

# Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

## Bring Me the Head of Gian Carlo Menotti

I'm still calling for news of where the head (bust) of Gian Carlo Menotti is, but no news yet from the City of Charleston - that seems to have lost it over the years.

Gian Carlo Menotti was the founder of the Spoleto Festivals, both in Charleston and Italy? In 1987 some folks hired a well known sculptor to create a bust of Menotti and they presented it to the City of Charleston, but it can't be located.

I'll continue calling for news of its finding - until it's found or someone comes up with what the City did with it. This could get kind of sticky as May comes around and the Festival is in gear. People attending the Festival could start wondering how the City could be so careless or disrespectful.

## Let's Try and Forget About January

January 2014 was such a nasty visitor in the Carolinas. After a wonderful December, January came in like a teenager wondering what to wear the first day of school. It's decent and then it's cool, then it's decent again, then it's cooler. Then there's the Vortex and then it's rain, sleet, ice and snow. Enough already!

Of course it's all relative to where you live. I was talking to a friend who lives in the snow belt of Michigan and they said that this year it never stops snowing - it's the lake effect - Lake Michigan that is. The day we were talking it was in the 60s here and their expected high was going to be 3. They had days where they got 10" to 15" of snow in a day. Their snowblower can no longer blow the snow over the mountains of snow on either side of their driveway.

So I guess it's not so bad here after

all. But, I'd love to see some consistency - one way or another - either decent or warmer than normal. I'm not ever going to wish it would just stay cold. If I wanted that I could just move back to Michigan. And the first week in February calls for highs in the 60s for a week - here. I just hope there's no Polar Bear Vortex coming right behind that.

## Paper has Two Themes this Month

The first theme is that we heard mostly from the non-profits about exhibits that began in January, but they were just getting around to putting out press releases about them in time for our February issue. Some don't last that long so if you want to see them you better hurry.

This seems to happen every year after the holidays. Some PR (public relations) folks just don't seem to recover from all that time off and some will take another month to wake up. A few of these PR folks just seem to be in a state of hibernation most of the time. They think that you put up an exhibit, have the reception, and then send out publicity.

Some have the excuse that they are unpaid volunteers, but they're real problem is that they are untrained in the art of PR and by the time I inform them of what they need to do - someone else replaces them.

As far as the paid folks go - I don't know what their excuse is - except that many wear many hats beyond their responsibility of doing timely press releases.

What's frustrating to me is that many of these folks receive taxpayer funding for their general operation, but I don't think it is fair that they continue to get funding when they don't seem to be able to func-

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tion properly. If your primary function is to present art exhibitions to the public and you're not putting out timely press releases about these exhibits to the general public - taxpayers are not getting a return for their investment. And, I'm not talking about local taxpayers, I'm talking about all the taxpayers who are chipping in for that funding.

Every non-profit organization who is receiving public funding from a state, county or city, should be required to post a timely public notice of their presentations so that the taxpayers in those areas will have notice and opportunity to take advantage of what they are paying for.

I'd be happy if all of them just posted timely info on functioning websites, but many can barely tell you what they had on view several months ago and always have a TBA - to be announced message posted about what their next exhibit will be, but most can't even tell you what year they are working in. There have been a few times when I used info that had no year's date on it later to find out the info was several years old.

Don't get me wrong. There are a lot of folks in the non-profit sector that get me timely info - every month, it's just that there are just as many, if not more, who don't. If some can, why can't they all?

The second theme I noticed was that there were a number of photography exhibitions being presented. Nine are totally photography exhibits and a few more group exhibits include photography in them. That's unusual.

I don't tend to notice that there are a number of exhibits of paintings, sculpture, or fine art crafts, but I do notice when I see an article about an exhibit of photography - one after the other. The other exhibits just seem to be the norm, but once you get past three to four that feature photography - that catches my eye. It shouldn't but it does.

My background in the arts began in photography - the stepchild of the arts. I ran a fine art photography gallery once - another lifetime ago, so I vowed that I would always be a friend to photography

when I started doing an art publication. But I quickly learned I can't make galleries or museums present photography exhibits, I could only make sure they got their day in the sun with the rest of the exhibits when they were being presented. And, later I realized I couldn't even do that when the people presenting them didn't inform us of them.

So I found it amazing that we're presenting info about nine such exhibits this month. There are probably more going on - we just didn't receive a press release about them.

## A Special Feature

We are offering a Special Feature this month on Pages 31 & 32, about the 2014 Clay Olympics which took place in Asheville, NC. It only seemed right since the Winter Olympics will start this month.

I did not attend this event, I only saw photos and a couple of videos someone made of it on a blog I look at every once in a while. It looked like the folks were having a lot of fun and a few folks were winning some welcomed Winter cash.

Initially I was thinking of featuring the top winners' works on our cover this month, until I realized this event was more about the pottery process and not about finished products, so we then worked toward a Special Feature.

Unfortunately time ran out to get all the images identified, but we offer a small look at what went on and I suggest viewing one of the videos to get a closer idea of how these events went down.

The event is also just another view into how potters tend to work within a community. They work as individuals, but also work in a community, unlike many of the other areas of the visual arts. They do apprenticeships, they share kiln firings, they organize festivals and group shows. They just seem to like to gather together - for whatever reason. Yet, they don't seem to form as many guilds or organizations as other mediums do. It's kind of like lone wolves gathering in a pack.



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