



Thursday, October 23, 2008

R.S. Johnson — 2008 Best of Show Artist

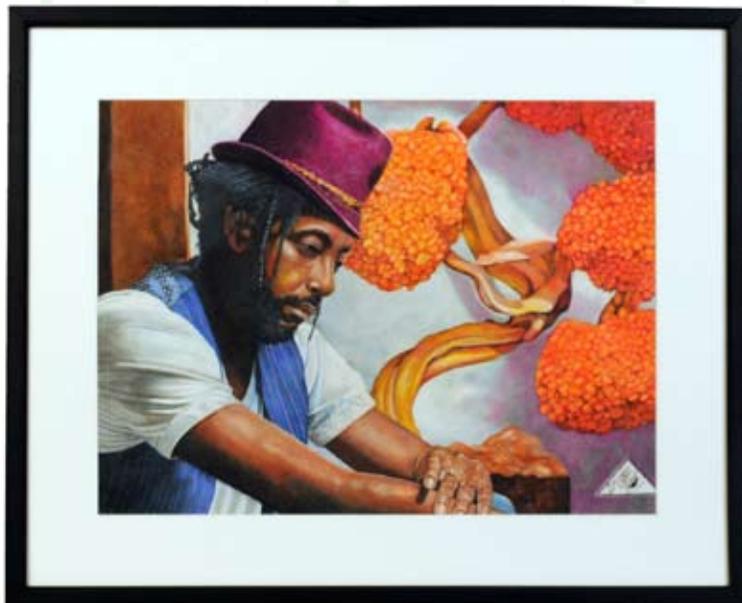
Interested in this year's Best of Show artist? From Milwaukee, Wis., R.S. Johnson has loved art since childhood, when he drew illustrations for his older sister's biology projects. Even at that early age, he committed the time that was needed to produce a great work of art.

It's that commitment to detail that won Johnson special acclaim as this year's Best of Show artist, quite an accomplishment for a first-year Festival participant. Johnson's colored pencil drawing called, "A Day in the Life of Will.i.am," is a portrait of the lead singer for the Black Eyed Peas, a hip hop group from L.A. Another first for Johnson was his trip to Riverside. Traveling by train, it took him about two days to get here.

An Army veteran, Johnson, 58, describes how art plays a part in getting him through some of life's ups and downs. "It has been a struggle," he says. "I feel that my art reflects where I'm at with my recovery. It has given me hope. Things haven't happened in my life as I had expected, but I know that if I keep moving in a positive way, my chances for a better tomorrow will take place."



2008 Best in Show artist R.S. Johnson



R.S. Johnson's "A Day in the Life of Will.i.am" won him the 2008 Best in Show artist title.

Johnson talks

freely of his struggle with addiction and the help he has received at the VA Medical Center in Milwaukee. "I came to VA to get a handle on my substance abuse," he said. He credits his art therapist, Marisa Straub, for being instrumental in his journey to sobriety. "When I get famous, she is going to be my manager," he says with a smile.

Johnson is also using his artistic talents as his "bread and butter," as he puts it. Working out of his apartment and studio as a freelance artist, he recently completed an acrylic painting entitled, "Brothers in Arms," for the Marine Corp League in Milwaukee.

In addition to his freelance artwork, Johnson is working on other important pieces that require the attention to detail he has honed over the years. "I try to stay busy with my art and on renewing relationships with my daughter and sons. It takes a commitment and a desire to make things work out."

Look for Johnson's drawing at Sunday's Artist Exhibition, along with all of the other incredible pieces of artwork from all of our talented visual artists.



Stars of the Stage

Use Rizzazz

Pizzazz means, "SELL IT!" It means making everything you do on stage bigger than life. Here's how:

1. Make big, broad gestures, using the whole arm, not just the forearm.
2. Sing and speak with a big, booming voice.
3. Move and/or dance with dynamic enthusiasm – feel it through your whole body.
4. Smile as broadly as you can.
5. Go overboard with energy.

Doing these things will make you a better performer. Ask your friends if they like your new "big" style. The answer will surely be YES!



National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Statistics

Males	93
Females	23
Artists	44
Performers	72

Branch of Service	
Army	67
Navy	15
Marine Corps	14
Air Force	22
Coast Guard	0
National Guard	4
Multiple Branches	6

Periods of Service	
WWII	3
Korean War	2
Vietnam	27
Gulf War	6
Grenada	1
Iraq	5



Stepping Stones Completion

Thursday 9 - 12:30 p.m.

La Sierra Room

Break a Dish?

Be in the La Sierra Room at 9 a.m. for the best selection of materials to finish the "Stepping Stones" you started yesterday at the 11 a.m. session.

Mosaic art is elegant or whimsical, always original – and perfect for those creative souls who can't draw a straight line! So, artists, tell your performing friends to break a leg while you break a dish!

Origami workshop

Thursday 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.

La Sierra Room *Bring a one dollar bill to fold!

Origami - The Art of the Folded Frog

"It's just so easy to pick up a piece of paper and fold," according to Diana Su-Erickson. Now, the VA Occupational Therapist is using this ancient art-form as a therapeutic tool. Su-Erickson believes paper folding develops cognitive skills and self-esteem. She will teach you how to fold a frog in today's Origami workshop - for a price. Yes, you must bring your own paper, a dollar bill. It's just the right size (and color) for the Origami frog. Plus, Diana's technique will actually get your frog to jump up. That's one way to get your money moving!



"The Festival is very addictive. It's the only addiction I think my doctor will approve of."

Mark Hansen
Air Force veteran
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

"It's just awesome. You can see that God's hand is upon us. The beauty, the talent - it's all here."

Maureen Howell
Army and Air Force veteran
La Crosse, Wis.



"There's so much creativity, sometimes we just can't pick which things to say."

A.J. Miller
Air Force veteran
Clear Water, Fla.

"Eating too much, sleeping too much, and I keep forgetting the ladies phone numbers and names. The musicians in charge of the festival are great. Especially Jerry and Gary."

George Simmons
Navy veteran
Draper, Utah



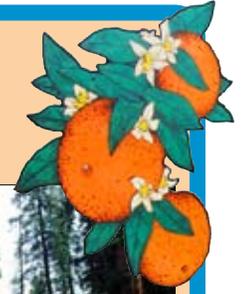
"This is my first experience and it really is a shock to me. It is so rewarding meeting the other veterans and watching them come to life and sharing their experiences."

Rhonda Seward
Army veteran
Davenport, Iowa



California

State of Natural Wonders



Some of our nation's most spectacular natural wonders are in California. Here is a list of a few of the major sites you'll want to visit.

Channel Islands National Park

Close to the California mainland, this park encompasses five remarkable islands and their ocean environment.

Death Valley National Park

A superlative desert of streaming sand dunes, snow-capped mountains, multicolored rock layers, water-fluted canyons and three million acres of stone wilderness.

Joshua Tree National Park

Close examination reveals a fascinating variety of plants and animals that make their home in this land shaped by strong winds, unpredictable torrents of rain, and climatic extremes.

Kings Canyon National Park and Sequoia National Park

These two parks testify to nature's size, beauty, and diversity. The parks boast immense mountains, rugged foothills, deep canyons, vast caverns, and the world's largest trees.

Lassen Volcano National Park

Nestled within Lassen's peaceful forests and untouched wilderness, hissing fumaroles and boiling mud pots.

Point Reyes National Seashore

Thunderous ocean breakers crashing against rocky headlands, expansive sand beaches and open grasslands — visitors can discover over 1000 species of plants and animals.

Redwood National Park

Stand at the base of a coast redwood that towers over you. Watch Roosevelt elk grazing in the prairies. Observe the tail of a female Chinook salmon heave skyward as she makes a nest for her eggs.

Yosemite National Park

Within its nearly 1,200 square miles, you can find deep valleys, grand meadows, ancient giant sequoias, a vast wilderness area and much more.



Sequoia National Park



Yosemite National Park



Redwood National Park

Stars of the Studio

Origami

– the Japanese art of paper folding

Origami, a word which stems from ORI (to fold) and KAMI (paper), is the Japanese word for paper folding. Origami is an art form that has been handed down from parent to child through many generations. The process involves creating paper forms usually made entirely by folding. Some of the simpler creations are of animals, birds, fish, geometric shapes, puppets, toys and masks.

Paper itself has a long history in Asian civilizations. The art of making paper from pulp originated in China in the year 102 A.D. The secret of papermaking was kept in China for several hundred years before finally making its way through Korea and subsequently into Japan.

Following the introduction of paper, the art of origami developed and soon became part of the lives of the Japanese people. Colors and silk threads were added to the paper and origami eventually became a highly esteemed art form. Gifts were decorated with "noshi" (our version of gift tags) that had particular folded patterns depending on the gift. Later holidays and festivals were celebrated with the use of colorful origami.

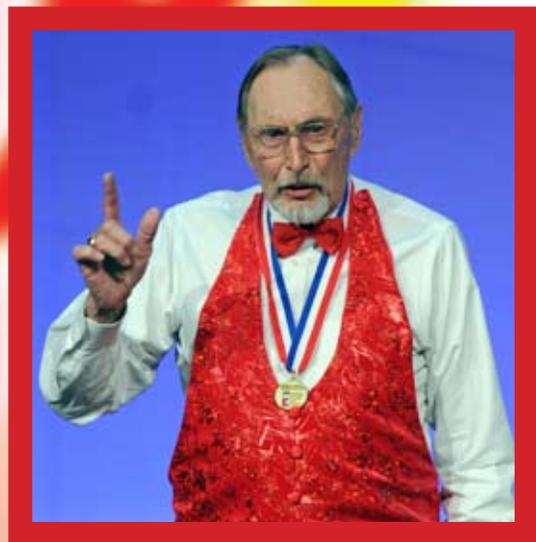
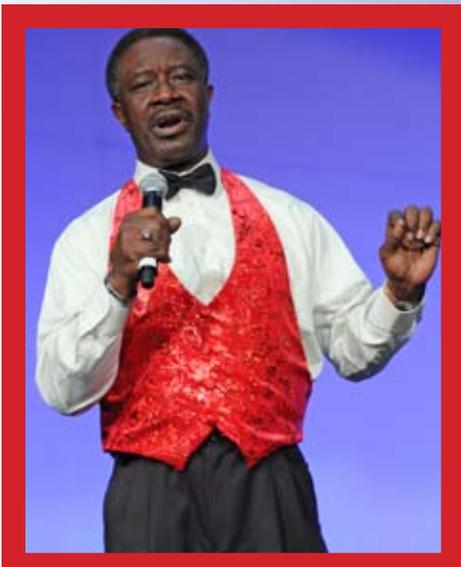


At one time, origami was taught in schools, but today, children are generally taught origami at home. Holidays are still celebrated with colorful origami decorations made by the family. One such holiday is the summer celebration of Tanabata, The Star Festival. Live bamboo branches are decorated with origami stars and other paper decorations in a manner which brings to mind a decorated Christmas tree.

Enjoy your class this afternoon and celebrate the Festival with your designs!

Festival Photos





Thank You, Presenters!

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) and Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV) are the three co-presenters of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. All three share a strong commitment to America's veterans, dedicated to promoting creative art therapy for veterans' health, rehabilitation and recovery.



VA has supported art and music therapy programs in its facilities for more than 20 years, recognizing how this event demonstrates to the American public the multitalented face of the American veteran. "Creative expression is an important component of healthy living," said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "Demonstrating VA's commitment to rehabilitation, this annual Festival demonstrates that real healing goes well beyond our patients' physical needs and that creative arts therapy has a key role in rehabilitation and recovery."

Of course VA could not support an event of this size and caliber alone. Both the ALA and HHV support this event with equal generosity and energy.

The 2008 Festival marks the American Legion Auxiliary's eighth year of active involvement. Always bringing countless dedicated volunteers who help with so many of the event logistics and day-to-day operations, many ALA volunteers are working here in Riverside in areas like the costume room, assisting with meals and trips, and providing a warm welcome in the hospitality room. The organization also contributes immensely to the competition phase of the program by donating funds, materials and supplies, in addition to judging some of the local competitions.



"The American Legion Auxiliary's long tradition of supporting America's veterans continues with its annual co-sponsorship of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival," said National President Desiree (Desi) A. Stoy. "Rarely can one event accomplish so much, offering extensive recreational therapy and rehabilitation for veterans nationwide, while delighting audiences in both the visual and performing arts."

HHV's support of veterans has existed since 1970 when its founder, Roger Chapin, fulfilled the need of hospitalized Vietnam veterans with a creative outlet. Since 1970, HHV has distributed more than 23 million craft kits to VA medical centers across the country. In addition to sending craft care specialists to the program, HHV also hosts an annual craft kit workshop during the week that is always extremely popular among the participants. HHV's 2008 craft workshop is scheduled for Saturday from 9 – 11:30 a.m. in the La Sierra room on the second floor of the convention floor. Don't miss it!



"This Festival continues to give thousands of veterans the opportunity to express themselves creatively, as well as enabling them to experience life changing experiences to their health and overall mindset," said HHV Executive Director Mike Lynch. "In our 15th year as a national co-presenter of the Festival, HHV is really proud to bring well-deserved recognition to our outstanding veteran performers and artists."

Thank you to all of our co-presenters – for supporting our veteran performers and artists and helping them learn, grow, heal, create.

Crafting Up Some Fun in Temecula!

Tonight, we will tour the Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV) National Headquarters in Temecula, Calif. As you probably know, HHV is responsible for distribution of approximately 99 percent of all therapeutic arts & craft kits utilized by VA and military facilities across the country, provided to veterans at no charge. Over one million kits were delivered by HHV last year alone, bringing the total distributed since 1970 to over 23 million!

HHV has been a valued co-presenter of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for 15 years. "Veteran patients from around the world have experienced the therapeutic value of arts and crafts," said Mike Lynch, HHV's Executive Director. "To have many of those folks here in our own back yard was reason enough for the HHV Board of Directors to decide to do something special for them." So tonight, HHV is opening its doors to veteran participants, VA officials, volunteers, craft specialists and other Festival sponsors from around the country. Artists will load the buses at 3:15 p.m. and performers will load at 4:15 p.m. Note: you may want to bring a light jacket or your denim Festival shirt along as the temperature is expected to dip into the low 50s.

Re-Creation, USA, a group sponsored by HHV, will perform for us tonight after dinner. The group is a troupe of college-age youth who share their talents, free of charge with veterans in VA facilities nationwide. Their patriotic and classic TV show productions bring energy and joy to veteran audiences.

"The evening is going to be a blast," Lynch promises. "Thank you, veterans for your wonderful talents and your service to our beautiful country!"





The **Medical Suite** is located in the **Marriot Hotel, Room 901 & 902.**

Hours of Operation: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The Medical Suite phone number, if you are calling **inside** the Hotel, is **extension 7901.** **Outside** of the Hotel, call **(951) 784-8000** and ask for **Room 901.**

Participants should inform their team leader(s) of any medical concerns, and the team leaders will then assist with contacting the Medical Suite. Medical personnel will accompany veterans and support personnel on all trips away from the hotel.



Happy Birthday to You!

The following Festival participants have celebrated – or will soon celebrate – a birthday this month. Many Happy Returns to all our October birthdays!

- R.S. Johnson, Milwaukee, Wis. (October 2)
- Allen Eckman, Rapid City, S.D. (October 5)
- Dan Krehbiel, Black River Falls, Wis. (October 7)
- Marvin Hooper, Temple, Texas (October 10)
- Gaylen Young, Salt Lake City, Utah (October 11)
- David Bonello, Stanchfield, Minn. (October 16)
- Orlinda Marquez, Westminster, Colo. (October 27)



DAILY MENU

Thursday, October 23, 2008

Meals will be served in **Raincross Ballroom in the RCC** unless otherwise designated.

Breakfast: 7 - 8:30 a.m.

Lunch: Noon - 1 p.m.

Dinner: 5:30 - 7 p.m.



Breakfast - Sunrise Buffet

Fluffy Scrambled Eggs; Sliced Fresh Fruit Tray; French Toast with Maple Syrup; Butter and Powdered Sugar; Bacon and Sausages; Breakfast Potatoes; Oatmeal or Dry Cereal; Orange Juice, Apple Juice & Tomato Juice; Milk (Soy Milk available upon request); Coffee, Hot Tea

Lunch - Soup and Salad

Clam Chowder & Vegetable Soup; Traditional Chef's Salad - Julienne Strips of Ham and Turkey, Cheddar and Swiss Cheeses, Sliced Egg, Tomato Wedges, Chopped Olives on Romaine Lettuce, Ranch, Italian and Thousand Island Dressings; Carrot Cake; Coffee, Hot Tea & Iced Tea



Dinner - Barbecue Dinner at Help Hospitalized Veterans

Coriander Lime Marinated Quartered Chicken; Spice and Anchor Team Mesquite Roasted Beef Brisket; Spice-Rubbed Barbecued Boneless Ribs; Smokey Bacon and Baked Beans; Crisp Cabbage, Carrots and Herbs in a Sweet and Tangy Slaw Dressing; Sliced Red Rose Potatoes Tossed with Celery and Red Onions in an Herbed Sour Cream Dressing; Rustic Rolls with Butter; Chocolate Chunk Brownies Topped with Chocolate; Ganache
(If you wish the vegetarian option at the HHV dinner tonight, please tell the servers.)

Vegetarian Option:

Garlic Roasted Portobello Mushroom Drizzled with a Balsamic Reduction.

The **Hospitality Suite** is located in the **Marriott Hotel, Suite 1228** and is open today for your convenience. The wonderful volunteers in the hospitality suite have snacks and drinks available if you need something – along with a lot of welcoming smiles!



Hours of operation for the week of the Festival are as follows:

Thursday, October 23	9 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Friday, October 24	9 a.m. to Midnight
Saturday, October 25	9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; and 8:30 - 11 p.m.
Sunday, October 26	10 a.m. to Noon; and 10 p.m. - Midnight

Oops:

One of the recipients of the 2008 Therapeutic Arts Scholarships was inadvertently left out of the article. Patrick Metoyer from Grand Junction, Colo., also is here as a scholarship winner. Congratulations, Patrick!

Thursday, October 23

Star Artists

Star Performers

7 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast – RCC Raincross Ballroom
8 a.m.	Team leaders and support staff meet with National Art Chairperson – RCC Aviators East, 2nd floor
8:30 a.m.	Team leaders and support staff meet with artists
9 a.m. – 11 p.m.	Hospitality Room Open at Marriott Hotel – Suite 1228
9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Art Workshop #2 “Stepping Stones” completion at RCC La Sierra
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Origami Basics – RCC La Sierra
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch – RCC Raincross Ballroom
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.	Shopping at Main Street Promenade, adjacent to the Riverside Convention Center
3:15 p.m.	Load buses to Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV)
3:30 p.m.	Buses depart
5 p.m.	Tour and celebration at HHV
6:30 p.m.	Dinner at HHV
7:30 – 9:30 p.m.	Events & Performance by Re-Creation U.S.A. at HHV Headquarters

7 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast – Raincross Ballroom
8 a.m.	Team leaders & support staff meet with Amy Kimbler – De Anza North
8:30 a.m.	Team leaders & support staff meet with performers
9 a.m. – 11 p.m.	Hospitality Room Open at Marriott Hotel – Suite 1228
9 a.m. – Noon	Complete run-thru in show order, including chorus numbers, stopping to fix problems, we will get as far through the show as we can – ALL VETERANS NEEDED – Ben Lewis Hall Chorus vests/costume fittings – Aviators West
Noon – 1 p.m.	Lunch – Raincross Ballroom
1 – 4 p.m.	Run-thru in show order with emcee narration, no stopping – Ben Lewis Hall
4:30 p.m.	Load buses to Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV)
4:45 p.m.	Buses depart
6:30 p.m.	Dinner at HHV
7:30 – 9:30 p.m.	Events, Tours & Performance by Re-Creation U.S.A. at HHV Headquarters

Please check with your team leader and/or the posted schedule outside of Ben Lewis Hall for any changes or updates to your daily schedule.

Internet Cafe

Where: Northeast Foyer
Riverside Convention Center

When: Tuesday, October 21 -
Saturday, October 25

Hours: 7 - 8:30 a.m.
11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
7 - 9 p.m.
(Not open Thursday
or Saturday evening)



Provided by Hewlett Packard

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Participants may have their Veterans History Project (VHP) interviews recorded today from 8 a.m. – noon and from 1 – 5 p.m. Interviews conclude on Saturday.

Any veteran who wishes to record an interview, which will be sent to the Library of Congress, should do it soon! Remember, this historic project honors America's veterans by creating a lasting legacy of their military experience. Regardless of branch or period of service, age, military career or experience, all veterans are invited to share it with our VHP program staff and help make history! Please go to the VHP interview room (in the University Room on the first floor of the Marriott Hotel). Festival volunteers or VA employees who are U.S. veterans are welcome to sign up as well.

Thanks to all the veterans who have already participated. Hours remain as listed through Saturday.



Weather for October:
Average low - 53°
Average high - 83°
Average of .26 inches
of rain for the month

Today's Weather
Low - 51°
High - 95°
Sunny and bright!

NVCAF WEB SITE

www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov

Have you shared the Festival's Web address with your family and friends back home? It is a good way to keep them abreast with all that is going on. They will be able to read the *ARTS-GRAM*, read your news release and see photos from the week.