

Takoma Park Maryland  
**ARTS AND HUMANITIES COMMISSION**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2014**

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The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission (AHC) serves in an official advisory role to the City Council on all matters related to the arts and humanities. Established by Ordinance in 2003, the Commission has been charged with the following general responsibilities:

- To advise the City Council on ways in which the City might best serve the public with regard to matters involving the arts.
- To encourage and aid the appreciation and awareness of, and participation in, the arts among all Takoma Park residents.
- To encourage cooperation and coordination among individuals, organizations and institutions concerned with the arts in Takoma Park.
- To facilitate employment opportunities for artists and the development of self-sustaining arts programs.

There are currently nine members serving on the Commission as of December 31, 2014: Michelle Ohnona (Chair), Susan Strasser (Vice Chair), Chiara Atoyebi (Co-Secretary), Hannah Baldwin (Co-Secretary), Gelynn Hurt, Janie Meneely, Elizabeth Mische, Charlene Porter, and Iva Saller. Efforts to recruit additional members to the Commission are ongoing.

The Commission typically meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month. In September 2014, the Commission voted to move to a quarterly meeting schedule with additional meetings to be called as needed. There were three Commission meetings held in 2014 (January 28, May 27 and September 23)

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The following activities were undertaken by the Commission in 2014.

### Community Outreach

Commissioners engaged in a variety of outreach efforts designed to increase the community's awareness of the cultural programming offered by the City; promote individual events; and recruit new members. Individual members represented the Commission at the following community events: Takoma Park Jazz Festival, Takoma Park Folk Festival, and the Takoma Park Street Festival. In addition to volunteering on behalf of the Commission at these events, individual members began to serve as hosts at many of the

cultural programs offered by the City; welcoming participants, introducing performers and encouraging attendance at future events.

### Public Art

Commission members participated in the unveiling of a new gateway sculpture, Azalea City. Howard Connelly's work, commissioned by the City in 2013, was installed at the corner of Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road.

### Poet Laureate

Charged with "encouraging young and old to strive for greater expressive abilities and creating a wider appreciation of poetry and literature," Merrill Leffler continued in his third year as Takoma Park Poet Laureate. Activities included the development and installation of the Takoma Park Poetry Walk in collaboration with the Friends of the Library and Montgomery County Community College, the organization of a various public readings, and collaboration with the City TV staff on several poetry broadcasts.

### Special Events

The Commission assisted in the organization of the City's 8<sup>th</sup> annual Holiday Art Sale with members serving on the selection jury and volunteering on the day of the event. A total of 29 vendors participated in the event, 14 of whom had participated in past years. Over 41% of the vendors participating in a follow-up survey indicated that they were very satisfied with their sales. Two new additions to the sale this year was the co-location of the Friends of the Takoma Park MD Public Library's annual holiday children's book sale and the operation of a food truck onsite. The children's book sale has been held in the Historic Takoma facility in past years. Both the book sale and the food truck were considered good additions to the sale.

### Program Development

Options for the expansion of the City's current humanities programming were explored by the Commission. Potential funding sources were investigated. The recommendations of the subcommittee charged with this task are to be presented to the Commission for consideration in early 2015.

## **SUSTAINING PROGRAMMING**

The following is an overview of the arts and humanities programming, developed by the Commission in past years, which has been incorporated into the City's regular cultural arts offerings. Programming is coordinated by the Housing and Community Development Department with the support of the CityTV and Recreation Departments.

## **We are Takoma**

The *We Are Takoma* series features monthly storytelling, documentary film screenings, poetry readings, and musical, dance and theatrical performances. The series provides community residents with an affordable cultural experience and an opportunity to engage with artists. Of equal importance is the unique opportunity the series offers artists to present new and developing work.

### Performing Arts

Concerts, dance performances, theater productions have been the primary focus of the series since it was first offered to the community in the fall of 2010. Offered twice monthly, the performances are broadcast live on City TV and available for viewing online. Attendance at these events has varied by performance with audiences ranging from 30 to 160. Listing of the performing arts events offered in 2014 is included in Attachment A.

### Storytelling

*The Grapevine*, a new storytelling series initiated by the Commission in late 2013, provides a venue for stories of all kinds, truth or myth, though generally not personal storytelling. Hosted by Tim Livengood and Noa Baum, the series typically features two to three storytellers an evening. Attendance has varied with audiences ranging from 10 to 40 in size. Listing of the storytellers featured in 2014 is included in Attachment B.

### Film Screenings

Offered in partnership with Docs In Progress, documentary and experimental films have been screened on a monthly basis as a part of the *We Are Takoma* series since 2012. Audience members are given an opportunity to discuss the film or the subject matter with the documentarian, producer and others associated with the film following the screening. Attendance has varied with audiences ranging from 10 to 80 in size. Listing of the films featured in 2014 is included in Attachment C.

### Poetry Readings

The *Third Thursday* poetry series, organized by Takoma Park Poet Laureate Don Berger in 2005, features the work of poets from across the region. Hosted by Martin FitzPatrick for seven years, responsibility for organizing the series was assumed by a group of local poets in the fall. Attendance has varied with audiences ranging from 20 to 50 in size. Listing of the poets featured in 2014 is included in Attachment D.

## **Galleries at the Takoma Park Community Center**

The City's exhibits program showcases the work of local and regional artists working in a variety of medium. Exhibit options have expanded since the program was established in 2004 and currently includes five separate gallery spaces. The thematically grouped

exhibits, organized by Shanthi Chandrasekar, feature the work of five to six artists and include an opening reception and periodic talks by participating artists. Attendance at the exhibit openings has ranging from 30 to 80 guests. Listing of the exhibits featured in 2014 is included in Attachment E.

### **Ongoing Workshops**

#### Writing A Village

Writing a Village is a free monthly poetry workshop developed in 2008 by Anne Becker, Takoma Park Poet Laureate Emerita. Beginning and experienced poets alike are encouraged to bring a poem for critique and participate in an ongoing discussion of poetry and poetics with the group.

### **ARTS AND HUMANITIES COMMISSION**

City of Takoma Park Maryland  
7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park MD 20912  
301.891.7119  
[Arts@takomatarkmd.gov](mailto:Arts@takomatarkmd.gov)  
[www.takomaparkmd.gov](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov)

we are

TAKOMA

Attachment A

## PERFORMING ARTS PRODUCTIONS: 2014

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### **Mystical Dragonfly**

Saturday, January 18, 2pm

*In the Commedia Del'arte style, David Camero presented a multicultural show with traditional songs from Ibero-America.*

### **Shape-Note Reimagined**

Wednesday, January 22, 7:30pm

*Ballad've presented reinterpreted hymns from the Sacred Harp tradition.*

### **Passing Down the Folk Tradition: Ken & Brad Kolodner**

Thursday, January 30, 7:30pm

*Traditional and original Appalachian old-time music played with modern sensibilities, featuring hammered dulcimer, banjo, bass, fiddle and more.*

### **Takoma Ensemble**

Saturday, February 15, 7:30pm

*A new chamber orchestra lead by Victoria Gau, associate conductor of the National Philharmonic, featuring music from dead guys and living chicks.*

### **Takoma Academy Chorus**

Wednesday, February 26, 7:30pm

*In honor of Black History Month, Takoma Academy presented a choral collage celebrating the history of African American choral music beginning with its African roots, to its contemporary styles and composers.*

### **Billy Coulter**

Friday, March 7, 7:30pm

*Acoustic show with Takoma Park singer/songwriter*

### **Colors of India**

Saturday, March 15, 7:30pm

*The Nartraj School of Indian Dance, and the Natyabhoomi School of Dance and mridangum drummer Vishnu Balajee celebrate Holi, the Indian Festival of Color.*

**Takoma Park Scene Study**

Wednesday, March 19, 7:30pm

*Elementary students from Gretchen Weigel's scene study class performed theatrical scenes using the Stanislavski based acting technique.*

**Alan Reid and Rob Van Sante**

Sunday, March 23, 7pm

*Now working as a duo with Battlefield Band sideman Rob Van Sante, Reid presented an evening of old and new music, featuring Alan's compositions and familiar Battlefield Band favorites along with a handful of songs from Rob.*

**Lisa Moscatiello in concert, with Chris Noyes**

Saturday, April 5, 7:30pm

*A blend of traditional and contemporary acoustic music accompanied by guitar and cello.*

**Hello Sailor! Bawdy Song Concert & Sing Along**

Saturday, April 12, 7:30pm

*Jennifer Cutting leads a quartet of bawdy song aficionados—songs drawn from medieval brothels, pubs, tall ships.*

**Bram Devens**

Wednesday, April 16, 7:30pm

*Belgian artist Bram Devens played acoustic guitar songs wrapped with effects and driven by improvisation.*

**UpRooted Dance**

Saturday, April 19, 7:30pm

*UpRooted Dance with Keira Hart-Mendoza and taiko drummer Mark H. Rooney presented Go! -- a modern dance piece which explores the rules of board games.*

**Beau Soir Ensemble**

Thursday, April 24, 7:30pm

*The Beau Soir Ensemble performed flute, viola, and harp music by Ravel, Beethoven, Ibert, Locatelli, and Villa-Lobos.*

**Theatre Musick**

Saturday, May 10, 7:30pm

*Mezzo-soprano Barbara Hollinshead and lutenist Howard Bass presented music drawn from the plays of Shakespeare & his contemporaries.*

**Dance Along the Silk Road**

Saturday, May 17, 7:30pm

*Rare and exquisite dances from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Iran and more.*

**Washington Improv Theater**

Friday, May 30, 8pm

*Ensembles from Washington Improv Theater (WIT) used audience suggestions to inspire comedic performances created on the spot.*

**Intro to Improv Workshop**

Saturday, May 31, 2:00pm

*A completely free introductory workshop where participants learned the joy of saying yes!*

**Ayreheart - An Evening with Ron McFarlane**

Saturday, June 7, 7:30pm

*Traditional and contemporary acoustic music, featuring an assortment of string instruments including lutes, guitar, mandolin, violin, komuz, bass, and colascione.*

**thirty3**

Saturday, June 28, 7:30pm

*Improvised electric guitar with artist Jay Kishor inspired by Indian Ragas.*

**Mexican Independence Day Dance Celebration**

Saturday, September 13, 7:30pm

*This 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Mexican-Independence Day celebration featured folkloric dance performances from various regions in Mexico.*

**La Bestia: Sweet Mother**

Saturday, September 27, 7:30pm

*This multi-media production explored the concept of “mother” as both creator and destroyer as told through the fictionalized tale of a Honduran immigrant who immigrates to the United States. Modern dance and cello accompany the piece.*

**Coral Cantigas**

Sunday, October 5, 4:30pm

*In collaboration with Wit's End Puppets, Cantigas celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with this family concert of songs and stories from Latin America.*

**Peanut Butter & Jam Session with the Takoma Ensemble**

Saturday, October 25, 11am

*Kindermusik teacher, Becky Linafelt, and members of the Takoma Ensemble will engage young children through music, dance, storytelling, and games.*

**Takoma Ensemble**

Saturday, October 25, 7:30pm

*A lively concert featuring contemporary classical compositions – broadening the notion of what classical music can be.*

**U-liners**

Saturday, November 1, 7:30pm

*Local favorites performed roots rock and Americana music.*

**The Lab**

Saturday, November 15, 3pm

*Break dancing and b-boying demo workshop presented by the Takoma DC based studio, The Lab.*

**Orfeia**

Saturday, December 13, 7:30pm

*The Orfeia Vocal Ensemble, directed by Tatiana Sarbinska, presented an interactive performance of traditional Bulgarian, Balkan and Sephardic music.*





**FEATURED STORYTELLERS: 2014**

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February 6	<i>Bill Mayhew and Jane Dorfman</i>
March 6	<i>Noa Baum and Geraldine Buckley</i>
April 3	<i>Walter Jones and Limor Shiponi</i>
May 1	<i>Laura J. Bobrow, Janice Curtis Greene, and Gary Lloyd</i>
June 5	<i>Ad Booth and Susan Gordon</i>
September 4	<i>Elizabeth McCain and Jane Dorfman</i>
October 2	<i>Les Schaffer, Chris Potts, and Elizabeth McCain</i>
November 6	<i>Les Schaffer, Chris Potts, and Elizabeth McCain</i>
December 4	<i>Renee Brachfeld, Mark Novak &amp; Granny Sue (Susanna Holstein)</i>

**FILM SCREENINGS: 2014**

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**Hidden Books: the Art of Kumi Korf**

Thursday, January 9, 7:30pm

*Filmmaker Sam Hampton profiles internationally renowned artist Kumi Korf.*

**Black February**

Sunday, February 2, 5pm

*Host Bobby Hill presented Black February, a documentary film chronicling concerts by legendary composer Lawrence Douglas "Butch" Morris. Film will be followed by a performance of Morris' "Black February" composition, led by trumpeter Lewis "Flip" Barnes.*

**Broken Hearts & Butterflies**

Thursday, March 13, 7:30pm – 9:30pm

*A poignant film that documents a family reuniting to revisit their common past and explore the depth of impact each have had on the others' lives.*

**American Artifacts: Early Motion Pictures**

Tuesday, April 8, 7:30pm

*Mike Mashon, head of the Moving Image Section of the Library of Congress & C-SPAN's Richard Hall give us a look at the earliest films in the Library of Congress collection, dating back to Thomas Edison's camera tests in 1891 and progressing through Birth of a Nation.*

**Rosenwald Schools Documentary**

Tuesday, April 29, 7:15pm

*DC filmmaker Aviva Kempner explores Julius Rosenwald's crusade to build black schools in the 1920s and 30s, including one in Takoma Park, presented by Historic Takoma, with a performance by the Takoma Park Band.*

**Nuclear Savage: The Islands of Secret Project 4.1**

Friday, May 2, 7pm

*The film looks at U.S. atomic weapons testing in the Marshall Islands that vaporized islands and devastated entire populations.*

**Bringing it Home**

Wednesday, May 7, 7:30pm

*This film explores the question of why hemp, a crop with so many widespread benefits, cannot be farmed in the United States by illustrating its history, current industries and talking to both opponents and proponents of the industrial hemp farming legalization effort.*

**Las Calles Hablan**

Thursday, June 12, 7:30pm

*This documentary explores the street art scene in Barcelona, including the history, motivation, politics and characters involved. A discussion with DC area street artists followed the screening.*

**No Evidence of Disease**

Thursday, September 11, 7:30pm

*"No Evidence of Disease" interweaves the harrowing experiences and remarkable courage of women, devoted families, and dedicated doctors as they conquer the "Big C." Director Andrea Kalin will participate in a Q&A following the screening.*

**Driving Blind**

Thursday, October 9, 7:30pm

*This feature length documentary follows two brothers facing a rare genetic disease that causes blindness as they take the road trip of a lifetime around the United States and see everything possible before going blind.*

**Let Us Talk**

Thursday, October 30, 7:30pm

*"Leh Wi Tok" is a 40 minute documentary about the pioneers who started the independent radio movement during Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war. A discussion with the filmmaker – and local pioneers from Takoma Park's own independent radio station – followed the screening.*

**Docs In Progress Community Stories Film Festival**

Thursday, November 13, 7:30pm

*The Community Stories Festival celebrates both the local community and the works of the area's growing cadre of emerging documentary filmmakers.*

**Expanded Cinema**

Thursday, December 11, 7:30pm

*In this live experimental cinema and sound event, filmmaker Chris Lynn presented unedited Super 8 films accompanied by a live improvised score featuring double bass, clarinet, and cello.*

3<sup>RD</sup> thursday  
**POETry.**  
FEATURED POETS: 2014

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Attachment D

January 16	<i>David Ebenbach, Donald Illich, Riggan Waugh, and Mary-Sherman Willis</i>
February 20	<i>JoAnne Grownney, Anne Higgins, Judy Neri, and Kathleen O'Toole</i>
March 20	<i>Ellen Cole, Katie Herman, Susan Okie, and Anne Sheldon</i>
April 17	<i>Merrill Leffler, Grace Cavalieri, and Ethelbert Miller</i>
May 15	<i>Bonnie Auslander, Don Berger, and Samantha Magrath</i>
June 19	<i>Celeste Doaks, Buck Downs, Tafisha Edwards, Greta Ehrig, and Max Ochs</i>
September 18	<i>Bonnie Naradzay, Gregory Luce, Tony Mancus and Luc Phinney</i>
October 16	<i>Naomi Thiers, Rocky Delaplaine, Garrett Phelan, and Jonathan Katz</i>
November 20	<i>Martin FitzPatrick, Mary Beth Hatem, and Rob Soley</i>
December 18	<i>Patric Pepper (with open mic opportunity)</i>

## **Galleries at the Takoma Park Community Center**

### **EXHIBITS: 2014**

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#### **Transformations Gallery Opening**

Thursday, January 9, 7pm

*Featuring work by Teruko Bowens, Mary Freedman, Jackie Hoysted, Megan Peritore and Lisa Rosenstein.*

#### **Memories Gallery Opening**

Thursday, March 6, 7pm

*Featuring work by Keren Coxe (paintings), Drucilla Litz (wood sculpture), Denny Arant (painting) and Richard Spector (photography)*

#### **Urban Menagerie Gallery Opening**

Thursday, May 8, 7pm

*Sardar Aziz (acrylic and oil paintings), Mei Mei Chang (mixed media), Sara Anne Daines (photography), Katie Helms (art books) and Keith Kozloff (photography).*

#### **Colorscapes Gallery Opening**

Thursday, July 10, 7pm

*Featuring work by Damon Arhos, Jackson Berger, Mei Mei Chang, Pam Eichner, Deborah Gay, Alicia Geller, Megan Maher, and Jenny Walton.*

#### **Rituals Gallery Opening**

Thursday, September 11, 7pm

*Featuring work by Lucas Allison, Winston Harris, Percy Martin and Ibou N'Diaye*

#### **Further Outside the Margin Gallery Opening**

Thursday, November 6, 7pm

*This exhibit showcases artist books and contemporary prints that explore the outer edges of the medium; exhibited in conjunction with the Pyramid Atlantic 13<sup>th</sup> Biennial Book Arts Fair and Conference.*