

Culture club

Nonprofits seek ideas to survive downturn in economy

By Mark Skala
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HYANNIS — There is some comfort in knowing you are not alone as an artist or cultural group facing tough issues in this challenging economy.

"It is important to hear what other people are going through and how they are coping and making the best of it," said Peter Earle, who was among some 200 people gathered Thursday at the Cape Codder Resort for the second annual Creative Collaborative.

Hosted by the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod, the event featured forums and speakers sharing ideas, information and support for artists, arts groups, cultural centers and many organizations who encourage and support art and culture on the Cape.

Earle, executive director of the Academy of Performing Arts in Orleans, said the exchange of ideas in these "challenging economic times" is key to survival.

"Hearing how you can do things better and sharing information is critical right now," Earle said. "A lot of what we do as arts and cultural groups crosses over and we can help one another whenever possible."

Chris Duren, executive director of the Cotuit Center for the Arts, said she walked away from the conference energized, and manned with new ideas to better promote her organization.

"It is inspiring to be here among all these creative minds," Duren said. "Putting such a focus on how to survive and thrive in this climate is so critical. It's important for all of us in our isolated organizations to know the Cape is much more powerful when we face this together. There is real collaboration among these groups."

That collaboration and sharing of ideas is exactly what the arts foundation had hoped for when it envisioned this conference, noted Margaret G. Van Sciver, president of the foundation's board of directors. She said it is encouraging to see people sharing strategies for success.

Van Sciver said it is important for the arts foundation to take the lead and bring groups and artists together for a common purpose.

"The arts community is fully cognizant the economic circumstances require innovative and collaborative efforts so we can continue to entertain, educate and enrich the residents and visitors that we serve," Van Sciver said. "Today is about sharing strategies among colleagues so we can provide support and education."

Participants heard ideas on



Selina Trieff and Robert Henry of Wellfleet before accepting their Lifetime Achievement award at the Creative Collaborative.

Wellfleet artists honored

HYANNIS — Artists Selina Trieff and Robert Henry were feeling a bit overwhelmed by all the attention paid to them at Thursday's second annual Creative Collaborative hosted by the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod.

They were on hand to receive lifetime achievement awards for their work. The Wellfleet couple, who both studied under renowned artist Hans Hofmann, were humbled and delighted when they heard the news they would be this year's recipients.

"It's a great honor," said Henry, who was a professor of art for many years at Brooklyn College.

"When Maggie (foundation board president Margaret G. Van Sciver) reached out to us we were kind of overwhelmed and also absolutely delighted," added Trieff.

Van Sciver said Trieff and Henry have made an enduring impression on everyone with whom they have contact. They were a part of Cape Cod for many years and Henry has been involved with the Provincetown Art Association and Museum in addition to teaching and both perfecting their craft. They settled in Wellfleet in 1995.

"Now — friends and neighbors tell us that on any given day, you can pass their home and enjoy a revolving display — an exhibit — constantly changing from week to week featuring one painting from Robert and one from Selina displayed in the front windows of their home," noted Van Sciver. "They have become an iconic Cape Cod summer image — on a summer evening — sitting on their front porch chatting with friends and neighbors, and offering to show a new acquaintance around their studios. Which you should do — because their respective home studios are magical places of wonder."

They were both born in Brooklyn, attended Brooklyn College and studied under Hofmann. Their paintings are in many museum collections both nationally and internationally, and they are loved and well respected both in the Cape Cod art community in the wider national arts community.

Henry served for several years as president of the Provincetown Art Association and Museum during its recent renovations. "And has provided his counsel and rolled up his sleeves on behalf of many of Cape Cod's arts organizations for as long as anyone can recall," Van Sciver added.

Trieff describes herself as a painter, a wife, a mother, a grandmother and a teacher. She has often been cited as being among the most remarkable artists of a generation who came of age in the late 1950s in New York. She has also taught art classes for decades.

securing more funding for their efforts, better ways of reaching the media, discussed ways communities can work effectively with state and regional groups to promote arts and culture on the Cape, and shared ideas on how to effectively advocate on behalf of arts education.

According to Cathrine Macort, director of community partnerships for the arts foundation, participants came from the Cape and beyond, and included individual artists, organizations, historical societies, galleries and more. She was delighted with the turnout.

"I think the relevancy of the topics given the economic climate brought people out and they want to come together on behalf of the arts," Macort said. "If the arts foundation can help facilitate that in some way, that's great."

The day's event concluded with an awards reception honoring arts educator of the year LaVada Studley of Falmouth; the collaborative arts project of the year with the Cape Cod Museum of Art School-to-Careers Art Internship program; community leadership in support of the arts to John Sullivan of Barnstable high; and lifetime achievement awards to husband and wife artists Robert Henry and Selina Trieff of Wellfleet.