

FALL 2020

# Anton Art Center CENTERPIECE

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## No Dearth of Programming During Pandemic

By Mary Smith

While COVID-19 has temporarily suspended many cherished traditions at the Anton Art Center, it has failed to stifle the creative spirit that is at the heart of all that it does. Taking a cue from Broadway and circus ringmasters before that, staff, patrons and volunteers have adopted the dictum that: "The show must go on."

And in this issue of **Centerpiece**, you will read about the Herculean efforts that staff, volunteers and board members undertook to keep arts and culture thriving during a shutdown that no one ever expected to last this long.

The **ArtParty**, the Art Center's largest fundraiser, took to Facebook and other digital outlets in September to continue its annual gala, complete with the ever-popular silent auction. The upcoming **Holiday Market** will likewise be an online affair, with curbside pickup or delivery available. And there are other nods to the challenges of the times that have resulted in innovative ways to address the need of the community for access to the arts.

"We're excited about continuing our free **SatARTdays** programming via Zoom for the fall," says **Peggy DiMercurio**, the Art Center's Education Coordinator. "We are providing art kits that participants can pick up curbside."

Held the second Saturday of each month, SatARTdays have continued to provide families a chance to spend quality time together on an art project. On Sept 12, it

was a paper-making workshop with **Meg Heeres** and on Oct. 10, just in time for Halloween, it was a mask-making workshop with Kate Herron.

Upcoming SatARTdays are still being planned and will likely include, reminiscent of the previous Jingle Journeys, a holiday craft-making workshop for families in December.

For the 21 and over crowd, a virtual **Paint, Sip and Snack** class was held on Oct. 15. For \$40, participants received a kit consisting of paint, brushes and canvas to create their own masterpieces under the online tutelage of Art Center instructor **Kathie Bugajski**. It was up to each participant, however, to provide the wine, cheese and crackers.

While some art classes have met on-site this fall, albeit with extensive cleaning protocols and the requirement that all participants wear face coverings, a few have switched to online delivery.

**Deanna Clyne**, ceramics instructor, has also prepared some instructional videos to be aired online. Getting the technology right was a little tricky at first. But Clyne is getting the hang of it.

"The hardest part is getting a great view of what I'm demonstrating," says Clyne. "I've found that setting up multiple cameras is ideal."

**Our facility is temporarily closed to the public due to COVID-19, but be sure to visit [www.theartcenter.org](http://www.theartcenter.org) and our social media for all of our virtual content!**

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# Getting Creative in 2020

By Peggy DiMercurio

Back in 2019, when we were still excited about all that 2020 would bring, we decided on the hashtag: **#GetCreativein2020** for our classes, workshops and events. But we had no idea just how creative we were going to have to get!

After a great start to the new year with new programs, exhibits and guests, the second session ground to a halt as we were suddenly forced to put everything on hold and close our doors to the public. As the staff headed out the door to work from home for a short time (so we thought), Executive Director **Phil Gilchrist**, asked us: "Please work on ways we can continue to provide content and creative opportunities for our community through online mechanisms. This is going to be a rough, few weeks, and as we're aware, creativity and the arts can help provide meaningful ways for folks to relieve stress and pass time."

As the Stay Safe - Stay Home orders continued, we looked for ways to stay connected with our students, the art community and our patrons. Creatives are problem solvers and quarantine provided the opportunity and motivation to re-prioritize items and finally get to things like "expand virtual presence," "create online classes" and "develop YouTube content." We reimagined our programs to work in a virtual format to offer online art exhibits, artist talks, arts and craft demonstrations and tutorials. Since people couldn't come to us, we deconstructed and reworked programs like **SatARTdays**, **Super SatArtday**, **ArtParty** and even a summer camp to enjoy at home.

Building on our strong social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and by learning to utilize new technology like Zoom, we were able to create a robust **Anton Art Center @ Home** that is available whenever our followers are ready to enjoy it. We had to work out a lot of bugs and develop new systems and are really proud of what we have been able to do as a team. What follows is a look at some of our online undertakings.

**The Macomb County Primary Student Show** slated for April had to be cancelled so we created an online exhibit for our local artists to enter and share their work inspired by what they were looking forward to after the lockdown. This exhibit continued to evolve through the weeks and morphed into an international exhibit for kids, teens and adults with over 1,500 entries.

**Cindy Eichhorst**, Mixed Media Teacher and Mount Clemens Public Schools Art Teacher, launched her YouTube Channel "**Glitter and Glue with Mrs. Eichhorst**" to reach out to students with creative art lessons, reading suggestions and fun ways to learn at home.

**Deanna Clyne** and her pottery students kept morale up through the quarantine by meeting on Zoom to catch up, play games, show off their home studios and share their homebound pursuits, including taking up new mediums like painting and knitting.

Throughout our closure, our art instructors and staff created instructional videos to share on our platforms featuring art projects to do at home with supplies usually on hand. As soon as we closed, **Kathie Bugajski**

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## New Mini Grants Music to Ears of K-12 Art Educators

By Mary Smith

**The Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA)** has added an Arts Equipment and Supplies Grant to its mini-grant program and, as the Regional Regrantor for region 10A, the Anton Art Center is playing a major role in helping K-12 arts educators obtain the resources they need to strengthen arts programming in their schools.

"This new grant offers Michigan schools up to \$1,500 to add to or replace their arts equipment," explains **Greg DeLauro**, the Art Center's Grant Coordinator. "K-12 teachers in any arts curriculum were invited to apply, including those who teach creative writing, film and video, music, visual arts and theatre."

And when field trips return post-pandemic, a new \$500 Bussing Grant will help schools offset the costs of taking students to museums, plays, exhibits and other cultural venues and activities.

The MCACA Mini-grant Program addresses the arts and cultural needs of local communities by administering funds at the local level. It complements other MCACA grant programs, including Project Support, Capital Improvement, Arts in Education and New Leaders.

The new mini grants introduced this year join the existing \$1,500 Professional or Organization Development and the \$4,000 Arts Projects mini grants. The development grant is designed to assist nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, artists, arts administrators, arts educators and filmmakers in the management and enhancement of their business and creative affairs, including participation in national conferences and workshops. The projects grant supports a broad range of artistic and cultural endeavors that preserve, produce or present traditional or contemporary arts and culture and/or arts education in local communities.

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## Getting Creative continued

reached out to her young students to provide resources and guidance to help them continue developing their art. One mom recently told us: "Thank you so much for everything that you did (during) the shutdown. It really helped us get through."

We found out that good online content took different skills and equipment than our in-person programs. We had to embrace new technology, form a production team, write scripts, set up filming sets throughout the empty galleries, set up lighting, run tech rehearsals, find microphones, optimize connections, eliminate audio issues and be prepared for anything to happen. We learned a lot the hard way and are grateful for the feedback and patience of our participants.

In July, we were able to welcome students back, but we needed to be just as creative keeping everyone safe. We rearranged our classrooms to maximize distances between workstations, limited class numbers, set up classes in galleries, required mask wearing, conducted health screenings and added more robust sanitizing protocols. We also use big screen televisions, laptops and phones in the classrooms with Zoom to share demonstrations from a distance, allowing everyone safe access to the instructor onsite as well as at home. Students have been very happy to be back at Anton Art Center and one family told us: "We haven't been doing much, but we trust that you are doing things to keep us safe here."

## New Mini Grants continued

As the regranting agency for Region 10A, the Art Center facilitates the MCACA Mini-grant Program in Macomb and Oakland counties. More than 20 applications were received this year and the grant awards were announced in mid-October. Applications for the next round of mini grants are being accepted through Jan. 15, 2021 and may be accessed at: <https://mcaca.smartsimple.com/>.

"The mini-grant program is a great opportunity for local nonprofit, grass roots art organizations, as well as individual artists to receive funding to pursue art projects or attend art-related workshops," notes DeLauro. "Our local community benefits because these grants address specific needs that have been identified."

Our first virtual class was held in August and we realized that running a successful workshop takes much more than just pointing a camera at the instructor – it takes multiple cameras, an assistant to run a control board that can spotlight the different instructor views as well as the participants, and we need to provide time for one-on-one instruction. After a test run for the wire wrapping workshop, **Cheryl DeLauro** drew out detailed instructions and diagrams to include in art kits, recorded a video to showcase techniques and suggested a dress code to help with visibility. Even with a successful test run, audio issues on the night of class caused us to shut it down and reschedule the class. After some research, we identified the issue and the rescheduled class went very well. We were able to use those lessons for our first **Paint, Sip and Snack @ Home** which went well with no glitches and lots of fun.

Art kits have become a big part of our at-home programs. We put together kits for making paper, making masks, creating a painting project, making recycled art, acrylic flow and a wire wrap beach glass project. Kits included instructions, diagrams, tools, supplies, beach glass, canvasses, wire, paint, yarn, cds, paper and even branches and toilet paper rolls all packaged up and available for curbside pick-up.

This has not been the year we expected, but the challenges have taught us a lot. Though we are not back to normal yet, we are happy to be able to continue serving our community with virtual and in-person programs and the opportunity to get creative in 2020.



# Annual ArtParty Delivers with Online Celebration

By Peggy DiMercurio

Planning was already under way for the **29th Annual ArtParty** slated for the evening of Sept. 24 when news of the pandemic started circulating.

"I felt back in March that we were not going to be able to do an in-person ArtParty in 2020," said Executive Director **Phil Gilchrist**. "When the state shut things down, we realized it would affect everything for the year, although we tried to stay hopeful."

ArtParty is the largest fundraiser for Anton Art Center and one of the biggest parties each year in downtown Mount Clemens. For 28 years, ArtParty has brought together local restaurants and bars, artists, musicians, teams of volunteers, and hundreds of guests for a fabulous night celebrating the arts under a big, beautifully decorated tent. The money raised from the ArtParty helps fund no-cost and low-cost art programming for the community, including make-and-take events, exhibits and programs in local schools. It takes a lot of planning and hard work throughout the year, and it is always a lot of fun!

After the success of **Super SatARTday @ Home**, the Art Party Committee, comprised of staff, volunteers and board members, realized that they could take advantage of newly learned skills and updated technology to reimagine the Art-



Special guest Alexander Zonjic chatting with Executive Director Phil Gilchrist during an ArtParty @ Home Virtual Cocktail Party.

team developed scripts, staged each area, visited restaurants, and shot and edited videos to share on our website and social media pages.

With creativity, flexibility and dedication, mixed with a big dose of humor, the committee produced a six-week **ArtParty @ Home** program that captured the essence of previous in-person parties. Working with some of our restaurant partners, we presented a deconstructed dinner party with weekly installment videos – margaritas from **El Charro's**, a mezzaluna ravioli appetizer from **Testa Barra**, a roasted beet salad from **Chef Raymone Catering**, Chicken Frangelico from **Soprano's Catering**, all topped off with raspberry delights from **Champagne Chocolates**.

A host of artists, restaurants, sponsors and board members sent support videos and testimonials. Our silent auction went online with artwork, sculptures, textiles, a vacation package and studio tour and even a Dali. Artists were invited to share their artwork and insight into their creative process for more in-depth and intimate artist profiles than we can accomplish in a single party. The decorating committee brought us beautiful settings and a decorated tent for the final night's broadcast. To capture the fun of ArtParty, **O'Halloran's Public House** and **Orleans Sports Café**, who sponsor and run our bar each year, hosted free Zoom cocktail parties with drink demos, mini concerts by **DJ Bach Troy**, tenor **Aaron Caruso** and jazz musicians **Alexander Zonjic** and **Gerard Gibbs**. **First State Bank** donated raffle prizes for the participants to add to the festivities. Each week, Facebook (FB) live broadcasts helped us reach out to our audience and showcase an artist and on the actual ArtParty night, Zoom and FB live let the team thank everyone "in person."

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Education Coordinator Peggy DiMercurio hard at work behind the scenes during ArtParty @ Home.

Party as a virtual program. A production team was assembled to recreate key elements of the event in a virtual format. Empty galleries, classrooms and our kitchen were transformed into sets for recording and broadcasting cooking demos, artist profiles, live updates, silent auction showcases, virtual cocktail parties and mini concerts. The production

## Annual ArtParty continued

This wasn't what the committee expected when planning started, but it went well! Although the target had to be lowered for the virtual event, ArtParty @ Home hit its goal and raised about \$31,000 overall, netting over \$24,000 to support programming in our community and had hundreds of people tune in.

"Our 'village' of creative volunteers and staff brought the Art Party into your homes. The team's imagination and enthusiasm produced our first virtual attempt successfully," said Anna Doe, ArtParty Committee Co-chair. "We appreciate everyone – our team, our sponsors, everyone who participated over the six weeks and, of course, our guests!"

We could not have pulled this off successfully without the support from our sponsors: Anton Art Center Sponsor: **Oakland University**, Creativity Sponsor: **Crest Lincoln**, Zoom Cocktail Party Sponsors: **O'Halloran's Public House** and **Orleans Sports Cafe**, and Print Sponsor: **Printing by Johnson**.

"We had a lot of fun (like tasting the cocktails during our video shoot), but the best part of this experience was everybody's willingness to support us to make sure it was as successful as it was," said Gilchrist. "We are truly thankful."



Special guest Rosco the Clown reviewing video shot by Grant Coordinator Greg DeLauro for ArtParty @ Home.

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# Art Center Holiday Market 2020 Preview

By Maggi Gawel



Just a few of the fabulous gifts in the Holiday Market. Christmas Tree Tile by Mary Abbott, Christmas Bulb Wreath by Jan Gunning and Glass Block by Lynn Siciliano.

The holiday season will soon be upon us, and many in Macomb County are awaiting what has become a Mount Clemens' tradition: the **Anton Art Center Holiday Market**.

Like so many things in this very unusual year, the 2020 Holiday Market will have a whole different look when it opens Friday, Nov. 13, with shopping conducted primarily online! To help ensure visitor's safety, only very limited in-person shopping will be undertaken this year. Helping kick off the event is the Nov. 14 virtual SatArtday, featuring artist Daren Dundee demonstrating how to "build" found-art sculptures. But while the presentation has changed, the quality and diversity of the hand-crafted merchandise has not.

The wares of 89 artists will be available for purchase via the Art Center website: <http://www.theartcenter.org/online-store>. "We will have paintings, prints, ceramics, glass, fashion, jewelry, cards, wood, photography and mixed media, as well as holiday items like ornaments, wreaths, table arrangements, and tabletop Christmas trees," according to volunteer Holiday Market Online Manager **Nancy Garcia**. "We will have unique, quality items for everyone's gift-giving pleasure."

This year there will be no accompanying Community Gallery exhibit. Although classes will continue as scheduled and business office staff will be available by appointment, the building will only be open to the general public on Saturdays

from 11am-3pm, November 21, 28 December 5, 12, and 19, with health screenings and face masks required, and other safety precautions. Look for online peeks "behind-the-scenes" and other online content to keep Market "visitors" up to speed. In addition, the **Art Market Blog**, <https://www.theartcenter.org/art-market-blog>, will have weekly updates about Holiday Market Online artwork.

But all this won't be accomplished with a wave of a digital magic wand! Our dedicated Market volunteers will still have a lot to do! While observing social distancing and limited occupancy precautions, they will receive artists' products and transfer items to the Market storage area. They will also collect packages and arrange for shipping or free curbside pickup (by appointment) within five days of payment. Volunteers will be on hand again after the holidays to inventory, pack and return any unsold artwork to the artists.

Connect with the Anton Art Center at [www.theartcenter.org](http://www.theartcenter.org), phone 586.469.8666, or email [information@theartcenter.org](mailto:information@theartcenter.org) for additional information about SatArTdays, or about Holiday Market Online shopping, free curbside pickup, shipping charges and return policies.

# Donor Spotlight: First State Bank

By Maggi Gawel

If you have joined ArtParty festivities in the last 10 years or enjoyed family oriented-SatARTday programming, you owe a salute to one of the Art Center's significant community supporters: **First State Bank (FSB)**. The bank, now with 11 branches from Eastpointe to Richmond, has been a fixture in Macomb County for over 100 years, with the organization's partnership with the Art Center becoming even closer over the last two.

"One of our continuing goals is to help nonprofit organizations generate income for programming that will make Mount Clemens and the Macomb County community a better place to live, work and play," according to FSB Marketing Director **Amy Persyn**. She and FSB Marketing Associate **Lynn Scott** have been instrumental in maintaining FSB's support of ArtParty, a major fundraiser for Art Center programming.

"This is part of First State Bank's overall philosophy: Business thrives in a thriving community of people who have access to diverse activities and resources, including arts and culture. To ensure this, we use our resources to reinvest in the community, to create a reciprocal relationship with the community as a whole – not just the bank's clients," Persyn says. The bank, which is locally owned and operated, "is not only a full-service bank providing home loans, business loans and many other products; it is also part of the community."

In line with this philosophy, the bank strives to "make sure there are a variety of experiences available in the county to reach all members of the community. SatArtdays are a natural fit as they are a new, innovative approach to provide such experiences at no cost to participants," Persyn adds.

"Hometown – it makes us who we are" is the home-page greeting on the FSB website. Whether working within a continuing partnership, as with the Art Center, or on a one-of-a-kind event, each year, FSB's charitable arm, **First State Bank CARES**, provides funding to numerous nonprofit organizations committed to arts, culture, education, human services and business growth. **Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, Partridge Creek and Metro Parks Concert Series, CARE of Southeastern Michigan, Macomb and Sterling Heights Regional Chambers of Commerce, Leadership Macomb** and **MCREST** are but a few of the many organizations to benefit from this commitment to the community.

The bank also draws its employees and the community at large into its giving loop. Each November, FSB participates in "**Banksgiving**," an annual campaign building awareness of local nonprofits that are making a positive impact in the community. During "Banksgiving," FSB presents grants to a number of area organizations whose projects are nominated and voted on by the public online. In addition, the bank provides a stipend to employees so they may support a nonprofit of their choice and also provides paid volunteer time for employees to support nonprofit organizations.

Additional information about First State Bank, its history, services and First State Bank CARES can be found at [www.fsb.bank](http://www.fsb.bank).

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