The arts need your voice and we ask that you speak up for the generations to come. The arts define us and determine our cultural identity for future generations. You might find the hashtags #museumsadvocacy and #museumsadvocacy2017 helpful.

Policymaking and budget priorities but it is your voice that must be heard. You also need to make the effort and to utilize all the resources available to advocate for the arts. The arts face the specter of budget cuts and reduced funding. Recent reports have hinted at the potential elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Both the NEA and NEH have supported arts initiatives and programs that have benefited young and old alike.

“We are extremely concerned by these reports, and the museum field will stand strongly against any efforts to gut the important work of NEA and NEH, or any other federal agency supporting the work of museums,” said American Alliance of Museums President and CEO Laura L. Ott. “These agencies play a uniquely valuable role in helping make the arts and humanities accessible to every American.”

You might recall that we faced a similar challenge at the state level not so very long ago and, through a strong grassroots effort, we persevered. The arts community showed that for five cents on the dollar we delivered impactful programming with meaningful results.

SAMA requires a combination of a generous donor pool, successful fundraisers, foundation grants and government dollars annually to offer a robust exhibition schedule and to provide meaningful arts programming to the people of this region. For example, SAMA’s award-winning arts education program brings art to the classroom for over 10,000 students (K-12) at area schools each year. Unfortunately, a number of SAMA’s arts residencies account for the only exposure to the arts that these students will receive at their respective schools. Each year, SAMA’s Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program helps thousands suffering from chronic pain, the elderly, veterans and children on the autism spectrum. In short, SAMA serves the people of this region in a variety of ways and we do make a difference in the lives of thousands of people residing here in southwestern and central Pennsylvania.

The time for action is now! Let your representatives in Congress know that the arts are important and that these funds are critical to making the arts accessible to everyone. Government support helps to evoke an interest in, an understanding of, and an appreciation for the arts.

It is recommended that we “get social.” The Congressional Management Foundation found that 80% of Congressional staff pay close attention to their constituents on social media. Find your elected officials, including their social media information, and start following them to learn more about their priorities so you are prepared to make the case for the arts.

I might suggest you follow the American Alliance of Museums on Facebook (@americanmuseums) and Twitter (@AAMens) for updates and insights on advocacy initiatives. The AAM provides help with the advocacy effort relative to government, policymaking and budget priorities but it is your voice that must be heard. You also might find the hashtags #museumsadvocacy and #museumsadvocacy2017 helpful.

We need to make the effort and to utilize all the resources available to advocate for the arts. The arts define us and determine our cultural identity for future generations. The arts need your voice and we ask that you speak up for the generations to come.

LIGONIER NATIVE KRISTIN MILLER NAMED COORDINATOR OF SAMA—LIGONIER VALLEY

By Ashley Samek, SAMA Volunteer

Visitors to SAMA - Ligonier Valley may recognize a familiar face leading the Museum. Kristin Miller, a life-long resident of Ligonier and former SAMA receptionist, was named Site Coordinator of the Museum. She assumed her new position January 3.

Art has always been an important part of Miller’s life, dating back to a childhood that was filled with art camps and lessons. As a teenager she developed a passion for photography upon receiving a Kodak 35mm camera as a birthday gift. She continued to pursue art classes while a student at Ligonier Valley High School and Seton Hill University.

“Art is a vital part of our culture,” said Miller. “It’s an integral part of human expression and really makes us who we are. I'm so excited for the opportunity to work in a fine arts setting every day. Art allows us to come together and share those pieces of ourselves that bring about self-expression, and the museum setting helps to facilitate that creative outlet.”

Miller graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. from Seton Hill University and later returned to the University to obtain a Master’s in special education. Miller has worked extensively in the field of education, beginning with a position as elementary school teacher at Holy Trinity. While she there she developed and helped to implement a fine arts and music program for the school that was utilized until the school’s recent closing. She later spent six years with Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 as an autistic support teacher in Cambria and Somerset counties and worked in a similar role at Windber Area School District. She also has taught at the university level, having served as an adjunct professor in the education department at Seton Hill. In 2014, she joined SAMA-Ligonier Valley as a receptionist.

Miller’s new position at SAMA comes at an exciting time, as the Ligonier Valley Museum is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2017. Throughout the year, the Museum will host a variety of programs including the annual Night of Distinction and Garden Party events, guest speakers, art classes and painting contests before culminating in September with a family day open house.

“I am so very excited to be a part of the SAMA family, especially at such a momentous time,” she said. “As we celebrate the Museum’s 20-year milestone in 2017, I am most impressed with what SAMA has been able to accomplish over these years. I am truly honored to be a part of what lies ahead for the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Ligonier Valley.”
IN THE NEWS

- SAMA received contributions from First Commonwealth Bank, Little Enterprises and M&T Bank for the Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.
- SAMA is seeking new artists for the Artist-in-Residence program. Artists in any discipline are welcome to apply. Please send cover letter, resume and work samples to Jessica Campbell at jcampbell@sama-art.org.
- Congratulations to trustee Ann Benzel, who was honored at UPMC Altoona Foundation’s “Winter Splendor” event on January 20. Benzel received the Healthcare Honors award for her many years of service and generosity in support of UPMC Altoona and its patients.
- The Eamon Foundation recently awarded SAMA a grant for the Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program.
- The Ligonier Valley Museum will bring back UFO researcher Stan Gordon for a presentation on March 15. Gordon spoke to a standing-room-only crowd at the Museum last spring. In this program, Gordon will discuss in-depth the 1965 UFO crash-landing near Kecksburg, as well as provide updates on recent UFO and Bigfoot sightings in the Ligonier area. Cost for the program, which begins at 6 p.m., is $5 per person. Please call the Museum for reservations.
- SAMA recently loaned several Sue Severson paintings for an exhibition at 321 Gallery in Hollidaysburg. The exhibition opened in February and will remain on view through May 15. A reception is scheduled for 6 to 8 p.m. on March 24. Any SAMA members receive 25% off the purchase of any Severson works.
- The Jack Buncher Foundation awarded SAMA a generous grant to assist the Museum with on-going expenses associated with sustaining SAMA’s award-winning arts education programs in Fayette and Westmoreland counties.
- Our webpage at www.sama-art.org received 627,657 hits in 2016, representing a 20% increase over last year and a 30% increase since 2014.
- Biennial 2016 has come to a close and we can now reveal the winner of the Chantel Ventura People’s Choice Award. With nearly 15% of the vote, New Florence artist Diana Williams claimed the $300 prize for her oil-on-linen, Seafaring Textures. Cynthia Ake Rabold (Blue Knob Sunset) and Scott Sieberger (Reflections) came in second and third.
- SAMA-Loretto will offer “Fit & Fancy,” a series of PiYo classes, at 6 p.m. on March 23 and April 27. The classes are led by Kelly Dummm, a certified PiYo instructor. Following the Pilates and yoga-inspired workout will be cocktails and a gallery tour. Cost is $10 per person. Classes are restricted to ages 21 and older.
- In March, SAMA is celebrating National Youth Art Month and Pennsylvania’s Arts-in-Education Month with the return of its popular Artists of the 21st Century student art exhibitions. Nearly 300 student-created works will be on view at the Loretto and Ligonier Valley Museums this winter, representing 15 districts and 37 schools. On view through April 8, SAMA-Loretto’s exhibition features works from students in Bedford, Blair, Cambria and Somerset counties. Fayette and Westmoreland County students are represented in SAMA-Ligonier Valley’s exhibition, open through April 23. Both museums will celebrate the exhibition with opening receptions in early March. SAMA-Loretto’s reception will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. on March 4, and SAMA-Ligonier Valley’s from 1 to 4 p.m. on March 5.

GARDEN PARTY, GALA LOGOS REVEALED

In just a few months, SAMA’s annual Garden Party and Gala fundraisers will return to the Ligonier Valley and Loretto museums respectively. The Garden Party, scheduled for June 3, will feature a “Roaring ’20s” theme, invoking the era of speak-easies, flappers and the Gilded Age. The Garden Party will include games of chance, silent and live auctions, a dance contest and a special exhibition of vintage automobiles of the 1920s and ’30s.

In the summer, SAMA-Loretto’s annual Gala will take on the decidedly patriotic theme of “Red, White and Blue.” Scheduled for July 22, it will feel more like the Fourth of July with the color guard, flags, bunting and other decorations under the tent. Guests will be greeted by none other than Uncle Sam himself and will be treated to a display of a World War 2 Jeep. Stay tuned to the next issue of The Gallery for more information on the Garden Party and Gala.

ARTS-IN-EDUCATION UPDATE

By Jessica Campbell

An independent panel of the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts recently completed an evaluation of SAMA’s Arts-in-Education program. The assessment highlighted program strengths and areas for improvement, with respect to quality, access and management:

Quality
- SAMA maintains a good arts program.
- SAMA’s expansion of its advocacy effort is a plus.
- SAMA’s Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program is unique.
- SAMA’s efforts to improve program quality through professional development, including workshops for teachers and artists, is noteworthy.
- The teaching artists directory layout on the SAMA website was good but there was some difficulty in navigating the website to access the directory.

Access
- The Panel liked that SAMA is part of the Autism Task Force at Saint Francis University.
- The Panel applauded SAMA’s Arts for Healing partnership with the Cone- maugh Health System.
- The Panel appreciated the continuity observed as SAMA works with the same schools year after year.
- The Panel would like to see SAMA’s outreach effort expanded to include new schools in the six-county region.

Management
- The Panel noted that SAMA endeavors to, and has been successful in, raising additional funds for the Arts-in-Education Program.
- The Panel underscored the Board of Trustees’ involvement in fundraising for the Arts-in-Education Program through the state’s Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.
- The Panel liked SAMA’s partnership initiative with the Autism Task Force and the collaboration exhibited on the Autism: Putting the Pieces Together Conference.
- The Panel applauded SAMA’s Arts-in-Education 20-day residencies scheduled at schools in each of the six counties in this region.

This assessment report and the corresponding application resulted in a small increase in Arts-in-Education Program funding for SAMA from the PCA for 2016-2017. As we look to expand and diversify the Arts-in-Education Program, SAMA remains committed to continuous improvement. In short, SAMA’s action plan is to drive program excellence. We do appreciate the feedback received. If our readership should have any recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact us at (814)472-3922 or via the email address jcampbell@sama-art.org.
SA M A  N E W S


The annual dinner-and-awards event, Night of Distinction, is coming to SAMA-Ligonier Valley this spring in honor of the Museum's 20th anniversary. On April 22, the event – now in its sixth year – will mark its inaugural appearance at the Ligonier Valley Museum. The program was established to honor individuals and organizations that have made an extraordinary impact on SAMA and the arts.

At this year's event, SAMA will present the prestigious Service to the Arts Award to trustee and former staff member Marian Morgan. Trustee Ed O’Brien and his wife Barbara, a longtime SAMA volunteer and former Gala chair, will receive the Volunteerism Award. SAMA director artist Rita Haldeman will be presented the Award for Artistic Distinction, while Fort Ligonier receives the Award for Architectural Excellence. The event will begin with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres in the Museum before moving to the prestigious Rolling Rock Club for dinner and awards presentation.

“Night of Distinction takes on added significance in 2017 as we recognize the contributions and talents of several awardees and highlight the 20th anniversary milestone of the Ligonier Valley Museum,” said Gary Moyer, SAMA Executive Director. “SAMA-Ligonier Valley epitomizes both the artistic distinction and architectural excellence, as well as the service to the arts and community that are the hallmarks of our Night of Distinction program.”

Night of Distinction is scheduled for 5 to 9 p.m. on April 22. Cost is $95 per person. Reservations are required by April 14. For reservations or more information, please call the Ligonier Valley Museum.

HEALTHCARE RESIDENCY PROGRAM FEATURED

SAMA’s annual The Art of Healing Exhibition returns to the Johnstown Museum in March. This year marks the sixth installment of the exhibition, which highlights artwork created during SAMA’s Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program residencies at the John P Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute in Johnstown. The exhibition opens March 24 and will remain on view through June 2.

This year’s exhibition offers more than 40 works from two separate artist residencies. Participants in Deb Bunnell’s residency used scratchboard and acrylic painting in projects that explored animals and symbolism. Susan Novak’s residencies introduced patients to the functional and fashionable art of Japanese silk Shibori scarves.

“SAMA is excited to host this exhibition in partnership with Conemaugh Health System,” said Education Coordinator Jessica Campbell. “The artistic expressions featured in this exhibition will leave you feeling inspired and wanting more.”

The Museum will host an opening reception that is free and open to the public from 6 to 8 p.m. on March 29. Please R.S.V.P. to (814) 269-7234 by March 27.

SA M A B O A R D P R E S I D E N T L O O K S T O M U S E U M ’ S F U T U R E

An early interest in architecture helped build a lifelong love for the arts in new SAMA Board of Trustees President Jim Cayce. A SAMA Trustee since 2012, Cayce, of Hollidaysburg, was elected to a two-year term that began January 1.

“Growing up in Dayton, Ohio, my first interest in art was marveling over the fabulous architecture that existed in the area, whether it be that iconic – in my seven-year-old mind – downtown Art Deco skyscraper, the Italian Renaissance-inspired Dayton Art Institute, or the gothic revival architecture of a local church we passed on our way downtown,” he said. “I love the architecture of a museum as much or more than the art inside.”

Cayce earned a bachelor’s degree and J.D. from Mercer University before serving as an officer in the Army. After several years, he began practicing law in Orlando, Florida, in 1973. Later that year, he accepted a position with the US Army Corps of Engineers as an Attorney-Advisor, a position he held until 1988 when he joined the General Services Administration as the Administrator’s Director of Government-wide Real Property Policy. By the mid-’90s, he had joined the Department of Energy (DOE) to head its Real Estate program. In that position, he had direct responsibility for the management and execution of DOE’s real property holdings, its real property information management system, and oversight of the Department’s facility maintenance management program.

Cayce was able to pursue his appreciation for the arts more extensively upon his retirement and subsequent move to the Altoona area in the early 2000s. Within a year of moving to the region, he had become active with SAMA, first serving on the Altoona Museum’s fashion show fundraiser committee. He chaired the event in 2005 and 2006, co-chaired in 2010 and ’11, and also has been a long-time sponsor of the event. He has been a member of the Gala committee since 2004 and has been a patron and served as co-chair or on the Leadership Circle every year since 2012.

According to Cayce, museums and the arts play an integral role in society. “Without the arts, and I mean the arts in all its forms, I think we would lead a bleak existence,” he said. “And art isn’t just a framed piece on a wall, or a sculpture in a sculpture garden. It’s also that incredible 1953 Buick Skylark convertible that was part of Harley Earl’s General Motors legacy. “Likewise, SAMA isn’t just a collection of over 4,500 works of art. It is a dynamic service provider of in-school Arts-in-Education and Artist-in-Residence programs, Museum/Healthcare Partnership programs, student art exhibition programs, and a whole host of other activities that simply would not exist in our area were it not for SAMA.”

As President, Cayce listed enhancing and perpetuating SAMA’s influence and visibility in the arts community as a major goal. So, too, is reaching out to a new donor base.

“There seems to be, in my opinion, a generational divide on the notion of philanthropy, no matter what the level of giving might be,” said Cayce, who has also served as President of the Blairmont Club’s Board of Directors from 2008 through 2011. “While SAMA is extremely fortunate and grateful to receive grant funding from several large Pennsylvania-based foundations and other foundations throughout the country, we need to stimulate individual giving at all levels to support our operational requirements.”

There are already promising developments in that regard, however.

“In support of increasing our funding, I’m happy to note that Nancy Devorris has been named Vice President for Development. Her proven track record of fund-raising will go far in increasing the Museum’s endowment and securing SAMA’s future.”
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<td>Lunch at ’Art with Chuck Olson (ALT)</td>
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<td>Opening reception for <em>Artists of the 21st Century</em> (LV)</td>
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<td>Wicked Wednesday feat. Raining Blue (ALT)</td>
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<td>Like the Wings of Butterflies: The Fragile and Gorgeous Art of Pastel closes (LOR)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>SAMA-Altoona Bus Trip to Philadelphia Flower Show (ALT)</td>
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<td>Lunch at ‘Art with Scott Dimond (LV)</td>
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<td>UFO presentation with Stan Gordon (LV)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Labor and Landscape: 100 Paintings of the Allegheny Mountain Region by Ron Donoughue opens (LOR); Age of Rock: Classic Posters and Concert Photographs from the Mark del Costello Collection opens (LOR)</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td><em>Unlikely Heroes: Selected Prints by Leonard Baskin</em> closes (JTN)</td>
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<td><em>The Art of Healing Exhibition: Reflections</em> 2017 opens (JTN)</td>
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<td>Opening reception for <em>The Art of Healing Exhibition: Reflections</em> 2017 (JTN)</td>
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**SAMA SITES**

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<td>Pasquerilla Performing Arts Center</td>
<td>One Boucher Lane</td>
<td>Saint Francis University Mall</td>
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<td>1210 11th Avenue</td>
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