



## *Holiday Performances for the Whole Family*

The Highland County Arts Council will bring its annual gift to the Community on December 10 when Geoff Marsh will give family-oriented performances at 5 pm and 7 pm at the Highland Center.

A Virginia Commission for the Arts' artist, Marsh says "Don't watch the circus, come be a part of it!" And he promises his audiences will be a part of this unique set of performances. His physics-defying tricks and dangerous juggling stunts are pulled off with ease, but his personality captures and intrigues each and every one of your guests!

Marsh not only gives a show to remember, but makes the kids the stars of the show. The performance is labeled a "witty, fun-filled, interactive performance of unthinkable yet hilarious juggling feats, musical plate spinning, audience participation, and much, much more!"

HCAC is excited to bring this international artist to Highland. Geoff Marsh has experience entertaining and traveling all over the world with his unique circus stunts and zany marionette puppets. He has performed at family festivals, corporate events, Renaissance fairs, and private parties for over 20 years. He also volunteers with Clowns Without Borders, a non-profit that offers laughter in hospitals, refugee camps, crisis areas, disaster zones, migrant camps, neighborhoods, and schools in areas of extreme poverty since 2015.

As in the past, HCAC's December performances are a holiday gift to the community. Thanks to our members and the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the NEW, both the December 10th 5 pm and 7 pm performances will be admission free. However, donations will be gratefully accepted and used to support the Highland County Arts Council's goal of making Highland a destination for the Arts.

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## Make note

Our email:  
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# *Annual Membership Meeting*

The Annual Membership meeting of the Highland County Arts Council (HCAC) held on November 12th featured a special concert, new board member elections and a by-law change. A “for members only” musical presentation was performed by Debbi Stephenson and Elizabeth Lohr-Myers. While they were an unlikely duet on flute and viola, members in attendance knew they were in for a treat with the first note played.

Since HCAC Board members serve for three year terms, each year three new members are selected during the annual meeting. There were two new openings for the 2023 – 2025 session since Donna Bedwell has agreed to stay on for another term. There was also a two year opening in the 2021 – 2024 session due to the resignation of a previous member. Make sure and read all about these new board members in this newsletter!

One other small change to the organization’s by-laws was also part of the business. Language concerning the removal of a serving board member in Article IV was updated to include “or by missing three consecutive monthly meetings”. The change was approved by those present.

Refreshments were served and the meeting adjourned as members made their way upstairs in the Highland Center to enjoy an evening of comedy with the Improv Teen Troupe from the Wayne Theatre.

## *Arts Education for Highland County Students*

Arts education enhances students’ self-awareness and teaches respect for others like no other socio-emotional curriculum. The HCAC is partnering with The Wayne Theatre for a series of programs throughout the 2023 calendar to bring arts education to the youth of Highland and help students make sense of an often confusing world.

Our first class for older students was held in October with great response, and last month’s Improv show in collaboration with The Wayne was well received. Suggested programming for 2023 consists of:

**Fantasy makeup  
Improv**

**Stage combat  
Theater movement**

Additionally, we plan on holding a week-long summer program that will culminate in a show for all of Highland County to enjoy!

This training will build students’ empathy in a rich, social-emotional learning environment, helping them discover strategies and habits which translate offstage as self-affirming, preventative mental health care. If you feel led to support these efforts financially, please contact our board.





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The Arts Council Board would like to acknowledge **Caroline Smith** for her service to the Arts Council and community. She has been an integral part of the Highland County Arts Council. She demonstrated her commitment to the importance of the Arts for all age groups in many ways and we owe her a special thanks for creating and directing an annual drama camp for the children of Highland County. In addition she has served on the board in many capacities and been our diligent Treasurer for many years. We wish her all the best as she retires from the board and know that she will enjoy the offerings the Arts Council continues to present.



*New Board member Jim Sherman with his wife Linda.*

## ***Welcome New Board Members!***

Jim Sherman has been elected to fill out the vacated two year term on the Highland County Arts Council Board. Jim has been involved in “the arts” in many ways over the years. He was in musicals, community theatre, and modern dance in college. He has sung in ensembles and was in a Barbershop quartet for about 10 years, where he served in leadership roles. He is an author of poetry, two books, and lyrics for songs. He is a retired physician, and held many positions of leadership and teaching. He obviously has an appreciation and love for the arts and has supported the Arts Council by attending performances and has participated in storytelling events.

Serving the three year terms ending in December of 2025, will be Duane Hylton and Ashlyn Senger.

Duane studied Art and Interior Design at Virginia Commonwealth University 1982-1984 and graduated from Virginia Tech in 1987 with a B.S. in Housing Management & Interior Design. He worked his way through school as a portrait, equine and architecture artist/illustrator, painted signs and briefly worked as a cartoonist for a local newspaper. He loves attending art shows, visiting museums, and enjoys setting up for Arts Council events. He has previously served a two-term membership on HCAC and his experience will be a true asset.

Ashlyn is a flautist and music educator who graduated with a Bachelor's degree in instrumental music education from Virginia Commonwealth University. This is her second year as the music teacher and band director at Highland Elementary School and High School. She will be an important connection in the partnership between the public school system and the Arts Council.



# *Creativity Corner*

Zsuzsanna (Susanna) Baxter

My name is Zsuzsanna (Susanna) Baxter. I have lived in Highland County with my husband and two children since 2013.

Ever since I can remember, I loved baking with my grandmas, Mother and other female relatives. When I decided to go to culinary school in Hungary, I was sure about my career path. Baking, making and creating sweet items, fulfilled my creative desire and fascinated me from the science point of view.

The reaction between the ingredients is a lot of science, but then it meets the creation and it becomes a masterpiece of confection! It might not be perfect, because I am only a human, but it is my best at that moment. Making and decorating European cakes, Chocolate Truffles and Pastries are the items that I would say need more artistic ability, beside the science knowledge. They need a lot of attention and precision to get them right. From mixing to egg wash by a 'paint brush' it is a tedious process, which not everyone can master. One needs ability, love of creating and passion, beside the training from teachers and professors.

It is very fulfilling and assuring for me, to see satisfied and returning customers, who are happy with my products. That tells me I am doing something right!

I am beyond blessed that I can offer something different to the Highland community, where we have so many other types of artists who appreciate good, wholesome sweets. I am forever grateful to all my patrons and the Highland Center to make this happen. Thank you.



THANK YOU

**Without the support of the following organizations, the Highland County Arts Council would not be able to provide the programming that is its hallmark.**

The Virginia Commission for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts

The Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge

The Little Swiss Fund

The Charles Pinckney Jones Foundation

