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## Doing business artfully: Creative people can thrive on Cape Cod with right approach

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Meryl Vujs makes a point as, left to right, moderator Dorothy Savarese and presenters Sarah Thorington and Coby Vincent listen.

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By John Basile  
 THE REGISTER  
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HYANNIS — It's possible to make a living in an arts-related business on Cape Cod, but commitment to your art and organization are keys.

That was the message delivered by a panel of creative people at the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod's third annual Creative Collaborative Conference March 25 in Hyannis.

Clinton Flagg, a floral and garden consultant who until last year operated a flower shop in Osterville, said the best decision he ever made was to open a shop on Cape Cod, but he cautioned against complacency.

"Just because the customer is there, it doesn't mean he'll come in," he said. "You have to prove yourself and you have to be good at what you do."

Artists and other creative people are especially subject to fluctuations in the economy and can easily land in trouble when things go bad.

Architect Rick Fenuccio raised a scenario that many creative people encounter when they go into business.

"Architects get great training in architecture, but zero training in business," Fenuccio said. He added that he never heard the term "marketing" until he opened his own business.

Mary DeAngelis, a clothing designer who co-owns Silk and Feathers in Provincetown, said she didn't know enough about the clothing design business to have any false assumptions when she started. But she expressed concern about young people considering her business now that designers are shown in glamorous settings on the popular television show "Project Runway" every week.

"Every little girl in America wants to be a clothing designer and they have an enormous amount of false assumptions," DeAngelis said.

Painter Simie Maryles who own a gallery in Provincetown, said a false assumption artists can have is that they can set their own work hours.

"It's 24/7 when you own your own business," Maryles said.

A theme that ran through the panel discussion was the need for artists and others in creative endeavors to be aware that the customer is the reason they are in business.

Sarah Thorington, a portrait photographer who owns Studio by the Sea in Hyannis, said artists must appreciate their customers.

"I value the fact that they are paying me money," Thorington said.

She also said artists must give their potential customers a pleasant experience.

"When I walk into a gallery that is clean and smells good, it makes such a difference," Thorington said.

Coby Vincent, who, with his wife, owns Cape Cod Hip Hop and Jazz dance studio in West Barnstable, pointed out that a faltering economy will cut into the number of people who can spend for things such as dance lessons. But he stressed that said artists of all kinds benefit by being part of the community they serve.

"Volunteering our time over and over has brought us business," Vincent said.

Meryl Vujs, whose Meryl's Music and Arts Centers specializes in music lessons for children, emphasized that artists in business cannot ignore their competitors.

"Know who else is out there and keep an eye on that," Vujs said.

The panel discussion was one of several in the daylong conference.

Arts Foundation of Cape Cod president Margaret Van Sciver said the goal of the day was to get creative people together.

"Smart people with practical experience will be joined by other smart people who can help one another."

The Arts Foundation of Cape Cod is the regional arts agency for Barnstable County and provides grants to individual artists, fine and performing arts organizations, museums and historical organizations.

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### Creative Community Awards

Creative Community Awards

The Arts Foundation of Cape Cod presented the following awards at the March 25 conference:

- Arts Educator of the Year:** Daniel Springer, Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School
- Collaborative Arts Project of the Year:** Falmouth Artists Guild Community Outreach
- Community Leadership In Support of the Arts:** State Sen. Robert O'Leary
- Lifetime Achievement Award:** Royston Nash

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