

ArtsGram

Monumental Expressions



A Daily Publication of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

Saturday, October 21, 2006

Festival Artist Patrick Haskett Travels to Washington To Unveil Painting

Festival participant Patrick Haskett has been painting military themes since his youth. The talent may have come to him naturally, since his father was a Major General and Commander of the Washington National Guard and his mother a noted painter. Haskett served in the Army as the official Eighth Army artist stationed at Tague, Korea during the Pueblo Crisis of 1968. His military experiences in Korea inspire much of his artwork, and he has traveled around the world creating many art projects. From these experiences, Haskett has been described as one of the top military artists in the country.

Earlier this year, Haskett was selected by BAE SYSTEMS to create the official oil painting depicting Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant First Class (SFC) Paul Ray Smith, killed in Iraq on April 4, 2003. "I am humbled and honored to have been selected for such a major art piece to be exhibited in the Army Engineer Museum," he said. "Painting this piece was a very daunting task, but important to capture this intense battle for soldiers and those who believe in fighting for freedom."



To date, SFC Smith is the only U.S. serviceman to receive the Medal of Honor in the War on Terrorism. On October 15, Haskett was flown to Washington, D.C., to unveil his oil painting, entitled, "Firefight in the Courtyard."

While there, Haskett signed and handed out 400 prints of his paintings, which shows SFC Smith shooting a .50 caliber machine gun in a fierce firefight. SFC Smith received the Medal of Honor because he went above and beyond the normal call of duty and gave his life to save the men he led.

Bravo Company, 11th Engineer Battalion, was overwhelmed by the enemy while taking the Baghdad Airport. His actions saved the lives of his men caught in the cross-fire. Haskett's painting depicts the intensity of the battle, and the bravery and heroism of SFC Smith. "These soldiers left that court-



Army veteran Patrick, Haskett, of Steilacoom, Wash.

yard in victory but in tears, carrying the body of their leader," Haskett said.

A resident of Steilacoom, Wash., Haskett is a four-time gold medalist at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. He has created the official paintings for some of the most prestigious military units in the United States. His work has been exhibited at the U.S. Naval Institute in Annapolis, the Pentagon and also at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

At the Festival this year, Haskett won first place in the national art competition in the watercolor category and high honors in the oil painting category. He currently receives care at the VA Puget Sound Healthcare System, American Lake Division in Tacoma, Wash.



Presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Help Hospitalized Veterans and American Legion Auxiliary



Stage Notes

Relaxing after a hectic schedule at the Festival

Have you been feeling those muscles tense up in your shoulders following a long rehearsal schedule? Try these ideas to help you relax and enjoy the beautiful state of South Dakota to the fullest!

1. Sit on a chair.
2. Place both feet flat on the floor.
3. Put your hands around the arm rests (gripping them gently).
4. Place your back flat against the chair.
5. Keep your eyes open and focus on a spot in front of you, at eye level.

6. Do not look at the ceiling or floor.
7. Breathe in - pause - breathe out - pause - (slowly and evenly).
8. Now, say out loud (if possible - if not - then say in your mind): "I see 5 things ..." (i.e. the wall, window etc.)
9. "I hear 5 things ..." (i.e. radio, footsteps, etc.)
10. "I feel 5 things..." (i.e. my fingers clenching, the chair, my toes, etc.)
11. Continue Exercise by saying "I see... I hear...I feel... 4 things then 3, 2, 1."

Then you should be fully aware of your surroundings, calmer, more relaxed and ready to rehearse some more.



Welcome to Group Therapy – Introducing This Year’s Group Acts

One of the highlights at the Creative Arts Festival every year is the great entertainment that comes in the shape of not one, but an ensemble of performers. The Festival brings out their best, allowing participants to fuse their creative energies into memorable performances.



"The Blind Beat Dancers"

Since 1997, the Blind Beat Dancers have entertained Festival audiences around the country with their creative dances, which include this year’s *Dakota Twist*, in tribute to this year’s Festival site.

The trio again includes

George Hicks, a founding member, Walter Pasciak and Robert Jackson. For Hicks, dancing helps “keep me focused.” Pasciak, 81, and a World War II combat veteran says, “Dancing is an outlet you might not otherwise think of to relax and let the stress go.” From the Baltimore area, all three performers are visually impaired, enjoy the challenge of dancing and find it great therapy. Says Jackson, “Performing keeps me on my toes and my lungs clear. An idle body is the first step to a dead body and mind – and I just don’t have time to feel sorry for myself!”

Making their debut performance this year are the Swinging Valley Vets, with 11 band members here from Fresno, Calif. The group won first place in two categories in the national music competition. In addition, several of the members won other medals for their many talents in writing and individual musical performance.

Performing American Patrol in the stage performance, Swinging Valley Vets is the largest of all groups performing this year. All group members are retired musicians, long-time musicians or former educators.

Lynn Valerio, an Army veteran, is thrilled about performing at the Festival for the first time. “When I found out we won, it took me about a week to get over the shock,” Valerio recalls. “Our group gets together a few times each month and we play lively and upbeat marches. We absolutely love playing together!”

Harry Paul readily agrees. “I never expected to be a winner, but it is a great feeling,” he said. “It is a pleasure and very rewarding to be able to perform with other veterans. Music is the greatest form of therapy, and those who are involved in music are better equipped to face life. It is a second language – and when you play, it soothes your soul.”



Lynn Valerio member of the Swinging Valley Vets

For the seventh consecutive year, Salt Lake City has sent one of its finest musical acts, the *Salty Dogs*, to the Festival. This group of veteran performers sing with sensitivity in a tight, four-part harmony. Founding member, John Prather, a combat-wounded veteran of Vietnam, says that getting the group together every year is great fun.

“The experience brings me enjoyment and so does performing with these guys at the Festival,” Prather said. “Each year, I

See “Group Therapy,” continued on page 3



The Badlands



If you visit South Dakota again, make time to visit Badlands National Park, located about an hour from this year's

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Designated a National Park in 1978, it consists of approximately 244,000 acres of spires, buttes and pinnacles alongside the largest protected mixed grass prairie in the country. The park contains 64,000 acres of designated official wilderness, co-managed by the National Park Service and the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

Anthropologists believe that for 11,000 years, the Lakota and Arikara tribes inhabited the land. Records and oral traditions demonstrate that these tribes camped in secluded valleys where fresh water and game were available. At the top of the Badlands Wall, the American Indians could look out for enemies and game. In the winter, these great tribes would head back to their villages along the Missouri River.

Most Festival participants may be surprised to learn that Badlands National Park contains the world's richest Oligocene epoch fossil beds, dating back 23 to 35 million years. The badlands are believed to have once been under water, as there have been many fossils found of aquatic creatures which no longer exist.

At the park, there are some shorter and less vigorous trails. The "Fossil Exhibit Trail" is fully accessible. On it, there are examples of now extinct creatures that once called the Badlands home. The "Window Trail" is a quarter mile round trip that is accessible to physically fit wheelchair users. It offers a view of an intricately eroded canyon, which leads to what experts call a "window" in the Badlands Wall. The trails are an excellent way to explore the park and view the rich and diverse land in beautiful South Dakota. The awesome power of nature on full display here will leave you full of inspiration – and perhaps to lead to creating another artistic masterpiece!



"Group Therapy," continued from page 2

look forward to finding a good piece of music and getting together with the *Salty Dogs*. This year, they are performing *Chattanooga Choo-Choo*, a 1940s style piece that will be staged in a train station scene in Sunday's show.



Duane Scheuneman and Amie Fishinger

These singing groups will be joined by several talented duos in the stage performance, which include Glenn Moody and Matthew DeWein (otherwise known as *Hamhock and Slide*), and several musicians who came independently but are performing together, like Paul Boruff and Albert Gray Eagle; James Sterrett-Bryant and Christine Pointer; and Ed Hall and Marvin Hooper. That list doesn't even include our wonderful dancing duos like Duane Scheuneman and Amie Fishinger; or Nick Strom and Gloria Tatum. We applaud all group winners or performers this week. Coming together in a group, be it large or small, takes time, coordination and tenacity – and the benefits of learning and growing from performing with someone else are limitless.

Don't Miss the Trip to Hill City!

Don't miss our trip to Hill City today! Buses will depart the hotel at 12:45 p.m. The tour today will include scenic drives through the Black Hills.



Hill City, like most Black Hills towns, grew out of the great gold rush in the late 1800s. It is centrally located in the region between Mt. Rushmore and Crazy Horse in a picturesque mountain valley. Because of its location, it is often referred to as the "Heart of the Hills."

It is unusual for a town of this size to have such an impressive number of high quality restaurants, book stores, art galleries, antique shops and museums. As you stroll down Main Street, you'll find old world charm mixed with true western hospitality. Fine works of art are displayed at the following locations: Jon Crane's Watercolor Gallery, Spring Creek Traders, South Dakota Made Store and Warrior's Work Studio and Gallery. From impressionistic to western, sculpture to mobile, or wildlife to Native American – there is something for every artist to appreciate.

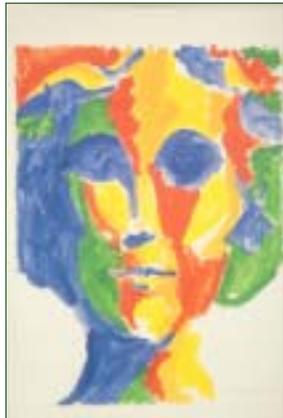
Buses will depart Hill City at 4 p.m. to return to the hotel.



Meet the Artists

Since 2001, VA's *Journal of Rehabilitation and Research (JRRD)* has featured artwork from the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Charles Moorhead's painting, *Picture*, and Albert Blaisdell's painting, *Dog Fight, 1918*, were selected as JRRD's cover art for the upcoming year.

Charles Moorhead, 77, from Philadelphia, Pa., served in the Army during the Korean War. Toward the end of his tour, he painted 25 murals in the mess hall and decorated the Men's Club. Later, he enjoyed a prolific career in the arts teaching for such notable institutions as Moore College of the Arts and the Philadelphia Art Institute.



"Picture" by Charles Moorhead

In 2002, Moorhead had a stroke that affected his right side and entered the Philadelphia VA Nursing Home Care Unit. When he arrived, he was depressed and refused to join in activities. Encouraged by recreation therapy staff, Moorhead attended a workshop where he learned to paint with acrylic colors. Because

the stroke had virtually paralyzed the right side of his body, Moorhead learned to paint with his left hand.

He was discouraged in the beginning. "Art was my life," he said. "I was so discouraged at first, but now I can't believe how far I've advanced." Painting helps Moorhead maintain motor function and dexterity, enhancing his self-esteem and overall satisfaction.

Albert Blaisdell, 86, a Marine Corps veteran from Prescott, Ariz., served during World War II, but always had a fascination with airplanes and pilots of

World War I. Since his service, Blaisdell has studied these subjects and constructed model planes as a hobby. Eventually, he turned to painting and *Dog Fight, 1918* is his painting of various World War I planes in action.



Albert Blaisdell's "Dog Fight 1918"

After being wounded in combat in 1944, Blaisdell lost 80 percent of the use of his right hand and arm, requiring that he re-learn many skills. During a 17-month stay in a naval hospital, he learned to strengthen his left hand by sketching. Eventually, Blaisdell became so skillful that he was asked to sketch cartoons for a hospital magazine, lifting his spirits tremendously.

Blaisdell receives care through the Northern Arizona VA Health Care System in Prescott and hopes that his story will encourage others around him to face adversity with hope and perseverance. "A person should always have an interest and a hobby," he said. "I knew that I had to find something to occupy my time so I began painting and sketching. I never gave up and have kept at it. I hope I can be an inspiration to others who may have injuries and think they can't do anything again because of them."

The Journal is a bimonthly publication distributed to an international audience of more than 7,100 readers. JRRD is a rehabilitation research publication, serving as a resource for scientists and doctors, as well as veterans with disabilities.

Unfortunately, Albert Blaisdell could not attend the Festival this week but his artwork will be on display at the *Meet the Artists* session in the hospitality room from 9 a.m.–noon. You can also meet Charles Moorhead and view his artwork there.



Festival Fun Facts

Highlighting some of our medal winning artists and performers.

■ Writer and poet, **Russell Telander** of Cheyenne, Wyo., has organized and published two poetry anthologies about veterans, and has used the proceeds for donations to such causes such as the WW II Memorial in Washington, D.C. and the "Make-A-Wish Foundation" of Wyoming. Although he won recognition this year in two categories of the creative writing competition, that isn't his only

talent. Also an accomplished cartoonist, this Air Force veteran shares his creativity with the local VA medical center, contributing cartoons in the facility's monthly newsletter. See an example of his cartoons on page 5. (Hey, Russell – want a job with the *ArtsGram*?)

■ **Marvin Wharton**, from Prescott, Ariz., is one multi-talented guy! Not only did he win first place in the national art competition (in the mosaic category), he also grabbed a gold medal in the national music competition in the instrumental solo (country/folk/bluegrass) category! "Music and woodworking are both good exercise for the mind," he tells us.





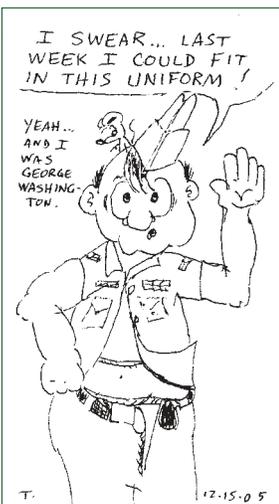
The "Wall Drug" team poses in front of Mt. Rushmore. (Back row, left to right) Tom Hollingsworth, Daniel Condon, Ricky Townsell and Dan Krehbiel. (Middle row) Helen Irwin, Steve Hensley, C.R. Barragan, Martha Gross, Roy Erbele and Bill Sautbine. (Front row) Veronica Andreassen, Frank Scout and Laura Bishop. Not pictured Janice Nelson and Cassandra Spencer.)



Nick Clifford speaks about the carving of Mount Rushmore at Thursday evening's event at Carver's Cafe'.



Crazy Horse Memorial was the first stop on the Thursday afternoon's sightseeing.



Cartoon by Russell Telander from Cheyenne, Wyo.

Photos from the Festival

Monumental Expressions
from the Festival





Painters' Tips

Is painting your favorite artistic medium? If so, here are a few tips that could help you along the way and solve some of those “gummy” painting problems.

- If you have a brush which has been damaged by standing in water, dip the tip into water, squeeze into a point; wrap tip tightly into newspaper and bind with tape. Leave it for 24 hours. Remove the newspaper, and it should be nearly as good as new.
- To add interest to paintings, you can sieve soil from the garden and cook gently in a saucepan (but use no water). Mixed with acrylic paint, this gives unusual texture and colors.
- An old toothbrush can be used for adding texture to paintings. Load the brush with paint, and then, with the

brush near the paper, rub your fingers along the bristles and flick the paint onto the paper.

- An old teabag stirred in water makes an ideal color wash to take away the whiteness of paper.
- If tubes of paint get gummed up and the lid is hard to remove, don't try to force the top undone because this could split the tube. Hold the top of the tube in hot water for a short time. The top should then open easily.
- To keep paints moist on a palette for several days, cover them with plastic wrap.
- If you make a mistake when painting in oils, scrape off the surplus paint with a razor blade so that when it is over painted, it will not show.
- To remove grease marks from paper, sprinkle talcum powder over the grease mark and leave it overnight. The mark will be gone in the morning.



Celebrate Good Times (Come On)!



You know that great *Kool & the Gang* song, now sing it! If you're looking for a celebration and a good time, the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival's annual celebration dinner is

where it's at! The program lets everyone have an evening of fun and relaxation before the big day tomorrow. (Of course, there will be another occasion worth celebrating at the Closing Ceremonies and banquet Sunday evening!)

Tonight's program begins with music, followed by a special dinner. After our meal, Stacie Yuhasz and Nick Lancaster will present the Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development Awards for artwork selected as cover art this year. In addition to staff recognition, a number of fun awards will be presented to several special participants. All in all, the celebration will be one for everyone to enjoy.

One special attraction this evening is the fantastic entertainment provided by a group who will electrify all of us –

Re-Creation! Their variety show, *Paint the Town Red*, features celebrated hot spots around town like a high school, the local firehouse, dance hall, and lots more. (Even if you are a musician, writer or visual artist, we know you'll be dancing in your seats this evening!)

This energetic group of young performers takes audiences of all ages on a fabulous joyride through the great eras of American music, presenting a program that transforms the stage into a showplace of unforgettable entertainment. Re-Creation is a non-profit organization whose main service is to America's VA medical centers and State veterans homes. Since 1983, Re-Creation has provided the only continuing, live, therapeutic entertainment in our nation's VA medical facilities. We're thrilled that they could join us again this year at the Creative Arts Festival.

The *Monumental Expressions Saturday Night Celebration* begins at 6:30 p.m. in the Rushmore Room, Convention Center I. After a brief welcome and introductions, the buffet dinner follows. The presentation of awards and recognitions begin at 7:45, with the grand finale presentation by Re-Creation starting at 8:30. Hope to see *you* there! (“Come on!”)



F-Y-I



Meet with your team leader this morning at 9 a.m. Tomorrow, meetings begin at 11 a.m.

NVCAF Web site
www.creativeartsfestival.org

Share the Festival with your friends and family back home! Tell them to log onto the Festival Web site to check out the daily editions of the *ArtsGram* and individual news releases and photos, located on the "Participant Information" tab.

Medical Suite

The medical support team is located in Room 1702 and team members remain available at all times through Monday morning. Some of you will be going to Hill City today — remember to drink plenty of fluids and dress in layers. Enjoy a leisurely stroll in the artistic area of Hill City. Remember, if you have a medical concern or health issue, please contact your team leader.



The Hospitality Room (Ramkota Room 1114) will be open today from 9:00 a.m. until midnight. (We're up late tonight!) Stop by to visit.

We Miss You!

Donald Gibby, one of our visual artists from Ogden, Utah, won the gold medal this year in pottery. Invited to the Festival for the second consecutive year, Gibby looked forward to attending this week's event. Unfortunately, his health required that he be hospitalized on Monday, where he remains. Earlier this year, Gibby said, "Art has been a way of life for me as a teacher for 30 years. My disease is progressing rapidly and has made me realize how precious each day is. The days I can work, I am blessed. Creativity helps me relax and forget about my pain and frustrations." You are in our thoughts, Donald – we miss you!



All meals, unless otherwise indicated, will be provided in the Rushmore Room, Convention Center I.

Meal hours are as follows:

Breakfast: 7 – 8:30 a.m.

Lunch: Noon – 1 p.m.

Dinner: 5:30 – 6:45 p.m.

Saturday, October 21, 2006

Breakfast

Sausage Links, Egg/Cheese Casserole
French Toast Sticks with Warm Syrup and Whipped Cream
Bagels with Cream Cheese and Jelly, Assorted Cake Donuts
Orange Juice, Apple Juice and Tomato Juice
Milk (Soy Milk Available upon request)
Oatmeal and Dry Cereal
Individual Yogurts and Fresh Fruit

Lunch

Deli Bar Buffet

Deli Sliced Ham, Turkey and Roast Beef
Tray with American, Swiss and Cheddar Cheeses
Assorted Breads, Lettuce, Tomato, Onions and Pickles
Soup of the Day, Garden Pasta Salad
Vegetarian Taco Dip with Tortilla Chips
Kettle Chips

Dinner

Saturday Nite Celebration

Burgundy Beef Tips, Roast Turkey Breast with Stuffing and Gravy, Whipped Potatoes, Chef's Choice of Vegetable Garden Salad with Assorted Dressings, Fruit Salad
Relish Tray with Black and Green Olives, Pickles
Cranberry Sauce, Bistro Roll and Butter
Chocolate Layer Cake, Carrot Cake with Vanilla Sauce
Angel Food Cake



FINAL DAY!
Veterans
History
Project (VHP)

interviews conclude today. If you have made an appointment, don't be late! The VHP interview room is in the Needles Room, Convention Center 1.



Saturday, October 21, 2006

7 — 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel — Rushmore Room

8:30 a.m. Team leaders meet with Katy Ryan — Sheridan Room

9 a.m. Team leaders meet with artists

9 a.m. — 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open — Suite 1114

9 a.m. — Noon "Meet the Artist" — Hospitality Room

9:30 — 11:30 a.m. Educational Session — Placing Stock in Family Bonds: Preserving Your Life Stories, Artwork, and Personal Principles for Future Generations — Legion 2

9:30 — 11 a.m. Photos with Jane Powell — Rushmore Room, CCI

9:30 — 11:30 a.m. Completion of artwork projects — Sheridan Room

11:30 a.m. Lunch at hotel

12:30 p.m. Board buses for Hill City Tour

1:30 — 3:30 p.m. Tour location — Art Galleries, Hill City

4 p.m. Board buses and return to hotel

7 — 9 p.m. Saturday Night Celebration Dinner (casual dress) — Rushmore Room

9 — 10:30 p.m. Entertainment by Re-Creation, USA — Rushmore Room

7 — 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel — Rushmore Room

8:30 a.m. Team leaders meet with Amy Kimbler — Badlands Room

9 a.m. Team leaders meet with performers

9 a.m. — 11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open — Suite 1114

9 a.m. — Noon "Meet the Artist" — Hospitality Room

9 — 10 a.m. Ensemble brush-up rehearsal — Washington Room

9:30 — 11 a.m. Photos with Jane Powell — Rushmore Room, CCI

9:30 — 11:30 a.m. Educational Session — Placing Stock in Family Bonds: Preserving Your Life Stories, Artwork, and Personal Principles for Future Generations — Legion II

10 — 11:15 a.m. Coaching: Individual acts with directors/assistant directors

11:15 a.m. — 12:15 p.m. Lunch at hotel — Rushmore Room

12:30 p.m. Performers depart for Rushmore Plaza Civic Center

12:45 — 1:25 p.m. Performers into costume and makeup

1:30 — 5:00 p.m. Final dress rehearsal with orchestra

5:30 p.m. Performers depart for hotel

7 — 9 p.m. Saturday Night Celebration Dinner (casual dress) — Rushmore Room

9 — 10:30 p.m. Entertainment by Re-Creation, USA — Rushmore Room



High: 37° Low: 24°
30% chance of snow

Cyber Stop

The Internet Café, sponsored by Hewlett-Packard Company, provides computers for participants in the Bear Butte Room, Convention Center I.

Hours of operation for Saturday, October 21 and Sunday, October 22 are: 7 – 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.; and 7 – 9:00 p.m.



OOPS!!! — On Friday's newsletter (page 6) we misidentified veteran Matt Hamilton from Oklahoma City and confused him with Albert Gray Eagle. Sorry, Matt and Albert!

Please check with your team leader or the posted schedule outside of the Washington Room for any changes or updates to your daily schedule.