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Storyteller Sheila Arnold Performance

Sheila Arnold has a talent for storytelling, a passion for history, and compassion for people. The Highland County Arts Council is thrilled to present an evening of storytelling featuring Arnold on Saturday, April 13 at 7 p.m. at The Highland Center.

Arnold provides storytelling, historic character presentations, Christian monologues, and professional development for schools, festivals, churches, and organizations nationally and internationally. She is co-founder and Artistic Director of Artists Standing Strong Together (ASST) a source of inspiration, strength and action in the storytelling and artist world. Arnold has been honored as a 2021 MacDowell Artist Fellow, a 2020 Mt. Vernon Research Fellow and a 2019 Hewnooks Artist Colony summer residence Noted Artist.

As a historical consultant, Arnold has worked with Montpelier in the creation of the script, along with arranging performers and coordinating and assisting in voice-over for their short film, "The Mere Distinction of Colour," a part of their African American exhibit. She also created scripts for Montpelier's recreated buildings as portrayed by the enslaved persons on site. She has also worked in creating scripts for the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad project, and collaborated with Abigail Schumann in creating a theatrical reading for the premier of historian Edward Ayers book, "The Thin Light of Freedom."

Arnold has published two books: a picture book, "Weeping Willow, or, Why the Leaves Change their Colors," and an historical fiction book using biblical persons, "David's Mighty Man: Benaiah." She also has two storytelling CD's, "Mini, Many, Minnie Tales" and "Hands Wide Open."

Join us for our 2nd Saturday on April 13th, at 7 p.m., featuring Sheila Arnold. Don't miss out on this captivating performance!

Stay up to date on
Arts Council
events at
highlandcountyartsCouncil.org

Our email is
[highlandcoarts@
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HAPPY APRIL!

MESSAGE FROM DONNA BEDWELL, ARTS COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Spring. Just typing the word brings a smile to my face. This is my favorite season for so many reasons. The days are longer, warm weather returns, and flowers begin to emerge in our gardens and along the roadsides of the county.

We have also survived another Maple Festival. As a native Highlander, I am always amazed that a community of our size can host such a large festival. The Highland County Chamber of Commerce does an outstanding job in coordinating and promoting the event. We know the amount of work involved by all our volunteers, and everyone should feel a sense of pride in its success.

The Arts Council was the Entertainment Sponsor for this year's festival and our 2nd Saturday concert featured Robin and Linda Williams. But this concert was not the only aspect of the entertainment responsibilities. Our volunteers set and reset chairs for all the performances both weekends. They set up the stage, managed lights and sound equipment, made stage announcements, and manned the door for ticket sales. These logistical activities are often done behind the scenes and can involve early mornings or late evenings. As an added benefit, the Chamber informed us that our social media sponsorship post let 4,600 people know that Highland has an Arts Council!

But now it is time to spring forward and get ready for new concerts, new workshops, and new exhibits. Make sure to follow the Arts Council on Instagram and Facebook and check out our website so you do not miss any of the fun!



Robin & Linda Williams were thrilled to have their photo taken with the Highland County Maple Queen and Princess.

Photo by Michael Bedwell

APRIL LIBRARY EXHIBIT

The latest exhibit in the Mountain View Room in the Highland County Library is a joint exhibit featuring Karen Milnes and Kate Mackenzie.

Karen says she "is always enthralled by the intricacies of nature. This show is a play between the nature of the medium and the canvas and how they work together and separately, and the way species interact in the environment, also together and separately." For a number of the pieces, she used acrylic paints like they were watercolors, letting them simply lay and drip and pool, then using those as a format to inform the subsequent layers of paint that built up the final forms.

Kate's part of the exhibit is an illustrative and interactive children's book. Each image is a framed page of the two characters, following the pattern of a story set in the Blue Grass Valley. She said "I write poetry and short stories. I adore writing children's books, and thought it may be fitting for the location in the library. I'm hoping my story will give people a fun little experience while walking from wall to wall, and give people a story they can connect with since it is set in our shared and beloved hometown."



Karen Milne's paintings were recently shown in Staunton.

Education Chair, Brit Chambers Shares her Passion for Theater Programs

My daughter Anna has been acting and singing since we adopted her at age 4. When she was little, we would line up chairs in the living room and she would stand on the large fireplace hearth as a stage. She's moved to bigger stages now, desiring to seek higher education in Shakespeare's works and theater in general.

When we lived in Texas, she was involved in many theater-based extracurriculars. She did ballet and added tap and musical theater, she was involved in a homeschool drama club that put on a variety of shows each year, all with 150+ in attendance and with sets and costumes that rivaled large touring theater groups.

All of my children have participated in these programs and flourished with the skills they have acquired, but Anna, particularly, caught the bug. In Virginia, we connected with The Wayne Theatre and American Shakespeare Theatre through their plays and homeschool educational opportunities. Corey Holmes, the Education Director at The Wayne, pushed Anna and has encouraged her tremendously through both private and group lessons. When I spoke with Corey, she offered to hold some monthly sessions here in Highland if I thought there would be a group of children who wanted to participate.

At first, our family paid for these programs out of pocket, collaborating with The Highland County Arts Council for space and marketing. It was important to me that costs were completely covered for all who wanted to attend, and Corey worked hard to give us a price that was not too much more than a private lesson and the drive down-and-back to Waynesboro would cost.

Through the Highland County Arts Council, we were able to add a VCA education matching grant to funding in the fall of 2023, and this paid for the programming as a whole moving forward. Highland students have now been able to build a background in stage blocking and presence, and improv, as well as makeup and special effects. This summer, we will hold a drama camp June 17-21, with a community performance on the 22nd, which will serve as an intensive for ages 8-18 in both Highland and surrounding areas.

I was heavily involved in drama, dance, and the arts as a whole growing up. This exposure, especially while living in a small town, allowed me to pursue big dreams and have the knowledge to work at high levels within my career field.

Anna will leave Highland in the fall to pursue her theater passions, and I hope that these programs will continue so she can come back home to see the next generation of Highland kiddos taking the stage. To do this, the Highland County Arts Council will need support from those in the community who feel the same passion to continue this education. The VCA grant is matching, showing that others in the community, not just the arts council, are interested in providing a strong arts foundation for our youth.

Won't you help, by sending in your financial support today? Visit our 'Support the Arts' page on our website to donate, and stay up to date on upcoming events. Save the date for youth drama camp, June 17-21!



Creativity Corner

Nancy Vance

Nancy Vance might best be known around Highland County for her role as director of the Highland Community Chorus, or her years as elementary school librarian. But about seven years ago her sister introduced her to junk journals, a perfect outlet for her creativity. Vance realized she loved working with paper, glue and scissors. She said "Seeing the vision in my head come into being is fascinating, especially when it comes out better than I imagined. The best thing about making junk journals is that there are no rules, only methods. I am free to do anything I want as long as I can make it come together to a desirable finish."

Vance is most inspired by the things she loves: clothing and images from times past, music, dogs, books, and all things Scottish. Anyone viewing her journals will see these interests transformed into a work of art. Her journals are essentially handmade books, so paper is the primary material. Vance jazzes up plain old copy paper by dyeing it with tea, coffee, or even avocado peels, which transform white paper into a delicate pink. The wonderful images in her journals are sourced from vintage books, magazines, photographs, advertising, and other ephemera. Scanning and editing images on her computer is helpful, and Vance can also purchase digital papers and images. "The junk journal concept means that I can use anything I want. Some journals are primarily made of fabric and lace, and I've even seen some made entirely from junk mail," said Vance.

Vance came to Highland County in 1982, right out of college, to work as the elementary school librarian. She says "Living here can inspire most any kind of art, I think. All you have to do is be aware and pay attention." She envisions making a Maple journal, or a Highland history journal. Her intricate journals will be for sale in Art on Main, where they were shown for the first time during Maple Festival.



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.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS
arts.gov

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

