



Wednesday, October 19, 2005

A DAILY PUBLICATION OF THE 2005 NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

“Newcomers” Bring Fresh Talent and Creativity to Festival

Of the 108 veterans in Denver this week for the 2005 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, many are experiencing the event for the first time. Anticipating an inspiring week as they share their unique talent, hone their artistic aptitudes and enjoy good conversation with fellow veterans and artists, here is what just a few of these “first-timers” had to say.



Smith Iuli from San Diego, Calif.

Willie Thompson, 47, an accomplished guitarist and Coast Guard and Marine Corps veteran from St. Petersburg, Fla., won first place in the national music competition, instrumental solo (jazz/rhythm and blues) category. Thompson brings 34 years of instrumental experience to the Festival, 13 as a Marine Corps Band musician. During the stage show, he will perform a guitar version of the Steely Dan song “Do It Again.”

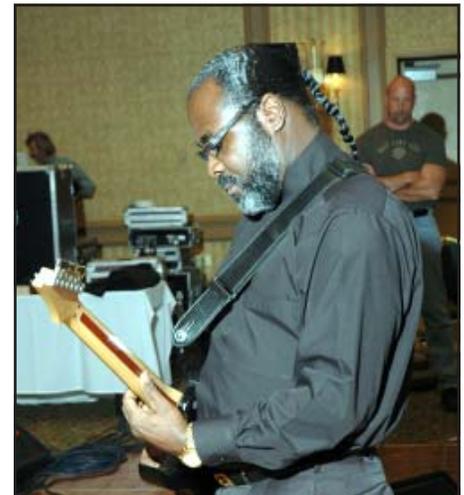
“Performing solo allows me open up my approach in my own style.”

Creative writer **Gay Leigh Mundy**, a 57-year-old Army veteran, comes to the Festival from Wauwatosa, Wis. Through her award winning entry, “The Dog Tags,” Mundy expresses her feelings about losing someone in war. Mundy has enjoyed creative writing since she was old enough to write. In

third grade, she had her own school newspaper column and wrote plays. Mundy says she woke up at 2:30 a.m. one day and wrote her award-winning poem in one hour.

“I hope that people will be touched by my words and that they all realize there is a price to be paid in war.”

Forty-five years ago, **Smith Iuli**, 55, an Army veteran and vocalist living in San Diego, fell in love with the song he will perform Sunday night. Iuli tied for first place in the national music compe-



Willie Thompson from St. Petersburg, Fla.

petition, in the vocal solo (jazz/rhythm and blues) category, and will perform “Crossroads.” The song, written by Robert Johnson, is about making a pact with the devil at the place where Highways 49 and 61 cross, just north of Clarksdale, Miss. Most recently, Iuli has been traveling back and forth to Clarksdale to record his first CD.

“Art is the perfect therapy because it does not lay down any rules except your willingness to participate and try your best.”



Edwin (Tee) Thompkins and Frank Erpelding-Chacon show their artwork at the Artists Interaction Session on Tuesday.

See “Newcomers,” page 2

Chinese Calligraphy – A Unique Art Form

Chinese calligraphy is a unique art form, which can only be mastered through patience, diligence and endurance. Here are some steps to help you develop a great style.



- The palm of your hand should be hollow, with a space the size of an average egg. To practice, use a boiled egg to assure you are using the proper shape.
- Pause to load the ink, scrape the brush to keep it fine, look at and refer to the examples, sit upright, and hold the brush correctly.
- Don't rush. Do it elegantly and slowly.
- Use a tracing book to practice, either by tracing the calligraphy printed in red in the copybook, or using the model in the exercise book to trace the character onto semi-transparent paper.
- Study the structure of the character.
- Study the characteristics of the structure, the sequence and the shapes of the strokes. Mere copying without thinking leads nowhere. Think first!

- Each stroke must be rendered with one smooth movement, requiring great confidence and carefulness. You cannot go over or correct the character.

恭喜发财	Congratulations for getting rich
生日快乐	Happy Birthday
圣诞快乐	Happy Christmas
恭贺新禧	Happy New Year
感恩节快乐	Happy Thanksgiving
情人节快乐	Happy Valentine's Day
你好	How Are You
我爱你	I Love You

- Experiment to see how a single movement of the brush can create shapes and textures in a stroke, instead of leaving just an outline. Observe how you can feel the rhythms of each stroke and the balance of the whole character and how you can build upon each stroke to create a complete, vibrant character.
- Chinese calligraphy is a beautiful art form. Using these tips will help you develop your skills in this special artistic modality.

“Newcomers,” continued from page 1

As a young boy, Navy veteran **Frank Erpelding-Chacon**, 55, was drawn to woodworking as he helped his uncles and grandfather sand wood. Years later, his portable writing desk took first place in the national art competition. Continuing his family's woodworking techniques, he explores new methods of construction used in handcrafting traditional New Mexican colonial furniture, helping to preserve those traditions for future generations. Erpelding-Chacon lives in Santa Fe, N.M.

“I entered the competition to honor my dear friend who was in the arts and crafts program and he has since passed away. This program brings back his presence in my heart.”



At an early age, **Edwin Thompkins**, 61, “took a liking to expressing (his) ideas through art.” He obviously had discovered his true calling. In 1978, this Air Force veteran from Martinez, Ga., completed studies at the New Orleans Art Institute. Thompkins won first place in two categories of the national art competition, in both the graphics and figurine/plaque painting kit categories. His winning pieces are entitled “Old Man,” and “My Swan.”

“Art is therapeutic because it is very relaxing and stimulating. It provides a healing process for veterans.”

Thomas Betz, 64, a Marine Corps veteran from Falcon Heights, Minn., won first place in the colored drawing category of the national arts competition with his drawing entitled “Circles.” Betz uses geometric forms to make complex patterns, often hiding ideas or pictures in his work. Although he has enjoyed art all of his life, Betz credits his daughter, an aspiring poet, for rekindling that interest. One day, she admitted to her father that she didn't think her poems were good enough. Betz bought her a notebook and told her to keep writing until she felt she had developed each poem. Soon after, his daughter provided Dad some valuable advice of her own, giving him a sketch pad and telling him to develop his art and stop throwing it away. Obviously, that advice paid off.

“Art comes from the deepest part of us and is expressed in a way that allows us to speak from our secret selves to others.”

A warm welcome and heartfelt “thank you” to all of our first-time participants at the 2005 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival!

Happy Birthday to You!



Yesterday, John Berry, of Renton, Wash., celebrated his birthday here at the Creative Arts Festival, and we hope this gold medal winner (in black and white photography) had a picture-perfect time on his special day at the artist interaction session! Birthday wishes are also in order for three other talented veterans who are celebrating another year during the month of October:

- ◆ Willie Thompson, St. Petersburg, Fla., October 7
- ◆ Marvin Hooper, Temple, Texas, October 10
- ◆ James Utz, Pacific, Wash., October 27

There are five other Festival participants who will be celebrating a birthday the first week in November, only two weeks away!

- ◆ Hager Garriott, Scottsburh, Ind., November 1
- ◆ Julie Cole-McCarter, Rice, Minn., November 2
- ◆ Thomas Betz, Falcon Heights, Minn., November 3
- ◆ Gary Dixon, Ft. Scott, Kan., November 3
- ◆ Nina Mincarelli, Salt Lake City, Utah, November 4

Many happy returns, everybody!

Denver Art Museum Trip

A tour of the Denver Art Museum takes place today from 10 a.m. - 12 noon. Buses begin loading at the hotel at 9 a.m. and will return to the hotel following the tour at noon.



The largest art museum between Kansas City and the West Coast, the Denver Art Museum has more than 55,000 works of art, including an internationally renowned American Indian collection and superb holdings of pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial art.

The Museum's collections include paintings and sculptures by a wide variety of local, regional, national and international artists. The collections include the work of such famous artists as Monet, Picasso, Matisse, Modigliani, O'Keeffe, Warhol, Dine, Grooms, Samaras, Corot, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Russell, Rodin, di Suvero, and Remington.

The American Indian collection includes works from more than 100 tribes across the United States and Canada.

The Asian art collection — the only such resource in the Rocky Mountain region — includes works of art from India, China, Japan, Southwest Asian, Tibet, Nepal, Korea and Southeast Asia.

Enjoy your trip to the Denver Art Museum today!

Country Dinner Playhouse

Get ready for a fun evening of entertainment at Denver's Country Dinner Playhouse. Based on an idea by Murray Horwitz and Richard Maltby, Jr., *Ain't Misbehavin'* is a sassy, strutting, swinging show that celebrates the music of one of America's most adored jazzmen, Thomas "Fats" Waller. It has toe tapping renditions of more than thirty classics including *Honeysuckle Rose*, *The Joint is Jumpin'* and *Your Feet's Too Big*. (For more about the play, see related story, page 6.)

The Country Dinner Playhouse offers the best of classic Broadway musicals, murder mysteries and regional premiers. Throughout the years, its professional actors, musicians and productions have been critically acclaimed and recognized for their excellence. The dinner theater experience takes place in a spacious dining room/theater that can seat more than 450 people at a time, all never more the 36 feet from a unique "theater-in-the-round" stage. On top of all that, the generous buffet served at each performance typically includes a sumptuous array of tempting salads and fruits, garden vegetables, North Atlantic Turbot, oven-roasted chicken and choice baron of beef.

Buses begin loading this afternoon at 4:45 p.m. The dinner theater experience will take place from approximately 6 - 10 p.m., with buses returning to the hotel right after the performance. Don't miss this fun evening with all of your fellow Festival participants, staff, volunteers and friends!



Photos from the Festival



Opening Ceremonies





Rick Stang of Sartell, Minn. is interviewed on Tuesday by Butch Miller for the Veterans History Project.



Don Gibby explains his "Best of Show" artwork to Lynette Roff, director of the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System.



Reporter Stephanie Riggs of the Denver CBS affiliate, Channel 4, interviews Charles Walkingstick from Oklahoma City at the Artists Interaction Session.



Choir practice on Tuesday afternoon.



Sharon Hightower from the Bronx VA Medical Center shows her "Dreamcatcher" string art kit.





Tips for the band!

Musicians, here are some basic suggestions we're sure you already know about gearing up to perform. But for the rest of you, read on!

Long tones - Practice playing long tones facing a wall (the wall bounces your sound back to you). Listen for strength of tone, clarity and unwavering sound quality. Play each tone

until you feel it in your diaphragm – that's where you want to play from.

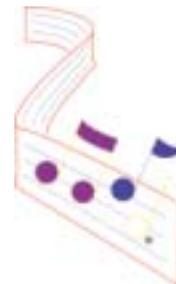
This will strengthen your breath support and playing technique. Your sound will improve tremendously. Try this for five or ten minutes every day or two.



Clean your mouthpiece! Make sure your instrument is in tip top shape, especially if you play a reed instrument. If you don't, the reed will gunk up and it won't vibrate like it is supposed to. If you want a good sound, keep it clean.

Got a problem with your horn? Why not have it fixed? Little things like minor adjustments can make a big difference.

Want to learn to improvise? Learn your scales. Start with one of the easy major scales like C major, and then give D a try and then F. The scales are the building blocks of music. Master the scales, and you'll be on your way to jamming like the pros.



If you're just starting out, begin by learning ALL the notes on your horn. Even advanced players can get better at hitting all the notes (or more notes), or learning different fingerings for some of the notes. If you're good at this, you have good "facility."

Can you play with expression? When you practice, try to express some emotion by playing louder or softer. Try to make your horn sound bold and majestic, or sweet and melodic. Can you make it sound mysterious? How about jazzy? Have fun with this—music is so much more than just playing the notes. How sweet it is!

Time to Behave

Festival participants are in for a memorable evening when they attend tonight's performance of *Ain't Misbehavin'* at the Country Dinner Playhouse.



This wonderful play is considered by many to be the quintessential musical revue – the standard against which all others are measured. With music by the incomparable Thomas "Fats" Waller, lyrics by various writers and based on an idea by Murray Horwitz and Richard Maltby Jr., the original Broadway production ran an astonishing 1,604 performances until the early 1980s. It won the Tony for best musical in 1978.

In the original cast were Nell Carter, Ken Page and Andre De Shields. At the piano was the legendary Luther Henderson, a pioneer among African Americans in the fields of Broadway orchestration, arranging and musical direction. In 1988, just six years after the original departed from Broadway, the show was revived with Carter, Page and Henderson, running another 184 performances.

The Denver theater critics have given enthusiastically high marks for this local production. Enjoy the energy, the creativity and, of course, the music!

In the Moment



Creating art for many participants is, as Festival participant Frank Russell said, "being able to live in the moment, at that moment." This was a recurring message shared by many of this year's first place winners at Tuesday's Visual Artists Interactive Session at the Denver VA Medical Center. It was also a sensation for everyone in attendance as they

listened to the stories of the participants' creative processes – how and why they do what they do.

This family of Festival participants shared not only their artistic techniques and triumphs, but also their motivations, their struggles and their unique personal insights. Edwin Tompkins told the story of how his graphics category winning entry, "Old Man," was the way for him to explain his sensations of depression. He also spoke of how he delights in answering the challenge of, "can you do something with this?" "I turn trash into art," he explained. Bud Smith, who won first place in the oil painting category, talked about his 40-year battle with PTSD, and how, after trying physical exercise, self hypnosis and a host of other coping mechanisms, he made painting in an outdoors setting an everyday activity. "Art, for me, is the place I want to be," Smith said.

F - Y - I



Remember to visit the hospitality room, located on the third floor, rooms 301 and 303. Staffed by friendly

Festival volunteers, the hospitality room offers snacks, soft drinks, juices and coffee for all Festival participants, staff and volunteers. Stop by today from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.



The medical support team is located on the third floor, room 318, and is available at all times during the Festival

week. Medical support team members will also accompany all tours away from the hotel.

If you have a medical concern or health issue, please contact your team leader. We hope to make your stay here in Denver the very best.



Meet with Your Team Leader

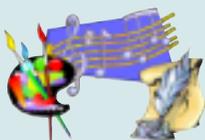
Meet with your team leader this morning through Friday at 8:30 a.m. Check with your team leader for the location of your meetings.

On Saturday, October 22, the team meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m. On Sunday, October 23, meetings will begin at 11:00 a.m.

Lost and Found

If you lost a pair of glasses, they have been turned in to Festival Headquarters, located in the Dulles Room.

Want to Know Who's Here? Check Out these STATS



Festival Categories

Artists	40
Performers	68

Gender

Men	88
Women	20

Branch of Service *

Army	60
Air Force	22
Navy	19
Marines	11
Coast Guard	1

Several veterans served in more than one branch.



Wednesday, October 19, 2005

Breakfast - Mile High Breakfast

Scrambled Eggs with Julienne Breakfast Veggies
 Breakfast Potatoes, Bacon, Sausage Links
 Danish, Muffins, Pastries
 Bagels - Plain and Poppyseed
 Butter, Margarine, Preserves, Cream Cheese
 Fruit and Berries, Fruit Yogurt
 Oatmeal, Cereals, Granola
 Milk, Soy Milk, Juices, Coffee, Hot Tea
 Cream, Sugar, Sugar Substitute

Lunch - San Francisco Bistro

Bacon Lettuce Tomato Turkey and Avocado Sandwich, Veggie Wrap on Flatbread
 Chicken Salad on Croissant
 Harvest Salad, Baked Vegetable Chips
 Assorted Marinated Olives
 Strawberry and Cream Cake
 Chocolate Chip Cookies
 Assorted Sorbets, Fresh Whole Fruit
 Coffee, Hot Tea, Milk, Iced Tea
 Cream, Sugar, Sugar Substitute

Dinner - Country Dinner Playhouse

(See article on the "Country Dinner Playhouse," page 3)

NVCAF WEB SITE

www.creativeartsfestival.org

Would you like your friends and family back home to be able to see what you are doing this week? Log onto the Festival Web site to check out the daily editions of the *ArtsGram* (on the main home page) as well as individual news releases and photos, located on the "Participant Information" tab.



Thunderstorms
 High 57°
 Low 41°





Schedule for Wednesday, October 19, 2005

7 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel
– Ballrooms C, D

8 a.m. Team leaders meet with
Katy Ryan, National Art Chair
– Stapleton Room, Atrium Level

8:30 a.m. Team leaders meet with artists

9 a.m. Load bus

9 – 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
Rooms 301 and 303, 3rd Floor

9:30 a.m. Depart for Denver Art Museum

1 a.m. Tour Denver Art Museum

Noon Return to hotel

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch at hotel – Ballrooms C, D

1:30 – 3:30 p.m. Art Workshop #2:
Chinese Calligraphy
– Stapleton Room, Atrium Level

3 – 5 p.m. Caricature Drawings
– Gatwick Room, Atrium Level

4:45 p.m. Load buses

5:15 p.m. Depart hotel

6 p.m. – 10 p.m. Dinner Theater at the
Country Dinner Playhouse
in Denver
(musical “Ain’t Misbehavin”)

10 p.m. Return to hotel

7 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel
– Ballrooms C, D

8 a.m. Team leaders meet with
Amy Kimbler,
Performing Arts Assoc.
– O’Hare Room, Ballroom Level

8:30 a.m. Team leaders meet
with performers

9 – 10 a.m. Chorus number rehearsal
with music director
– Ballrooms A, B

9 a.m. – 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open
Rooms 301 and 303, 3rd Floor

10 – Noon Rehearsal of individual acts
with directors as scheduled
– Ballrooms A, B

10 – 11 a.m. Chorus number rehearsal
with assistant directors
– O’Hare Room, Ballroom Level

10 – Noon Chorus member vests, other
costume fittings
– LaGuardia Room,
Ballroom Level

10 – Noon Caricature drawings
– Gatwick Room, Atrium Level

11 – Noon Soloists and narrators practice
with assistant directors
– O’Hare and Orly Rooms

Noon Lunch at hotel – Ballrooms C, D

1 – 4:30 p.m. Complete run-thru in show order,
including chorus numbers
– ALL PERFORMERS NEEDED
– Ballrooms A, B
Continue fitting for chorus
member vests and other acts
– LaGuardia Room, Ballroom
Level

5 p.m. Load buses

5:15 p.m. Depart hotel

6 - 10 p.m. Dinner theater at the
Country Dinner Playhouse
in Denver
(musical, “Ain’t Misbehavin”)

10 p.m. Return to hotel