

# Laurel Arts

*Arts for everyone*

Studio Kids  
PRESCHOOL

Laurel  
Arts  
DANCE

**ArtLink** • A Newsletter for the Members of Laurel Arts • December 2018

## *Dancers, band to present 12th annual Rhythms of Christmas December 8*

According to a newspaper clipping tucked away in a desk drawer from the Daily American published December 6, 2007. "Little girls dream about dancing with the big girls, and this Christmas their wishes come true," the article begins.

It goes on to talk about Laurel Arts' first-ever Rhythms of Christmas program. Miranda Zimmerman, now a dance instructor with Tonawanda Dance Arts in Buffalo as well as a faculty member and judge with Platinum National Dance Competition, was our student choreographer. There's also a picture that accompanies the article, and in the far left corner is tiny dancer Abby Burtner.

Fast forward to 2018, and Abby is one of 10 student choreographers for this year's show which will be presented at 1 p.m. Saturday, December 8 at Somerset Area High School.

"I have been in every Rhythms of Christmas performance since it began," Abby said. "I always enjoyed the older girls teaching me fun dances. It's a neat experience to now be one of the older girls teaching the younger dancers."

Each year students from our Performance Company at Laurel Arts volunteer to choreograph the dances for this show. They give up every Saturday from mid-October to mid-



(front from left) Seniors Mya Shomody, Alexis Mallory, Hanna Drake, and Makenna Messenger along with (back from left) Catherine Houghton, Abby Burtner, Isabella Lauer, Alexa Shaulis, Morgan Troy and Ashlyn Bittner have choreographed 10 dances for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Rhythms of Christmas show to be presented at 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1 at Somerset Area High School.

December; they select the music, design the costumes, and choreograph and teach the dances. It's a great learning experience for these kids; and over the years, some have gone on to teach dance.

The older students are at the dance center by 9 a.m. every Saturday (they're teenagers, so that's a sacrifice!) Abby said, "Waking up every Saturday morning is definitely worth it in the end. I'm glad I get to be a part of the show."

Joining Abby as student choreographers are Ashlyn Bittner, Hanna Drake, Catherine Houghton, Isabella Lauer, Alexis Mallory, Makenna Messenger, Alexa Shaulis, Mya Shomody and Morgan Troy.

Saturday's show will begin with "A Visit to the North Pole," a show-in-a-show featuring 27 performance company members that will also be presented at five elementary schools, Studio Kids preschool, The Sheltered Workshop, and two nursing homes.

*continued on page 7*

## **Upcoming exhibits**

*November 10-December 18*

### **Christmas Store**

Handmade art and craft items from local artists fill all three galleries during the holiday season. It's the perfect place to shop for that one of a kind gift.

*January 15-February 1*

### **Countywide Elementary School Art Exhibit**

Art provides an important means of expression for youngsters. Visit the galleries during this show to see art through the eyes of elementary school students. All county schools and homeschoolers are invited to participate.

**Open house & reception January 20**

*February 5-March 1*

### **Countywide Jr.-Sr. High Schools Art Exhibit**

Visit the galleries to see the progress made by older students as they continue to explore art through various mediums. This show features the artwork of students in Grades 7 through 12. All Somerset County Jr. and Sr. High School students as well as homeschooled students are invited to participate.

**Open house & reception February 10**

*March 8-March 29*

### **Somerset Area School District Art Exhibit**

Artwork will reach from floor to ceiling as Somerset Area School District art teachers showcase the creative works of students in Grades K-12.

**Open house & reception March 10**

## ***We say goodbye to another exceptional artist and friend***

Helen (Leerberg) Totzke Thorne, 92, of Laughlintown, passed away peacefully Sunday, Nov. 18. Helen often exhibited pieces in shows sponsored by Somerset County Artists Association at the Dressler Center. Over the years, she also taught classes in watercolor and pastels for Laurel Arts.



Helen Thorne

She was preceded by her husbands, Donald Totzke and John Thorne, her kindergarten classmates, in Edgewood. The daughter of Nis and Helga Leerberg and sister of Jim Leerberg (deceased) and Eileen Krabbe (deceased), was an award winning artist and gardener who loved teaching, traveling and dedicating her time to church and charitable causes.

A graduate of Carnegie Tech, Helen embraced opportunities to learn through the arts by teaching and taking classes into her 90s. Her cheerful countenance and boundless energy was an inspiration to many. Helen is survived by three daughters and their spouses, Karen and Mark Schecter, Pamela and Barry Ronan and Susan and Sean O'Rourke, and beloved grandchildren, Jessica Jackson (Terrell deceased), David Schecter, Dane Morris, Lauren Ronan, Kaleigh O'Rourke, Kyle O'Rourke and great grandson, Matthew Ronan Jackson. She was also blessed through her second marriage with additional family, John S. Thorne, Barbara Thorne (Edward Weiler) and Richard Thorne (Nancy), and their children, Alison Sebens (Alex Schuster) and Charles Sebens, Ellen and Heidi Thorne.

*Published in Greensburg Tribune Review on Nov. 25, 2018*

## **Thank you**

We would like to recognize the following people who made contributions in memory of Anna Marie Schnur who died September 20. Anna Marie was a long-time friend of Laurel Arts and a well-known artist. Making contributions in her memory are: Mary C. Hunter, Leslie & Frances Young, William & Bonne Gurzenda, Lillian J. Lutz, Kathy & Robert Reed, Judith Musser and Barbera Law.

### **GALLERY HOURS:**

Monday-Thursday: 11 am to 6 pm; closed Friday;

Saturday: noon to 4 pm; closed Sunday.

(Center will be open at other times for exhibit openings and events.)

## What would Christmas be without Laurel Arts?

One Christmas, many years ago, I made these crazy fleece hats for everyone in the family. All five of us, Dave, me and the kids (Alex, Garrett and Ashley) dressed in our warmest outdoor wear including our crazy fleece hats and trudged through the snow to attend First Night of Christmas at Laurel Arts.

Rarely do we have lots of snow for our First Night Celebration, but that particular year, there was plenty. There were kids rolling big balls of the white stuff to make snowmen in the lot across from the arts center. There were snowflakes tickling noses and lots of hands being warmed by the fire. It was magical for the kids and the adults.

Fast forward to last year. My daughter Ashley is all grown up, but when the fire truck brought Santa up the street and raised the ladder so he could create his magic from high above, she was awestruck.

I know the holidays can be harried and stressful. You may feel pressure to make the season super special by planning big trips or attending big-ticket events. But honestly, there is plenty of holiday fun and entertainment to be had locally; and a lot of it is free.

Join us for **First Night of Christmas** at Laurel Arts from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Friday, December 7. Not only will Santa light our tree, he will be announcing the winners of the holiday design contest (see pages 4 & 5). Then, he will move upstairs to visit with all the little ones.

Downstairs there will be entertainment, refreshments and shopping. Yes, shopping for unique, one-of-a-kind gifts made by local artists and crafters. There are doll clothes sized for American Girl, adorable pottery made by artists in our clay studio, fabulous jewelry, and lots of holiday décor.

The next day, at 1 p.m. Saturday, December 8, you can spend a couple hours enjoying the talents of our Laurel Arts dancers and the Somerset County Community Band. It's our 12th annual **Rhythms of Christmas**, a show that rivals the Rockettes Christmas Spectacular. REALLY! The auditorium seats are comfortable, the music includes all your holiday favorites, and the show is followed with a cookies and punch reception in the cafeteria.

Both events, **First Night of Christmas** and **Rhythms of Christmas**, are free. We do gratefully accept donations to the Dorothy Dressler Scholarship Fund.

Bring the family to both events and make magical memories.

**Happy Holidays from all of us at Laurel Arts**

Cindy Breen, president, Laurel Arts Board of Directors

**Thank you to**



Citizens Neighborhood Bank  
A Division of Riverview Bank

**for sponsoring our holiday events!**

## Our Dressler staff ...

**Jaclyn McCusker**

Director of Development

**April Davis**

Business Manager

**Kristin Ferre**

Administrative & Membership  
Assistant

**Senda Harvey**

Administrative Assistant

**Linda Harrill Peck**

Gallery Assistant / Curator

**Marsha Schmuck**

Classes / Programs Coordinator

**Dave Slowak**

Maintenance Director

This newsletter is published by Laurel Arts  
for its members and friends.

### Laurel Arts Board of Directors

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### The Philip Dressler Center for the Arts

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Somerset, PA 15501

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[jmccusker@laurelarts.org](mailto:jmccusker@laurelarts.org)

The official registration and financial information of Laurel Arts may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



Created by students at Meyersdale Area High School and sponsored by Meyersdale Area Merchants Association.



Created by students at North Star High School and sponsored by Highland Tank.

## *Schools create new holiday decorations*

I remember the first time I had the opportunity to visit New York City at Christmas. The lights scattered throughout the towering trees, the perfectly orchestrated window designs that draw you so close that you accidentally blur the window with your breath, the glimpses of red, gold, green and silver on every corner and down every street, are fond memories. The city that never sleeps has contributed a lot to the American holiday fabric, but the same could be said for the charm of small towns.

Whether your favorite holiday film is *Miracle on 34th Street* or *It's a Wonderful Life*, there is an underlying theme of bringing family together, community together and in a lot of these films, the town takes on a supporting role of its own. The feel of an uptown (or downtown) space can completely transform during the holidays, that holiday magic is made in part by the local organizations and businesses that go the extra mile to spread a bit more cheer this time of year; however, that cheer is not always cheap and for many towns, it can become quite an expensive undertaking to update or add holiday decorations. This is where a bit of imagination and a dash of ingenuity can create some magic — enter the Holiday Design Scholarship.

During a Somerset Borough meeting, Henry Cook, CEO of Somerset Trust Co., presented an idea for a holiday design competition where students would be

challenged to create large-scale holiday decorations for their communities. Soon after, Somerset, Inc. and Laurel Arts joined forces to make this idea a reality.

Six schools in the county agreed to participate, and their designs were delivered uptown just before Light Up Somerset on November 24. On December 2 they were moved to the Dressler Center, where they will be on display through First Night of Christmas Friday, December 7. The community has had the opportunity to vote for their favorite entry and the winning entries (Most Artistic, Best Technical, and People's Choice) will be announced at First Night. After First Night, the projects will be moved back to the schools' respective communities and be proudly displayed.

Somerset Trust is sponsoring the awards. Participating schools and their material sponsors are: Berlin — Center Rock; Conemaugh Township — Croyle-Nielsen Therapeutic; Meyersdale — Meyersdale Area Merchants Association; North Star — Highland Tank; Rockwood — Rockwood Casualty Insurance Company; and Somerset — Morocco Welding.

Voting for the people's choice continued through noon on Dec. 7. To vote, visit [www.somersetinc.org/holidaydesign](http://www.somersetinc.org/holidaydesign).

*Jaci McCusker*, Director of Development



Created by students at Rockwood Area High School and sponsored by Rockwood Casualty Insurance Company.

See all the designs at  
***First Night of Christmas at Laurel Arts***  
6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Friday, December 7  
214 S. Harrison Street, Somerset



Created by students at Somerset Area High School and sponsored by Morocco Welding.



Created by students at Berlin Brothersvalley High School and sponsored by Center Rock, Inc.



Created by students at Conemaugh Township High School and sponsored by Croyle-Neilsen Therapeutic.

# Mark your calendars for these upcoming events!

## ***Grinchmas Celebration***

Saturday, December 15, 1 pm, Education & Dance Center

Drop your kids off while you get some last minute Christmas shopping done. The kids will take part in a Grinchmas Celebration. Join us as we travel to Whoville and create some Grinch crafts, play games, and whip up a batch of special green cookies. Afterwards, we will watch How the Grinch Stole Christmas on the big movie screen. Cost: \$20 nonmembers/\$16 members payable to Laurel Arts plus a \$10 materials fee payable to Marsha Schmuck.

## ***Valentine Papercutting Workshop***

Saturday, January 12, 1:30 pm, Dressler Center

Experienced Papercutting Instructor, Kathy Trexel Reed will share with students the techniques involved to create beautiful cuttings. Participants will be guided in creating cut paper art for Valentine's Day. Your creations will be personal, inexpensive, and easy to mail. This class is free to the November Session I and II members. Cost for new participants is \$15 nonmembers/\$12 members payable to Laurel Arts plus a \$5 materials fee payable to Kathy Trexel Reed.

## ***Couponing for Beginners***

Saturday, January 19, 2 pm, Education & Dance Center

Are you a bit short on money after the holidays? Or perhaps your 2019 resolution is to spend less? If so, you'll want to join us for this couponing workshop with Cathy Tunstall. Cathy has saved countless dollars on groceries through couponing. During today's class, she will share her tips and strategies to help you save too. Folders with handouts, fliers, coupons, etc. will be provided. Class fee: \$22 nonmember/\$17.60 members payable to Laurel Arts plus a \$7 materials fee payable to Cathy Tunstall for materials.

## ***Pottery Plate Making Workshop***

Wednesday, February 27 & Wednesday, March 13, 6 pm, Education & Dance Center

This is an adult Pottery Workshop taught by experienced instructor Susan Wilson. Students will learn the techniques involved in creating their very own set of 4 plates created from clay. Susan will show students step by step how to create and decorate the plates using items such as lace, plant parts, stampers, and more. During the second class, students will return to glaze the plates they created in the first class. Class fee: \$35 nonmembers/ \$28 members payable to Laurel Arts plus a \$20 materials fee payable to Susan Wilson for clay and glazes.

## ***Soup-er Bowl Event***

Saturday, March 16, noon, Education & Dance Center

Come in and select a one-of-a-kind, handcrafted bowl made by local artists and receive a simple meal of soup, bread and beverages, all donated by local restaurants. The bowls are taken home and serve as a reminder that soup feeds the body and ART feeds the soul! Cost for the event is a \$15 donation. Tickets are available for advance purchase at Laurel Arts (Dressler Center location). Take out will also be available. This fundraising event will benefit the Laurel Arts Clay Studio and a local food pantry or organization

## ***Gelatin Printing Workshop***

Saturday, March 30, 11 am, Education & Dance Center

Allow nature to be your MUSE! Join Artist Edward Maier of Eddie Spaghetti Art for an afternoon of creative printmaking. Gelatin printing uses a pan of Knox Gelatin which is covered with waterbed ink. This spontaneous printing process creates unique prints using leaves and other elements of nature. Each participant will be able to create several unique works of art without having to draw. Cost: \$40 members/ \$32 nonmembers payable to Laurel Arts plus \$7 materials fee payable to Edward Maier. Children under 12 are half price with a paid adult. \*All ages are welcome to attend this class.

## ***Succulent Terrarium Building Workshop***

Sunday, March 31, 2 pm, Education & Dance Center

Class Instructor Autumn Harrold will be showing us some creative tips on how to build an amazing terrarium complete with succulent plants. Amanda has started her own business called Planter's Farmhouse and has already held several classes. We are so excited to have her teach here at Laurel Arts. She will provide students with all of the materials needed to build a beautiful terrarium including a container, succulents, dirt, rocks, etc. If you have a piece you would like to bring along to add, please feel free to do so. You are also welcome to bring food and drink along for yourself as we build and create together. All ages are welcome but we ask that children under 12 be accompanied by an adult. Cost for the class is \$20 nonmembers/ \$16 members payable to Laurel Arts plus a \$15 materials fee payable to Amanda Harrold.

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**All classes noted above require pre-registration.  
Please text or call Marsha at 814-442-6217  
or call Laurel Arts at 814-443-2433 to register.**

## 12th annual Rhythms of Christmas Dec. 8

continued from page 1

Somerset County Community Band, under the direction of Jason June, will also participate in Rhythms, playing many traditional Christmas favorites as well as some jazzed-up versions of well-known songs.

New this year will be an alumni performance with nine ladies dancing; plus lots of tap, ballet, jazz and lyrical dances with children as young as two through 18. Our adult students with special needs will also be "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree."

Kerri Burtner, Abby's mom, has sat through 12 years of rehearsals and performances. She said, "Rhythms is perfect for getting your entire family into the Christmas spirit," she continued. "The creativity of the performance company combined with the talents of the community band make for a fun afternoon."

As an added bonus, the show is free, but we will gratefully accept donations to the Dorothy Dressler Scholarship Fund which benefits many of our dance students. A reception will follow in the cafeteria.

### **Performance company takes show on the road**

Laurel Arts Performance Company members will take two days off school to perform this year's Christmas show at various locations throughout the county. Students at Somerset, North Star, Rockwood, Shanksville and Berlin elementary schools will be take a trip to the North Pole along with dancers: Zya Belardi, Ashlyn Bittner, Abigail Burtner, Ashley Ciepiela, Avery Cook, Taylor Cook, Faith Custer, Bena Croushore, Hanna Drake, Lindsay, Frazier, Emily Hostetler, Catherine Houghton, Cali Koval, Alana Kreger, Isabella Lauer, Alexis Mallory, Makenna Messenger, Teegan Pugh, Ava Pyle, Alyssa Richard, Kenadie Robosson, Katie Romesburg, Alexa Shaulis, Hayden Sheeler, Mya Shomody, McKenzie Spiker, and Morgan Troy .

Dancers will also visit the Sheltered Workshop, Studio Kids Preschool, Skills of Central PA, The Heritage at Seimons and Meadowview Nursing Center.

The show was written by Amanda Bergstresser, lead instructor.



From the Daily American, December 6, 2007. Pictured are Abby Burtner and Alexa Shaulis (two little ones in the middle) and Miranda Zimmerman (right).

**Laurel Arts**  
DANCE

### **Education & Dance Center staff ...**

**Brianna Smail**  
Education & Dance Center  
Administrator

**Amanda Bergstresser**  
Lead Dance Teacher

#### *Dance Instructors*

**Cindy Breen**

**Megan Girimonti**

**Melissa Gindlesperger**

**Aubree Maus**

**Studio Kids**  
PRESCHOOL

**Angela Fullard**  
Preschool Teacher

**Patricia Ohler**  
Preschool Aid

**Marsha Schmuck**  
Fundraising Coordinator &  
Preschool Aid

**Laurel Arts**  
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Happy  
Holidays!

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Permit No. 2

**Remember the Christmas Craft Shoppe  
will be open until December 18.**

Current resident or

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Wheeler Family Charitable Trust  
Wheeler Bros. Inc.

**Thank you to ...**

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