

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

Hell Has Frozen Over

The South Carolina Arts Commission Board has been vacant a few members for some time, but no more. Governor Nikki Haley, who is no fan of the Arts Commission, has found a way to do what she can't seem to do legislatively - shut down the Arts Commission and for now at least throw a monkey wrench into its operation - as usual.

The Commission Board is the governing body of the Commission and although currently they act as a rubber stamp to the whims of the Commission staff headed by Ken May - that will soon change, especially if Haley is re-elected for a second term, giving her power to appoint a majority of members on the Commission Board - who serve for three year terms.

And I'm happy to tell you my three year term - the first of at least two I hope, will begin with the next Board meeting on Apr. 24th.

That should be an interesting meeting. I plan to bring up a lot of issues and I'll be asking a lot of questions that I'll expect answers to in a timely fashion - without the cost of a Freedom of Information request. I also invite any who have had questions or complaints that they have been afraid to ask fearing blowback from the Arts Commission, to send them to me at (info@carolinaarts.com). Your name will stay with me as it always has.

The other new Board member that will be joining me is Jimmy Johnston of Florence, SC. As far as I can tell from the short conversation we had waiting to meet the Governor is that he owns a music store and is a card carrying member of the Tea Party.

Now, you all know I am no fan of our Governor and the Tea Party, but in this case I have adopted the strategy that the

enemy of my enemy is my friend, which I can only guess was the thinking of the Governor in appointing me, but we see eye to eye on one issue.

Now this does not mean that the end of government funding for the arts in South Carolina will eventually be over. The Governor has learned that the reason the Legislature has overridden her veto of the Arts Commission's budget is because they like the money that goes into their districts and they hear from local voters when she tries to cut off that funding. So, the new plan is to take that same money less the administrative cost of the Commission staff and distribute it directly to each county in SC, based on population figures. Yes, the more populated counties will get more than others, but they do now anyway, with a few exceptions.

Of course, there will be a loss of NEA funds that come to the Arts Commission, but the bad news/good news on that issue is that the restrictions on no funding going to commercial operations involved in the arts will no longer be in play. And, the Governor has no problem turning away money coming from Washington, DC.

Under this system, county leaders will make the hard decisions where and how that funding will be distributed amongst the arts groups in their county. And because they have to answer to the voters in those counties, for the first time in a long time, arts funding will be determined more by the people in their own area. The era of centralized arts funding decisions will be over. The era of staff members at the Arts Commission deciding with other folks from outside the state - who and what gets funding will be over. Unfortunately, the era of one arts group stabbing another in the back to get higher up on the funding

continued above on next column to the right

list will begin, but I think that's been going on all along anyway.

It will be a new day (well in about three years) in the arts community of South Carolina - providing the Governor is re-elected. And, the way polls are looking on that issue - that currently looks likely - unless she is challenged in the primary by someone who is even more conservative. Is that possible?

I also was able to bring up the issue that the Governor and her staff should look into the way North Carolina uses funding for the arts to develop cultural tourism - bringing in funding from outside the state to support local community arts, without over taxing state coffers. NC's arts commission is a department of their NC Department of Cultural Resources. The Governor is not interested in reorganizing the Arts Commission under SCPRT, but she did seem interested in how NC has used tourism dollars to develop cultural events and cultural infrastructure that brings in tourism revenue. After all - the savings from

doing away will the SC Arts Commission's overhead - facilities, operations and staff - will leave extra money that can go toward cultural tourism. That's not a totally new concept in SC, but there was interest in finding out why a state just to the north of us is more successful at it. We have no problem attracting tourism in SC, but turning that into dollars that support the arts and develop arts destinations - that isn't happening in SC.

Spoletto Festival USA Brings Back Visual Arts in 2014

I guess the folks at the Spoletto Festival USA in Charleston, SC, are concerned that Lake City, SC's ArtFields' visual arts festival is stealing some of their thunder as far as being "the" art festival in South Carolina by announcing that in 2014 the Festival will be bringing back the visual arts as a full component, making it once again a truly comprehensive arts festival.

continued on Page 11

Carolina Arts is now on Twitter!

Sign up to follow Tom's Tweets, click below!



follow us on twitter

twitter.com/carolinaarts



Giclée Fine Art Printers

Inkpressions®

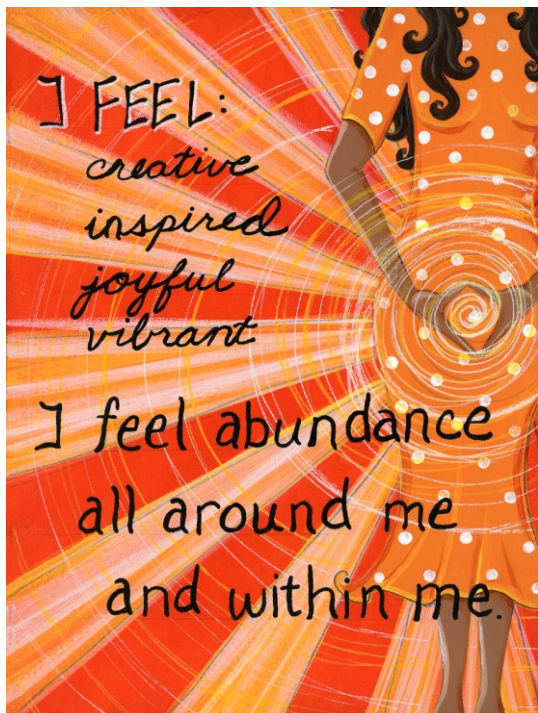
www.inkpressionsllc.com



Attention Artists!

Let Us Do It!

Your Artwork on Fine Art Canvas or Watercolor Paper



Laura Koniver

Summerville, SC

• Prints & Canvasses

• Scanning Services

• Full Color Banners

• Full Color Notecards
Postcards
& Rack Cards

Summerville, SC/Savannah, GA
(843) 821-8084

Serving the Art Community from New York to Charleston to Laguna Beach

PAY LESS. PRINT BETTER.

INKJET PAPER

to fit your printing needs

T Shirt Transfer for light and dark shirts

Photo Chrome for your photos...

Glossy, Satin/luster, Matte finishes

Fine Art for your artwork...

100% cotton rag, blended canvas

Graphic Art for your business promotion...

single or double sided matte or glossy

All our papers and fine art media are

water resistant and archival...

available in rolls or cut sheets

~Custom cut sizes on request~

Order online at: inkpressionsllc.com

Also available in store @

PHOTOGRAPHIK 821-3686
100 OLD TROLLEY RD SUMMERVILLE, SC 29485

INKPRESS@BELLSOUTH.NET
INKPRESS.SC@GMAIL.COM