1111 or go directly to the room.

## Meet with Your Team Leader

Artists meet with their team leaders at 9:00 am. Performers meet their team leaders this morning at 8:30 am on the second floor of the hotel. Tomorrow's meetings will be at 11:30 am.

## Hospitality Room

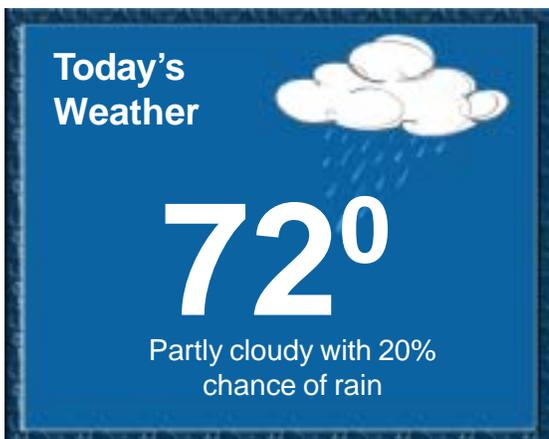
The Hospitality Room, manned by friendly volunteers, offers snacks, soft drinks, juices, and coffee for all Festival participants, staff and volunteers. It remains open daily from 9 am to 10 pm in room 318.

## Transportation to the Airport on Monday

Be sure to be in the hotel lobby with all luggage packed, identified and not locked at least two and a half hours before your flight departure time.

## Check It Out!

The Website for the Festival is:  
[www.va.gov/vetevent/caf/2003](http://www.va.gov/vetevent/caf/2003)



### Saturday, October 11

#### Breakfast

Assorted Fruit Juices  
Danish and Assorted Muffins  
Scrambled Eggs, Crispy Bacon, Breakfast Potatoes  
Country Biscuits and Sausage Gravy  
Assorted Dry Cereals  
Starbuck's Coffee and Milk

#### Lunch

##### *Artists at the Old Trinity Gallery*

Chicken and Beef Fajitas, Grilled Peppers and Onions  
Soft Flour Tortillas, Refried Beans and Rice  
Pico de Gallo and Relish, Sour Cream and Guacamole  
Chips, Salsa and Cheese Sauce  
Bunuelos  
Iced Tea

##### *Performers at Westin Hotel*

Bricktown Deli Buffet  
Pasta Salad, Potato Salad, Coleslaw  
Lettuce, Tomato, Onions, Pickle Spears  
Sliced Seasonal Fruits  
Oven Roasted Turkey, Roast Beef, Pastrami, Danish Ham,  
Corned Beef  
Swiss, American, and Cheddar Cheeses  
Selection of Breads  
Pastry Chef's Selection of Cakes/Pies  
Starbuck's Coffee and Iced Tea

#### Dinner

Black-eyed Pea Salad, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad  
Southern Fried Chicken and Fried Catfish  
Green Beans, Whipped Potatoes  
Cornbread with Butter  
Pecan Pie and Warm Peach Cobbler  
with Chantilly Cream  
Coffee and Iced Tea

# TODAY'S SCHEDULE

## ARTISTS

## PERFORMERS

**7:00 – 8:30 am**

**Breakfast**

– Westin Hotel, Century Ballroom

**9:00 am** – Meet with Team Leader

**9:30 am** – Depart for Paseo Art District

**10:00 am – Noon**

Artists' tour of Paseo Art District

**Noon – 1:00 pm**

**Lunch**

– Old Trinity Gallery in Paseo Art District

**1:30 – 4:30 pm**

Completion of artwork projects

**4:30 – 6:30 pm**

Relaxation/massage offered

– Westin Hotel, Red Carpet Room

**7:00 – 9:00 pm**

Veterans Appreciation Buffet Dinner  
(Casual Dress)

– Westin Hotel, Century Ballroom

**9:00 – 10:30 pm**

Re-Creation Show

– Westin Hotel, Century Ballroom

7 am

7:30

8

8:30

9

9:30

10

10:30

11

11:30

Noon

12:30

1

1:30

2

2:30

3

3:30

4

4:30

5

5:30

6

6:30

7

7:30

8

8:30

9

9:30

10

10:30

11

**7:00 – 8:30 am**

**Breakfast**

– Westin Hotel, Century Ballroom

**8:30 am** – Meet with Team Leader

**9:00 – 10:00 am**

Ensemble Brush-up Rehearsal

– Plaza Room

**10:00 am – Noon**

Relaxation/massage offered

– Westin Hotel, Red Carpet Room

**10:00 – 11:30 am**

Drumming Workshop

– Grand Pavillion

**11:15 am – 12:15 pm**

**Lunch**

– Westin Hotel, Century Ballroom

**12:30 pm** – Performers depart for

Rose State College Performing Arts Theater

**1:30 – 5:00 pm**

– Final dress rehearsal at theater with orchestra

**5:30 pm** – Performers depart for hotel

**7:00 – 9:00 pm**

Veterans Appreciation Buffet Dinner  
(Casual Dress)

– Westin Hotel, Century Ballroom

**9:00 – 10:30 pm**

Re-Creation Show

– Westin Hotel, Century Ballroom

“Hitch your wagon to a star.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson