



Art in Your Backyard

backyard

by Peggy Capper

It was just a few years ago that local businessman, Austin Dempsey, and local artist, Joe Gagnepain, brainstormed about an arts center in Batavia (see story page 10). Two years later Water Street Studios opened. On the heels of that development has come the auditorium addition to Batavia High School. The result was a spectacular theatre to rival the best theatres in the area. So spectacular, in fact, that it has taken on an institutional life of its own, called Batavia Fine Arts Centre, complete with a full-time director, Dominic Cattero (see story page 37). Last year's Bulldog's fundraiser was an adventure in commissioned art, involving many groups and individuals in the community. The artistically appointed "Bulldogs" adorned the streets with a pronouncement that Batavia is now a city of energy and art. Throughout the mild weather months residents gather at the newly renovated Peg Bond Performing Arts Pavilion for concerts, exhibits, and community events.

Recognizing that the arts have become a rallying point within the community, the Batavia Arts Council has been formed to help keep that energy moving forward. With a board of nine people they are just beginning to decide how the arts council can serve as a catalyst to advancing what is already being done and to answer needs of organizations and artists as necessary. "One of the (first) things we did was get involved with Art In Your Eye," said Leigh Tracy, Batavia Arts Council Chairman. "We have a monthly BAM (Batavia Arts Council Mixer) focusing on marketing the arts in Batavia and discussing where our efforts are most needed."

Beyond Batavia, the Tri-Cities have an abundance of cultural venues and activities for all to enjoy. Each of the Tri-Cities has a local art commission specifically tasked with enriching the art culture in their respective cities. From local artists and galleries, to festivals and award winning performances, there is a plethora of art. Here are just some of the many ways to find Art in Your Backyard...

PHOTOS MICHAEL BARTON, INDIGO PHOTOGRAPHIC



Above, the main gallery at Water Street Studios during the 2nd Anniversary Show

Batavia Arts Council

P.O. Box 383, Batavia
bataviaartscouncil.org

The Batavia Arts Council's mission is to develop awareness of and interest in the arts, culture, and entertainment. They also strive to create an environment that is conducive to the growth and development of individual artists and organizations devoted to the arts, culture and entertainment in the greater Batavia area. The council is involved in several cultural events in the Batavia area such as Art In Your Eye Fine Art Show and Festival, Shakespeare on Clark and the River Rhapsody Concert Series.

Art in Your Eye Fine Arts Show & Festival

Batavia Riverwalk (August)
artinyoureye.com

Established in 2005, the Art In Your Eye Fine Art Show & Festival

is a collaborative effort of the City of Batavia, Batavia MainStreet, Batavia Public Library, Batavia Park District, Batavia Depot Museum and Water Street Studios. The free festival features a fine arts show, art exhibits, children's art activities, musical entertainment, art demonstrations and much more. The event takes place in late summer and is a Batavia favorite.

Theater/Performance

Batavia Fine Arts Centre

1201 Main Street, Batavia
bataviafineartscentre.org

Completed the summer of 2011 as a part of Batavia High School, the Fine Arts Centre is a state-of-the-art facility with four separate venues to showcase different forms of art. The Fine Arts Centre is not only for the use of the children of Batavia High School, but also for the community as a whole.

The Albright Theatre

100 N. Island Avenue
 Batavia, 630-406-8838
albrighttheatre.com

Located in downtown Batavia, the Albright Theatre's mission is to encourage public interest in, and appreciation of, the dramatic arts as well as provide a source for creating, producing and presenting works of dramatic merit to the public.

Art Studios/Galleries

The Attic Christian Arts Center

26 N. Island Avenue, Batavia
 331-222-8224
theatticbatavia.com

The Attic is a God inspired center where people can come together to enjoy a passion for the arts in a Christian environment. They offer dance, drawing, painting, cartooning, and ceramics classes.

Opposite page, "Manual Dexterity," wire and paper sculpture by Sharon Sychta, Honorable Mention in the Anniversary Show

Art in your back yard

Water Street Studios

160 S. Water Street, Batavia,
630-761-9977
waterstreetstudios.com

Batavia Artists Association at Water Street Studios is a not-for-profit organization devoted to expanding art in Batavia and the surrounding communities. They have converted an historic limestone building into an amazing 16,000 sq. ft. arts center featuring 28 artist studios, three classrooms and two premier galleries for showcasing fine art. It was created by a group of artists, the property owners, city officials, and community members and the center focuses on extending the arts community in the tri-cities and beyond.

Music

Fox Valley Children's Chorus

PO Box 502, Batavia
630-879-3235
fvchildrenschorus.org

Fox Valley Children's Chorus provides vocal training and excellence in performance of high quality choral music for children of the Fox Valley. The Fox Valley Children's Chorus consists of two choirs: The Apprentice Choir for girls and boys in grades 2-4; and the Concert Choir for girls and boys with unchanged voices in grades 5 through age 15. The chorus works on challenging choral music and presents two concerts per season, one in December and the other in April. The group is available to sing for other events as well.

Ispirare School of Music

104 First Street, Batavia
630-879-1280
bataviamus.com

Ispirare School of Music's goal is to deliver outstanding comprehensive music education in a supportive environment. Their school includes a large recital space with a baby grand piano, and two smaller teaching studios. The school also owns six hammer-action digital pianos for students to rent.

Music Matters

222 E. Wilson Street, Batavia
630-406-8742
musicmattersschool.com

Music Matters mission is to provide people of all ages and abilities the tools to have a life long love of music. Students are encouraged to explore all areas of music and offers performance

opportunities as soloist or with an ensemble. Piano, drum, guitar, voice, violin, cello, and saxophone lessons are offered as well as lessons for any other percussion or orchestral instrument. A unique pre-school program for parent and child is also available.

Dance

Batavia Academy of Dance

8 E. Wilson Street, Batavia,
630-406-8232
bataviaacademyofdance.com

A Step Above Dance Academy

103 E. Wilson Street, Batavia
630-326-9600
astepaboveacademy.net

Geneva

Geneva Cultural Arts Commission

630-938-4530
culturalarts@geneva.il.us

The Geneva Cultural Arts Commission is specifically tasked with creating a diverse cultural art experience that engages the community. They are responsible for some of the more popular art experiences in the Geneva area such as Dancing with the Geneva Stars on Saturday, February 4, The Geneva Film Festival in March, the First Fridays Gallery Walk, Shakespeare in the Park and the RiverPark Summer Series.

5th Annual Geneva Film Festival

March 29-31, Downtown Geneva
genevafilmfestival.org

Sponsored by the Cultural Arts Commission in Geneva, the festival has rapidly become a well-known venue for writers, producers, and actors to screen a variety of independent films and screenplays. The annual festival also provides technical workshops with industry professionals for filmmakers and film enthusiasts alike.

Carolyn Abramofsky

Resident artist, Water Street Studios

Carolyn Abramofsky started taking her art seriously just a few years ago. "After retiring I took a workshop at Valley Ridge Art Studio in Muscoda, Wisconsin. It was an awakening experience for me. I just never thought I had any talent. I began to produce pieces that I actually liked. And surprise, surprise, others liked (my work) too." While at Valley Ridge, Carolyn met Sharon Sychta who invited her to visit Water Street Studios. That was three years ago.

Carolyn rented studio space at Water Street two years ago and is enjoying the company of the many artists around her. "It's wonderful to be around a group of artists. They are all very friendly. We share ideas. And we enjoy a variety of art styles." Water Street brings together artists of all ages and experience, pursuing a wide spectrum of artistic media. Carolyn favors acrylics with stenciling on canvas and board. "I love experimenting



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GRANATA

with color and texture using paints, dyes and photos I have taken. Nothing suits me better than to take fabric and paper, crunch it up, dye it, spray it, paint it and then spread it out. It's the lovely surprise of line and texture, of hidden ghost figures or shapes that appear on paper, cloth and/or hard substrates."

You can see more of Carolyn's work at Gallery H20, Water Street Studios' retail store.



Geneva Arts Fair

July 28-29, Downtown Geneva
genevachamber.com/artfair

Art lovers are invited to visit Geneva for a day of shopping at their juried outdoor gallery of fine art. Victorian homes-turned-businesses in the downtown historic district serve as a picturesque backdrop for the fine arts show. The Geneva Arts Fair will showcase over 150 artists from around the country. Art mediums include photography, pottery, fiber, printmaking, glass, mixed media, watercolor, oil, acrylic, wood, sculpture and jewelry.

Theater/Performance

Geneva Underground Playhouse

524 W. State Street, Geneva
630-677-1725
guptheatre.org

The Geneva Underground Playhouse is a not-for-profit community theater that produces main stage productions throughout the year, and also hosts performances by comedy groups, musicians, playwrights and any number of other entertainers.

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Art in your back yard

John Granata

Resident artist, Water Street Studios

John Granata uses digital photography along with several other mediums in creating unique art. Much of John's work is based on old photographic processes, including working on tin types. "It is not specific material that interests me; it is the process of discovery. I am very specific. The color has to be very true. The colors must be precise. I don't want to be gimmicky. Everything is my own and done by my hands. The journey is what it is all about."



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GRANATA

John has had his studio for about two years. "I was looking for a job a couple of years ago when my wife found Water Street Studios. We went there and I fell in love with it right away. It was a tough time for me, but I took a leap of faith and opened my studio there. I had never shown my work before. Water Street Studios got me out of my bubble. My main focus is to teach photography." John has a Master's Degree and teaching certificate from Concordia University, Chicago.

"The best camera is the one in your hand, whether it's a phone or the most expensive camera on the market. I try to help people find their own voice through

photography. I like to help people find and discover the world. I can also teach technical skills, including photo printing and Photoshop®." Although John works part time at Calumet Photography in Oak Brook, he tries to be at his Water Street studio every day. "Between the two, I work 14-15 hours most days. Water Street Studios is a good environment for me. There are full-time artists, part-time, and some never come at all. But it is really a nice mix. It is more social than competitive. Someone is always there to help. We share ideas, skills, qualities and strengths."



Art Studios/Galleries

Art Box

514 W. State Street, #101
Geneva, 630-232-2870
artboxgeneva.com

Art Box is an arts supply store, serving students, teachers, hobbyist, beginners and the professional artist community. They also host art classes featuring instruction in drawing, calligraphy, and painting in watercolor, oil, pastel and acrylics. Classes are geared for ages 5 to 100.

First Friday Gallery Walk

First Friday of every month,
Downtown Geneva
artgalleriesgeneva.com

The First Friday Gallery Walk is a self-guided art walk and reception to showcase the Art Galleries of Geneva. Participating Galleries stay open "late 'til 9" the first Friday of every month. All of the galleries are within walking distance of each other. A Gallery Directory is available at the Geneva Chamber of Commerce, at artgalleriesgeneva.com, or at any of the participating galleries. Many of the galleries provide refreshments, special events, artists show openings, or live performances.

Artemisia

101 S. #3rd Street, Geneva
630-262-0249
artemisiastyle.com

Dene Gallery

207 S. Third Street, #110, Geneva
331-248-0041
denedesign.com

Down to Earth Pottery

426 S. Third Street, Geneva
630-232-9915
downtoearth-pottery.com

Gallery 28 Fine Functional Art

28 N. Fourth Street, Geneva
630-845-9673
gallery28.biz

Morrison Galleries

232 W. State Street, Geneva
630-232-0035
morrison galleries.com

Out of the Mainstream Designs

107 S. Second Street, Geneva
630-232-2419
outofthemainstreamdesigns.com

Proud Fox Gallery

213 W. State Street, Geneva
630-262-8797
proudfoxgallery.com

Verve on Third

227 S. Third Street, Geneva
630-845-1399
verveonthird.com

Dance

DancEncounter, Ltd.

School of Dance
630 E. State Street, Geneva
630-232-1221
dancencounter.tripod.com

State Street Dance Studio

9 North Fourth Street, Geneva
630-232-0444
statetreedancestudio.com

Vargo's Dance

(Specializing in BallRoom Dance)
115 W. State Street, Geneva
630-232-2990
vargosdance.com

St. Charles

St. Charles Arts Council (SCAC)

630-443-3794
stcharlesartscouncil@gmail.com

The St. Charles Arts Council's mission is to serve and promote the arts and cultural activities in St. Charles, to the mutual benefit of the arts and the community. They are involved in many art activities around St. Charles including the neXt Pop Up Galleries, and the "Art at Home" Program. The "Art At Home" Program is an initiative of the St. Charles Arts Council

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Art in your backyard

intended to support artists by giving them opportunities to showcase and be compensated for their talent. The events typically take place in someone's home and can include the work of performing artists, visual artists, culinary artists, etc.

St. Charles Fine Arts Show
 May 26-27, Downtown St. Charles
downtownstcharles.org/FineArtShow
 Sponsored by the Downtown St. Charles Partnership, this award-winning, highly regarded show features the work of 100 juried artists in various mediums including water-color, oil, sculpture, photography, jewelry, ceramics, fiber, wood, and glass, which are exhibited and available for sale during the event. Festival goers will get to enjoy live music and artist demonstrations throughout the weekend.

Theater/performance
Fox Valley Repertory—
Live Theater at Pheasant Run
 4051 E. Main Street, St Charles
 630-584-6342
foxvalleyrep.org
 Fox Valley Repertory (FVR) is a not-for-profit Performing Arts Company dedicated to entertaining, enriching and educating lives in the Fox Valley Area. As the largest, professional arts organization in the area, FVR strives to present outstanding productions and provide exceptional education programs through the FVR Performing Arts Academy.

The Dellora A. Norris
Cultural Arts Center
 1040 Dunham Road, St. Charles
 630-584-7200
norrisculturalarts.com

Founded in 1978, the Dellora A. Norris Cultural Arts Center includes an art gallery and a 1,000-seat performing arts theater. The theater features an hydraulically operated orchestra pit, a free-floating floor and enough separately operated flylines to bring in flats, battens, and backdrops for complete sets. It is located on the St. Charles East High School campus.

Steel Beam Theatre
 111 W. Main Street, St. Charles
 630-587-8521
steelbeamtheatre.com
 Steel Beam Theatre is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to bringing high quality theatrical entertainment, training, and arts awareness to the Fox Valley community at an affordable price. Located in the heart of downtown

St. Charles, it features a variety of adult and children's performances as well as classes, workshops and special events.

Arcada Theatre
 105 E Main Street, St Charles
 630-962-7000
oshows.com
 Arcada Theatre is an historic 888-seat performing arts center. A vaudeville venue in its early days, the theater has been hosting a variety of performing arts acts and movies since it was refurbished in 2005. It has hosted popular acts such as Rick Springfield, Bret Michaels, and The Bo Deans; as well as classic stars like Martin Short, Mickey Rooney, Jerry Lewis and Wayne Newton.

Marquee Youth (MY) Stage
 3800 E. Main Street, St. Charles
marqueeyouth.org
 MYStage is a youth-driven performing arts organization dedicated to providing young performers with a variety of enrichment opportunities throughout the year. Offerings include classes, workshops and full-scale plays and musicals in comedy and drama. MyStage's goals are to empower youth, build character, enrich minds, and serve the communities they reach through their programs.

Art Studios/Galleries
Fine Line Creative Arts Center/
Dempsey Gallery
 6N158 Crane Road, St. Charles
 630-584-9490
fineline.org

The Fine Line provides quality art education to promote exposure, expression, and the celebration of art. Their goal is to nurture the creative spirit in an inspirational, natural setting which engenders a



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nese Garden located in the Fabyan Forest Preserve on select dates in January and February. A special way to experience this unique garden, Winter Walks are scheduled on Jan. 11, Jan. 21, Feb. 8, and Feb. 18 from 1-2pm. A donation of \$2 per person is requested. As snow-covered ground is necessary, those interested in attending should call 630-377-6424 the day of to confirm tour status. ppfv.org

Free training for literacy volunteers

Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley will hold free tutor training on February 6, 8, 13 and 15 from 6:30-9pm at the St. Charles Public Library. The four-session workshop

will teach volunteers how to help an adult read, write and speak English. Each volunteer tutor will be matched with an adult learner. Volunteers will meet for one hour each week at a time and location that is convenient. Volunteers can register at lvfv.org or by calling 630-584-4428.

Donate, sell or volunteer at the Fifth Annual Hoover Wood Resale

Hoover Wood Elementary PTO is holding the Children's Clothing & Toy Resale Feb. 17 and 18. Donations are accepted through Feb. 10 and may be brought to the school office. Sellers may register by going to myconsignmentmanager.com/hwspto.

Sellers who volunteer at least six hours will receive 70% of the profit instead of the regular 60%. Volunteers who work three or more hours are eligible to shop at the pre-sale. Visit hwspto.org for more information.

Start training for the 12th Annual Fox Trot 5K Run/Walk

The Batavia Mothers' Club Foundation will host its 12th Annual Fox Trot 5K Run/Walk Sat., April 28 at the Batavia Riverwalk (Island Ave. and Houston St. in downtown Batavia).

Start time for the 5K run is 8am with the non-competitive walk starting at 8:05am. There are awards for the winners of the run in all age groups.

The Fox Trot also features non-competitive kids' fun runs from pre-schoolers through fifth graders. The kids' events begin at approximately 9:15am.

The cost for pre-registration is \$25 per adult and \$8

per child. There is a \$3 CARA member discount available only through pre-registration. Participants receive a t-shirt and goodie bag.

Funds raised support Batavia Public Schools and other educational opportunities for local families.

For more information or to register, please visit bataviamothersclub.org.

Batavia Artist Ed Cook inducted into the Illinois Senior Hall of Fame

On Oct. 24, at the Governor's mansion in Springfield, Batavia's own Ed Cook was inducted into the Illinois Senior Hall of Fame in the Performance and Arts category. For 30 years, Ed has painted intricately detailed miniature paintings—considered rare masterpieces. During that time, he also educated the public on this unique art form. His paintings have been recognized for merit in international miniature competitions.

Two LWV Candidate Forums coming up

On Mon., Jan. 23, The League of Women Voters of Central Kane County will present a Candidates Forum featuring the two Democrats and two Republicans seeking their party's nomination for Kane County Board Chair in the primary election on March 20. The event will begin at 7pm at the Norris Cultural Arts Center in St. Charles. Candidates in contested county-wide races for circuit clerk, coroner and auditor will also be invited to participate.

The League will host a sec-

ond forum on Thurs., Feb. 23, at Batavia City Council Chambers at 7pm for candidates in contested races for the 25th and 33rd state senate districts. Candidates in the newly redrawn 14th Congressional district will also be featured if there are contested races, but because of a delay in court approval of the new districts, their deadline for filing petitions has been extended to Dec. 27, well after our publication deadline.

For updated information visit lvwvckc.org.

Art in your back yard

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sense of community. Internationally known artists teach a variety of workshops and membership draws from the Chicago area and surrounding states. There are as many as 1,100 students a year, a teaching staff of 37-plus and well over 200 class offerings a year. The center is run almost entirely by volunteers. Fine Line members' artistic works are displayed and sold in the Dempsey Gallery, located on the first floor of the center.

La Galerie Fine Art

219 W Main Street
St. Charles, 630-584-7373
lagalerie ltd.com

Tony & Friends Art Studio

731 N. 17th Street, Unit 16
St. Charles, 630-377-5377
tonyandfriendsartstudio.com

Tony & Friends Art Studio in St. Charles teaches art workshops and classes including painting, sculpture, watercolors and more. Most workshops are taught by Tony Carneseccchi and the studio has classes for both children and adults.

neXt gallery/ Pop-up Art Gallery Program

nextgallerystcharles.org

The neXt gallery is a "Pop Up" gallery, which is typically an empty storefront/office building that is transformed into a temporary art gallery for a short period of time. The neXt gallery program is an initiative of the St. Charles Arts Council designed to create energy, excitement, and opportunities for artists – as pop up galleries have done in Chicago's Loop, Evanston, and cities around the world – and to provide opportunities for artists to showcase and be compensated for their talent. The program is called neXt gallery, because you never know where it will pop up next!

Norris Cultural Arts Center/ Norris Galleries

1040 Dunham Road, St. Charles
630-584-7200
norrisculturalarts.com

Music

The Fox Valley Academy of Music Performance

fvacademy.org

The Fox Valley Academy of Music Performance is a premier orchestra program that strives to enrich the life of Chicago's far western suburbs through the celebration of symphonic music. It is comprised of the Fox Valley Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus as well as the Fox Valley Youth Symphony Orchestra. The Academy's mission is to provide a challenging opportunity for musicians of all ages to study and perform great music together, while fostering creativity, friendships and life-long enrichment through the common language of music. The Academy also offers musical instrument instruction through its Access to Music program.

St. Charles Singers (SCS)

311 N. Second Street, Suite 201-B
St. Charles, 630-513-5272
stcharlessingers.com

The mission of the SCS is to perform, promote and preserve the finest choral music. This thirty-two voice, internationally-recognized, professional choir performs throughout the Chicagoland area

and appears as guest performers with other arts organizations in concert including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Elgin Symphony Orchestra. SCS has toured France and the U.K. and has performed under the direction of Timothy Brown, James Conlon and John Rutter (six times). SCS engages in educational and community outreach through its outreach ensembles and educational scholarship programs.

Dance

3rd Street Dance & Theatre Academy, Inc.

101 S. Third Street, St. Charles
630-443-0041
3streetdance.com

Beth Fowler School of Dance

2400 E. Main St. Suite 107b
St. Charles, 630-945-3344
bethfowerschoolofdance.com

Nelson Dance Center

1901 W. Main Street, St. Charles
630-584-2535
nelsondance.com

St. Charles School of Dance

1429 W. Main Street
St. Charles, 630-524-2602
saintcharlesschoolofdance.com

Underground Arts Connection

1820 Wallace Ave., Suite 123
St. Charles, 630-444-1464
undergroundartsconnection.com