

ADVOCACY UPDATE:

*State Art Action Network (SAAN)
Annual Conference Held in Wilmington*

Wilmington was the “hot spot” of arts advocacy September 30 to October 2 when over 50 arts advocacy leaders from across the nation attended the Americans for the Arts State Arts Action Network’s (SAAN) Fall Meeting in Wilmington. The various panels, discussions, and related meetings were held at the Delaware Art Museum and at OperaDelaware, who are both Institutional Supporters of DAA.



Delaware Secretary of State Jeff Bullock with DAA's Guillermina Gonzalez and AFTA's Jay Dick at SAAN reception.

DAA’s Executive Director, Dr. Guillermina Gonzalez, also the current national chair of SAAN, acted as host of the meeting. SAAN showcased the city of Wilmington and Delaware’s art and culture scene to the nation’s leaders in arts advocacy. Advocates received a tour of Wilmington’s Creative District, led by DAA Board President Dr. Carrie Gray, Managing Director of the Wilmington Renaissance Corporation.



Donna Russell, Alabama Alliance for Arts Education; TAHIRA, DAA member, artists & storyteller; Julia Kirt, Oklahomans for the Arts, and Davison Mwale, Leadership Delaware.



DAA Board President Carrie W. Gray, Managing Director of the Wilmington Renaissance Corporation, presenting the keynote address at the SAAN Meeting in Wilmington.



Catherine “Rusty” Foley of AZ Citizens for the Arts, John Schratwieser of MD Citizens for the Arts, Guillermina Gonzalez of DAA, and Lizzie Dorman of AFTA



Narric Rome, Americans for the Arts Vice President of Government Affairs & Arts Education addressing community and SAAN members attending the reception on Oct. 1, 2015.

The meeting theme was “Business and the Arts”. Dr. Gray presented the keynote address, titled “Authentic Assets—Cultural Districts: Hear how Wilmington is using cultural districts as one strategy to re-develop downtown Wilmington and to promote their economy”. Sessions included “The Creative Intersection of Business and the Arts” and “Workshop: Fostering Arts & Business pARTnerships”. Fellows from Leadership Delaware organized a special panel, called “Attracting next generation business leaders to the Arts.”



Panelists discussing “A Model for All Markets: The Evolving Relationships between the Arts and Business” at the SAAN Meeting at the Delaware Art Museum.

DAA INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTER PROFILE:

Rehoboth Beach Film Society

The origins of the Rehoboth Beach Film Society are rooted in a shared love of independent films within the Rehoboth Beach community. Executive Director Sue Early explains, "The Film Society began in 1997 when a group of people who were tired of seeing only mainstream movies locally wondered what would happen if we brought in independent films and screened them at alternative venues, like local restaurants." From that discussion came a meeting and screening, after the idea was shared with local film buffs. Over 30 people in the community gathered to watch a film about small town residents who have a big dream. Life imitated art, and the Rehoboth Film Beach Society was created.

The Film Society grew into a 501(c)3 and just one year later, the first "Rehoboth Beach Independent Film Festival" was held. Sue notes, "Our first festival sold 5,900 tickets—and our 2014 festival sold 19,000 tickets." Part of this increase she attributes to the growth of the population of Sussex County (a popular retirement destination) as well as the strong demand for access to independent film within the community.

Because of the high demand, Sue shared that the Rehoboth Beach Film Society is taking an exciting organizational step with opening its own venue. With support from the Longwood Foundation, the new venue will contain a 108-seat theater for primary programming and a 30-40 seat screening room for additional programming in Dartmouth Plaza. The move and screening space will enhance its year-round activities. "As much as we appreciate the support of our different venues, we believe a dedicated screening room will allow us to showcase more films and increase attendance."



Featured film selections at a past Rehoboth Beach Independent Film Festival.

Independent films, Sue reflects, bring people of diverse backgrounds together. "Film is more affordable than a play or opera so it is more accessible. Independent films are thought provoking; everyone has a different perspective."

SUPPORTER PROFILE continued...

The Society is gearing up for its 2015 Rehoboth Beach Independent Film Festival. Each year, films of a foreign county are highlighted, with adjoining cultural and culinary activities. This year, Iceland will be featured during the festival, taking place November 7 to 15.

A significant side benefit of the Film Festival is the economic impact it has on Rehoboth Beach during the off-season. "Each year several thousand people from more than 16 states attend the Festival. This brings people to restaurants, hotels, and shops in the area," Sue notes.

As a DAA Institutional Supporter, Sue considers the impact of arts advocacy in Delaware, "DAA links three counties together, which is really invaluable. As an Executive Director, I feel fortunate to meet with peers from across the state. DAA is the leader and mechanism to corral us and work for common causes in the arts."

KEEP THE ARTS STRONG IN DELAWARE:

Make a gift to DAA

The Alliance works hard to advocate for the arts in Delaware through our legislative outreach, activities, and resources. Please consider making a donation in support of our efforts. Gifts can be made on-line at www.delawareartsalliance.org.

We are working on establishing the option to gift stocks as a donation in the very near future, alongside traditional giving (updates to follow soon). Each and every gift allows DAA to continue its work and expand its advocacy reach in Delaware.

STATE SUPPORT OF THE ARTS:

Delaware Ranked Third in the Nation for Funding for State Arts Agencies

Delaware was number three in the nation for state funding for the arts—according to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies' Fiscal Year 2016 Legislative Appropriations Preview report released in July.

"We are fortunate to live in a state where our administration and legislators are committed to the arts and can see their great impact on Delaware's economy and culture," said DAA Executive Director Dr. Guillermina Gonzalez. "Arts advocacy efforts, by organizations like DAA as well as individuals, help ensure that arts organizations will continue to thrive. DAA is mindful that Delaware's high national ranking for state arts funding may change in the upcoming election year, which reinforces the importance of continued strong arts advocacy efforts."

DAA MEMBER PROFILE: WESLEY PAULSON

A lifelong love of the arts

Wesley Paulson, Executive Director for Clear Space Theatre Company in Rehoboth Beach, has had a longtime love of the arts. Wesley's interest in the arts started at home as a child. His grandparents took him to see musicals each summer at Shady Grove Music Fair, a summer stock theatre in the Washington, DC suburbs in the 1960s and 1970s. There has not been a time since first grade that he wasn't singing in choirs at church and in public schools. He believes this early foundation in the performing arts helped him in his career to appreciate the impact the arts can make in the life of an individual and in the greater community.



DAA Member Wesley Paulson, Executive Director of the Clear Space Theatre Company.

Wesley received his bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's degree in finance from University of Maryland University College. He also attended the Harvard Institute for Educational Management. Wesley's professional career in accounting overlapped with the visual arts in the early 1990s. In 1994, he was appointed as president of the Maryland College of Art and Design (MCAD). Prior to joining Clear Space, Wesley was employed for six years as Chief Financial Officer for the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church in Washington, DC.

Wesley was excited to return to arts administration when he learned about the Executive Director position at Clear Space Theatre. He considers it a blessing to be able to combine his passion for the arts with my background and training in finance and management. He noted, "I am fortunate to work together with a talented staff and a board. They have been able to strengthen the overall operation of the Company and look forward to a bright future."

MEMBER PROFILE continued...

His love of the arts continues. In April, he enjoyed performing at Clear Space with their Broadway Legends class in a concert version of *Guys and Dolls*. Wesley notes that he misses working with the Rainbow Express Puppets at Millian Church, in Rockville, MD where he was co-director of a group of 8-10 puppeteers and more than 100 hand puppets. However, as Executive Director of Clear Space Theatre he feels fortunate to work in a creative environment.

Wesley shared his thoughts on the mission of DAA and the importance of arts advocacy, "The arts play an important role in the social and economic development of the community. Through arts advocacy as individuals we can raise awareness of the impact of the arts on the quality of life, but our individual advocacy is multiplied when we can support an organization like the Delaware Arts Alliance."

JOIN DAA:

Make Your Act of Advocacy to the Arts in Delaware

DAA's Individual Members continue to grow! We are currently at 642 members across the state who are committed to advocating for the arts in Delaware.

Becoming a member is free--and easy to do! Simply go to the DAA website and click on the Membership link! (www.delawareartsalliance.org/arts-advocacy/acts-of-advocacy).

There you can sign up for your preferred individual acts of advocacy. Join us in keeping the arts central to the First State!

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