



# WINDHAM REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL ARTSPECTRUM

Volume #69 Issue #2 Spring 2025

*Promoting the arts in Windham and surrounding regions.*

## Message from the President

### IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	Pg 1
Students at the Garde Arts	Pg 2
A4A Fund Raising Event	Pg 2
Marika Solomon Marcy 2025 YAMC Concerto Award Winner	Pgs 3 & 4
Members in Spotlight	Pg 4
Summer Concerts @ Shaboo	Pg 5
Call for Entries & Upcoming Events	Pg 6
"Take Note!" Benefit Concert	Pg 5
WRAC Members Show	Pg 5
Hospital Gallery Exhibits	Pg 7
Windham Theatre Guild	Pg 8
Donate Band Instruments	Pg 8

### WRAC Board Members

**Cathy Shires**  
President

**Carol Twardowski-Heap**  
Vice President

**Sara Rogers**  
Secretary

**Joanne Sibicky**  
Treasurer - pro tem

**Sheila Clark**

**Trish Fabish / Janet Gaylor**

**Greg Grzywacz / Tom Hurlbut**

**Lorraine McDevitt**

**Melanie Noble**

**Priyeshni Perera**

**Scott Rhoades**

**Linda Tracy**

**Michelle Welles**

**Lorraine Williams**

Hello to all WRAC members and friends. The advent of springtime for me always brings feelings of great anticipation for many things: warm, sunny days spent in the garden or at the shore, dinner on the patio, or a sidewalk conversation with a neighbor I haven't seen in a while. The warmer days are a reminder of springtime events we have here at WRAC. We will begin the season with an enjoyable performance by the Willimantic Orchestra, featuring the solo performance by the Young Artist Music Competition winner. In June, we will host our annual Members Art Exhibit and reception. In July, we will host two concerts at the Shaboo Stage. Details of these events, and more, are in this issue of Art Spectrum.



I have just completed my tenth year as president of this wonderful organization. The time has come to pass my "virtual gavel" on to new leadership. My involvement with WRAC has changed my life for the better, mainly because of the new friends and acquaintances I have met over the years. I am always in awe of the steadfast, loyal, committed members who contribute their time, talents and financial resources for the good of the organization. Our dedicated board of directors is truly the heartbeat of WRAC, and our members are the life blood!

I believe the best way to forecast the future is to look retrospectively at the past. When I worry about our path to the future, I reflect on how far we have come. I joined the WRAC board of directors in 2007, on the invitation of the late Bette MacDonald. I had much to learn. Since that time, we have developed a digital presence, increased our programs to reach a greater population, pursued and successfully secured grant funding, just to name a few. Our dedicated board of directors brings a myriad of talents, such as the planning of the annual music competition, the art exhibits, the design of the newsletter, and digital media. Our treasury is sound, and organizational assets are responsibly allocated to bring meaningful arts experiences to our community. The strides we have made these past 18 years are an indicator that the future looks very good.

While my term as president is ending, I intend to continue to devote my energies to WRAC in a different capacity. In June, we will present the membership with a new slate of officers. My thanks to Carol Twardowski-Heap, who has stepped forward as the nominee for the president's position. Carol brings a wealth of experience in her direction of the music competition, and as Vice President. She is a trusted friend and my voice of reason. We are definitely in good hands. I invite any interested member to reach out to us to serve as a member of our board. Thank you all for your support and commitment to community arts. I am very grateful.

*Cathy Shires, WRAC President*

## Students Get Involved at the Garde Arts Center



Thanks to the fund-raising efforts by the WRAC Board of Directors, transportation to the Garde Arts Center in New London was provided for 3rd grade students from Lebanon Elementary School on April 22. The Eastern CT Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Toshi Shimada, performed an enjoyable selection of works by Beethoven and Dvorak as the children played along with their recorders. The finale of the performance was a sing-along in English and Spanish of Jim Papoulis's "Oye". The children had pre-



event classroom preparation and enthusiastically sang along in both languages. The purpose of WRAC's bus transportation fund is to provide the opportunity for local schools to bring arts experiences to students and bring memorable enjoyment and learning outside of the classroom.

## A4A Needs Your Help

When Hurricane Helene hit the community of Asheville, North Carolina last September, hundreds of artists in the once thriving arts district were displaced. The devastation was unmatched. The French Broad River rose to over 24 feet, and the waters washed away countless studios, shops and work spaces. There were 43 casualties from the storm, and an estimated \$53 Billion in property losses. According to the Asheville Citizen Times newspaper, the resulting debris from the event is 3 million cubic yards. To put that in perspective, that amount of debris would fill 140 football fields, end zone to end zone, and piled 10 feet high in each field.

Nancy Bunnell, a Willington artist, teacher and founder of the local Art & Garden Tour saw the news coverage and knew that something needed to be done to help the artists of Asheville who lost so much. She made connections with local art groups such as the Ashford Area Arts Collaborative, Windham Regional Arts Council, and Artists Open Studios, to name a few. Thanks to Nancy's vision, the foundation is laid for a major art and musical event to take place on Saturday, September 13, 2025, at the Jillson Park and Shaboo Stage, Willimantic. The mission of the endeavor is to raise much needed funding for non-profit arts groups in Asheville who are recognized leaders in helping these artists rebuild their businesses and their lives. All profits from the event will go directly to this effort. With the help of local musician and philanthropist Bruce John, there will be music throughout the day, concessions and other fund-raising efforts. Plans are in place for a number of visitors from the Asheville area to attend the event and give testimony to what they experienced during and after the flood and describe local efforts to rebuild.

How can we help? Artists and volunteers who are interested in taking part in the show should contact the Windham Regional Arts Council for entry information Email: [contactus@windhamrac.org](mailto:contactus@windhamrac.org) Entry fees collected will be put toward the fundraising, but sales would remain with the vendor. Food vendors are being sought. Interested licensed vendors should contact Bruce John via email: [brucejohn1951@gmail.com](mailto:brucejohn1951@gmail.com)

Let's show our support for Asheville,  
Eastern Connecticut style!

### ARTISTS FOR ASHEVILLE

An Arts & Music Event to Support the  
Asheville, North Carolina Arts Community



Hosts:  
The Town of  
Windham  
Windham Regional  
Arts Council  
Ashford Area Arts  
Bruce John Music

Saturday, September 13, 2025

11:00 - 5:00

Jillson Park / Shaboo Stage  
Willimantic

Mark Your Calendars

Media & Business Sponsorships Welcome  
[brucejohn1951@gmail.com](mailto:brucejohn1951@gmail.com)

Submitted by Cathy Shires

## Meet Marika Solomon Marcy 2025 Concerto Competition Winner of the Young Artist Competition



Cellist Marika Solomon Marcy received the Concerto Award at this year's Young Artist Music Competition, earning the opportunity to perform as a featured soloist with the Willimantic Orchestra later this season. A high school senior with deep roots in the Mansfield Suzuki program and an impressive record of musical achievement, Marika brings passion, versatility, and a spirit of curiosity to everything she plays. We congratulate Marika on this well-deserved honor and wish her all the best as she prepares for her debut performance and looks ahead to an exciting future in music. In the conversation below, she reflects on her musical journey so far—from her first cello lessons at age six to her plans for college and beyond—and shares the inspirations and experiences that have shaped her along the way.

**Could you tell me about your training as a musician? Your first teacher, what music school, how old were you when you began? Was there a particular teacher who inspired you or who had the greatest influence on your musical development? Etc.**

*I began the cello when I was in first grade (6 years old) through the Mansfield Suzuki program. I took lessons from Sondra Boyer for my first four years and performed with the other Suzuki students at the Mansfield elementary schools and String Fling. I began to take lessons with Thomas Calabro when I aged out of the Suzuki program and entered middle school (10 years old) and still take lessons from him, performing with his other students in a recital every spring.*

*Many teachers have influenced my development in different ways. I will always be grateful to Sondra Boyer for introducing me to the cello and encouraging me to challenge myself and continue to play. Lindsey Clark, at the middle school, has also had a large impact by introducing me to fiddle music, orchestra, and chamber groups, as has Ken Johnson, who introduced me to choir and musical software.*

**Do you play any other instruments?**

*I do not take lessons for any other instruments, but enjoy figuring them out and learning the basics. I have sung in school and community choirs since middle school, and play the viola in my school fiddle band. I also know the basics of violin, bass, ukulele, mandolin, piano, recorder, and Irish tin whistle.*

**Please tell me about your musical achievements: awards, recognitions, solo performances, festivals, accomplishments, groups that you have or currently play with.**

*Outside of school orchestras and clubs, I currently play with the Connecticut Youth Symphony and the Willimantic Orchestra. I have also played with the CMEA Eastern Region, CMEA All State, and NEMFA Orchestras for multiple years. I enjoy going to local events like the UConn String and Cello festivals, Arazzo music festival, and fiddle festivals, and have attended the New England Music Camp for three years. I also enjoy getting together with friends to play chamber music, and performed with a quintet at the CT-ASTA Solo and Ensemble festival for three years. I have performed in studio recitals since middle school, and have performed in masterclasses with Richard Aaron and Samuel DiCaprio. Playing with the Willimantic Orchestra will be my concerto debut!*



**What is your favorite musical genre? What types of pieces do you enjoy most of all and why? Favorite composer?**

*I don't really have a specific favorite musical genre. I especially love classical and romantic orchestral music, but I can also be found fiddling wherever I can with friends. I'm not a huge fan of trying to play pop music on the cello, but am definitely a fan of many indie and rock artists. I also love movie soundtracks, and can spend hours nerding out about the composition of the soundtrack of Lord of the Rings. Basically, I love anything that I can either jam to or dissect (or, even better, both!).*

*I can't say I have a favorite composer either—it really depends on my mood. At the moment, I'm definitely a fan of Dvorak and Beethoven, but ask me again in a couple weeks and my answer might be completely different.*

**Are you planning to pursue music? If so, where? What would be your aspirations professionally?**

*Yes, I'm hoping to go to college for music! I don't know for sure where I'm going yet, but I'm hoping to major either in cello performance or general music. My top schools right now are Bard Conservatory and Brown University. At the moment, my eventual goal is to get my masters in music education and become a teacher, but that could change. I am also planning to get a second degree in chemistry.*

**Please include anything else you would like to tell me about: for instance: other interests, accomplishments, etc.**

*My other hobbies include reading, writing, visual art (like painting and embroidery), and working out. I am also a big STEM nerd, and love to learn about all things science and math!*

## Members in the Spotlight: David Corsini & Delia Berlin

We wish a fond farewell to David Corsini and Delia Berlin as they move from the Willimantic area to relocate to West Hartford. We are sure their decision to move was not easy but certainly was logical. They will now live closer to their children, while also having the benefit of living near local arts and recreational activities that they enjoyed in Windham.

David is well known for his creative and whimsical assemblages, which can be seen in public gardens, private homes and businesses. He put many of his works in WRAC art shows over the years and was a steady participant in Artists Open Studios. Many of these works he donated, accepting no payment in return.

Delia is well known for her work in bilingual children's literature, and her regular columns in the Neighbors newspaper. In recent years, she embarked on learning clay and sculpture methods at Spiral Arts Studio, creating beautiful feeders for her beloved wild birds. Their new home will be enlivened by Curly, a young poodle who came to live with them last year.

On April 27, a group of WRAC members and other friends of David and Delia gathered for lunch at the Willimantic Brewing Company to bid them a fond farewell. As Delia wrote, "We feel truly honored and loved by so many great people. We leave with full hearts and strengthened by all the good wishes." It was the least that can be done for a couple who left such an impact on a community. We give our thanks and wish them the very best!



# Summer Concerts at Shaboo!

Once again, WRAC is proud to host two exciting concerts for the community to enjoy.



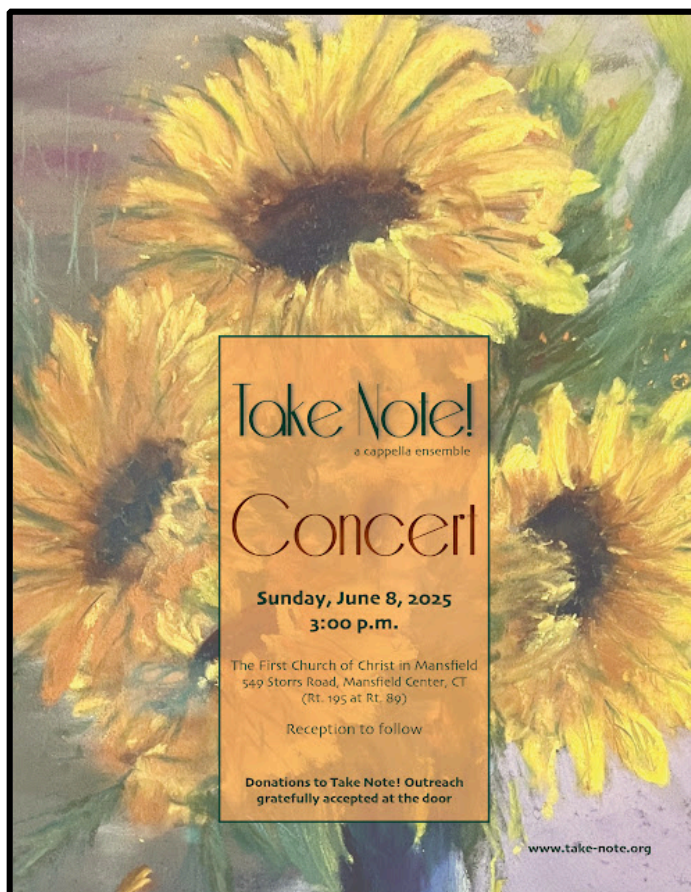
We are happy to bring back the Windham Concert Band on Thursday, July 24 at 6:30 PM to the Shaboo Stage, Jillson Park, Willimantic. This community band, directed by Kay Niemasik, will perform a variety of patriotic music, Broadway and movie tunes, and international selections for your listening enjoyment.

On July 31, we will host the Flamingo Big Band, an all-female ensemble of 15 performers. This band will get you moving as they perform music from the swing era, rock n' roll, pop tunes and rhythm & blues. Concert time will be 6:30 PM.



Both concerts are open to the public and free of charge.

Bring the family, a lawn chair or blanket, snacks and soft drinks for two enjoyable evenings of toe-tapping entertainment!



**Windham Regional**  
**ARTS COUNCIL**  
Promoting the arts in Windham and surrounding towns.

*2025 Annual Members Exhibit*

**June 6 thru June 8, 2025**

**Friday, June 6, 2025**

**Annual Members Meeting 6:00**

**Opening Reception 6:30 - 8:00**  
**thru**

**Sunday, June 8, 2025**

**Open Saturday & Sunday 12-4:00**

**Johnson Community Room**

**J. Eugene Smith Library**

**Eastern CT State University**

**268 High Street, Willimantic, CT**

**"Call for Entries" form will be in the mail soon!**



# Call for Entries & Upcoming Exhibits



**Art & Garden Tour  
of Northeastern CT**

**Creativity on Display!**  
Second Weekend of June  
10am – 5pm

[www.ArtGardenCT.com](http://www.ArtGardenCT.com)

[facebook.com/ArtandGardenTourofNortheasternCT](https://facebook.com/ArtandGardenTourofNortheasternCT)



**6th Annual Ekphrastic  
Extravaganza**  
June 7th - July 5th  
(submission deadline has past)

Please visit [artscentereast.org](http://artscentereast.org) for more exhibits.



Visit [lymeartassociation.org](http://lymeartassociation.org)  
for all upcoming 2025 "Call for Entries"

*Monson Arts Council presents*

## Funky Is Good

**31st Annual  
Spring Art  
Exhibition &  
Sale!**

Reception: 5/10  
1:00 - 4:00

Award Presentation:  
2:00

The exhibition runs  
May 10-11  
May 17-18  
May 24-25  
12:00 - 5:00




*A regional juried exhibit open to artists  
in CT, New York and New England*

April 27 - June 1, 2025 | Clubhouse and Saltbox Galleries  
Juror: Erin Monroe, Kriebler Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture  
Wadsworth Atheneum

The Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra  
celebrates

*the Remarkable Adventures of*  
**Connecticut's Own**

**LEROY ANDERSON**



and many other amazing feats of

**COMPOSITION**

At Clark Chapel, Pomfret School (on Rt. 44)

Friday, May 16, at 7 pm

Sunday, May 18, at 2 pm

Admission Free • Donations Welcome



**Saturday Night Poetry**  
at  
**The Vanilla Bean Cafe**

450 Deerfield Rd  
Pomfret, CT

Readings & Open Mic 7-9 PM  
Admission \$15.00  
includes raffle



Meg Smith  
May 31st



Open Mic, 5 min limit  
As time allows

Email [karen.warinsky@gmail.com](mailto:karen.warinsky@gmail.com)  
Recommended ages 14 and up

A sponsored project of  
Windham Arts/ADA compliant



Nathan Hale Homestead Field

The Marlborough Art Center  
will present the first place  
award to Scott Rhoades at the  
opening reception on May 18th.

Scott's artwork will be on  
exhibit at the Nathan Hale  
Homestead in Coventry, CT the  
month of August.

**WRAC invites you to join or renew your membership and receive the ArtSpectrum**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H/C) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Categories (circle one):** New / Renewal

(check one) \$15 (individual) \_\_\_ \$20 (Family) \_\_\_ \$100 (Group) \_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Your area of artistic skill (circle all that apply):** Visual Art / Music / Writing / Drama / Dance

**Your Donation helps WRAC continue to promote the ARTS in the Windham and surrounding regions. If you wish to help promote the ARTS further, please consider enhancing your membership to one of the following levels:**

(check one) Benefactor \$100 \_\_\_ Patron \$50 \_\_\_ Donor \$30 \_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to the Windham Regional Arts Council (WRAC) and mail to  
P.O.Box 847, Willimantic, CT 06226**

## Upcoming Windham Hospital Exhibits

Artists featured at the Windham Hospital Gallery:

**February:** The Quiet Corner Camera Club - *photography*

**March:** Charles McCaughtry - *watercolors*  
Scott Rhoades - *acrylics*

**April:** WRAC Group Show -  "BEE Kind"

**May:** Held over -  "BEE Kind"

**June:** Lorraine DuBois - *photography*

**July:** Susan Harpin - *acrylics*

**August:** WRAC Group Show - "Dog Days of Summer"

**September:** **OPEN** (Please sign up - solo, duo or group)

**October:** Tom Potter - *photography*  
Jane Horsman Potter - *mixed media*

**November:** Nancy Bergeron - *watercolors*  
Cindy Carey - *metal art*

**December:** WRAC Group Show - "Small (9x12 or smaller) & Affordable"



Any artist, artists or group who would like to exhibit their work (solo or shared) should contact Trish Fabish at (860) 617-5326 or text.

**NOTE:** A new procedure has been implemented whereby the artist will be notified when a piece of art has been sold, giving the artist the option to replace the sold art with another for the duration of their exhibit.

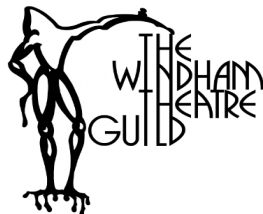




**Has your membership expired?**



Any member who would like to receive the ArtSpectrum (in color) via email please send your request to [Contactus@windhamrac.org](mailto:Contactus@windhamrac.org)



Burton Leavitt Theatre  
779 Main St., Willimantic

**Presents:**



**Windham Theatre Guild  
Broadway Chorus Concert**

April 25 & 26, 2025 at 7:30 pm



May 9th & 10th at 7:00pm  
May 16th & 17th at 7:00pm  
May 18th at 2:00pm

**Please visit website for more information.**

**WANTED: Your Unused  
Band Instrument**



Many thanks to Melanie Noble for her donation of a flute for the band instrument donation program. We are happy that instruments collected to date are actively being distributed under the advice of Mr. Tom Pelton, Band Director, Instrumental Music and Music Technology educator at Windham High School.

If you have an unused band instrument (brass or woodwind) that you can donate for use by a needy student, please email us: [contactus@windhamrac.org](mailto:contactus@windhamrac.org) or call Cathy Shires at (860) 423-1728. Instruments that are in need of minor repairs will be gladly accepted.