



WINDHAM REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL ARTSPECTRUM

Volume #70 Issue #3 Fall 2025

Promoting the arts in Windham and surrounding regions.

Message from the President

*Greetings to the membership of the
Windham Regional Arts Council!*



I would like to take this opportunity to, first and foremost, extend sincerest thanks and appreciation to Cathy Shires. Cathy faithfully served as President for 10 years. Her unwavering dedication to the WRAC was beyond what any organization could ask of their leader.

"Cathy, we thank you and appreciate all that you have done to lead the WRAC for a decade."

My name is Carol Twardowski-Heap. I became a board member of the WRAC in 2018. This past June, I was nominated and elected to serve as your next President.

A little about me: My interest in the fine arts began at age 7 when I first started classical ballet lessons. I have continued to dance throughout my life. At the age of 60, I finally retired my point shoes! But, I continue to dance.

At the tender age of 51, I began to take piano lessons. It was a long and arduous musical journey. Measure by measure, I continue to become the pianist I set out to be. Music holds a very special place in my heart. My continuation of music and ballet will always bring a special joy to my soul.

As artists, we all share a passion to express ourselves through our chosen art form. This is the bond that brings us together as members of the WRAC. As of 2025, our organization has thrived for 42 years. We remain strong and vibrant. Our strength has been a result of countless hours of hard work and loyalty from our membership.

We are always interested in new ideas for events to promote the arts in Windham county. And welcome your ideas. Please share your vision and thoughts with our board members. As we are within reach of 50 years as an established organization, we would also love to reach out to our younger artists to help us plan and mold the future.

WRAC continues to host art events and the Young Artist Music Competition. Be sure to visit our website for details on all the latest happenings.

I look forward to meeting our membership. In the ballet world, the expression is "See you at the barre". In the WRAC world, "I will see you at the easel, camera, barre, music stand or wherever the fascinating world of art brings us together."

Carol Twardowski-Heap - WRAC President

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WRAC Board Members

*Carol Twardowski-Heap
President*

Vice President

*Sara Rogers
Secretary*

*Cathy Shires
Treasurer*

Sheila Clark / Nancy Bunnell

Trish Fabish / Janet Gaylor

Greg Grzywacz

Tom Hurlbut

Lorraine McDevitt

Melanie Noble

Priyeshni Perera

Scott Rhoades

Linda Tracy

Lorraine Williams

Dollars and Cents

In order to further inform the Windham Regional Arts Council membership, the board members thought it was time the membership knew how the membership dues, donations, and funding grants are used.

I am very pleased to report that WRAC has been awarded a Supporting Arts grant of \$1,360.00 by the Connecticut Office of the Arts for 2026. Thanks to the efforts of Lorraine Williams of the grants committee, our application was approved, with a 23% increase over the 2025 award total for the grant. The grant stipulations are that the money is to be used for operating expenses. Receipt of the award is anticipated by January 2026.

Below is a summary of WRAC's income and operating expenses for the period of June 1, 2025 – October 31, 2025. Please note the data in the table represents WRAC's own income and expenses for the period. Income and expenses for the Artists for Asheville campaign were maintained separately and appear below the table (see related article).

| Item | Income | Expense | Fund Source |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| Donation & Membership Income | \$817.60 | | |
| Directed Donation | \$500.00 | | |
| Technology, Office and Postage | | \$365.60 | General Account |
| Publicity Expense | | \$200.00 | General Account |
| School Buses to Opera | | \$597.75 | Education Fund |
| Summer Concert Series | | \$500.00 | Concert Fund |
| Miscellaneous Expenses | | \$164.97 | General Account |

Artists for Asheville: Donations & Artist Entry Fees: \$10,419.47
 Publicity Expenses: \$480.00
 Sound Technician Services: \$500.00
 Balance as of 10/31/2025: \$9,439.47

Submitted by Cathy Shires - Treasurer



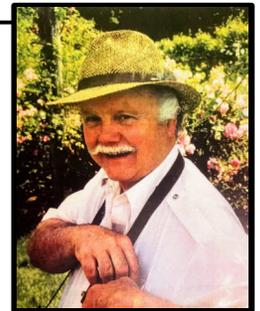
In Memorium

With great sadness, we learned of the passing of Gordon MacDonald on October 26, 2025. Gordon and his wife Bette were longtime members of WRAC, and Gordon was a valued member of the board for many years. Per Gordon's obituary, he was born in Hartford in 1934. His family moved to Andover, and he attended Windham High School, where he met the love of his life, Bette. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Pratt Institute.

Gordon and Bette married, raised a family, and together they became involved in local arts; especially community theater, musical performance and visual art. Archived issues of Art Spectrum and other memorabilia maintained by WRAC shows that Gordon and Bette became involved with this organization not long after its founding in 1983.

By the 1990s, Gordon and Bette settled into their beautiful Victorian home on Church Street, Willimantic. They became active in the Victorian Neighborhood Association, the Windham Theatre Guild, and many other community groups. Gordon championed the establishment of murals throughout the town.

His most lasting work can still be viewed in the dining room of the Willimantic Brewing Company and at the Windham Mills Heritage Park. These amazing works are Gordon's gift to us. In honor of his proud Scottish heritage, pay a visit to either site, raise a glass of whiskey or a strong cup of tea, and give thanks to this generous man who loved his wife, his family and our community. Donations in Gordon's memory may be made to the Windham Theatre Guild (windhamtheatreguild.org)



Spotlight on: Avin Perera



Feather Spearman & Avin Perrera

Photo by Tom Hurlbut

2025 winner of the Feather Spearman Honor

Avin began piano lessons at the age of 5 and violin lessons at the age of 8. By age 12, he had completed the examinations in grades 1-6 through the associated board of the Royal School of Music.

As he continued his studies in piano, violin, and voice, he began to feel called to serve others with the musical talent that God had given him as "a well and trustworthy servant".

As there are not many church members who are willing and able to lead singing and play instruments, including the piano and pipe organ for Sunday worship services, Avin saw a need and an opportunity to promote traditional hymns that are enjoyed by the older generation. The church service was live streamed and the worship services are archived so that a larger community can be reached through music.

Avin also became a volunteer accompanist to support the Consonare Choral community, a non-profit organization which solely runs on grants.

It is a community service organization to uplift choral music and build community in Mansfield through choral music. Additionally, he was part of a youth choir that encouraged the residents at the Juniper Hill senior center facility in Storrs, CT.

We recognize and thank Avin for his service through music!

About the Feather Spearman Honor

The Feather Spearman Honor was created to honor Feather Spearman, who served as competition director for over 20 years. Feather worked tirelessly to promote, organize, and maintain its smooth operations. She continues to avail herself to us.

This honor is presented to one student each year who has utilized their gift and love of music to serve. Areas of service may include your community, a non-profit organization, or health care facility.

How do I become a candidate for the Feather Spearman Honor?

If you are interested or know of a student who would be a good candidate for the honor, please visit our website and apply. The award is presented at the annual Young Artist Music Competition. However, participation in the competition is not required.

Application for the Feather Spearman Honor and registration for this year's competition is open until January 14, 2026.

The competition date is **January 24, 2026**. (The snow date is January 31, 2026)

If you have questions about the Feather Spearman Honor or the competition, please call or email:

Carol Twardowski-Heap

Competition director

860-933-8015 or 1880house@sbcglobal.net





Dear Friends of the Young Artist Music Competition,

We're excited to announce that registration is now open for the 39th Annual Young Artist Music Competition, hosted by the Windham Regional Arts Council!

 Date: Saturday, **January 24, 2026** • **1:00 PM**

 Location: von der Mehden Recital Hall, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

 Snow date: **January 31, 2026**

 Entry Deadline: **January 14, 2026**

Competition Categories

General Competition

- Open to vocalists and instrumentalists, solo or ensemble.

Concerto Competition

- For instrumentalists performing concerto movements or showpieces with orchestral accompaniment.

The Feather Spearman Honor

- A non-performance award recognizing community service through music.

Open to students in grades 7–12, the event offers opportunities for both instrumentalists and vocalists to perform, gain valuable experience, and compete for cash and special awards.

Learn more and register online: windhamwrac.org - select the bars in upper right hand corner for drop downs and select **Events**.

We look forward to celebrating another wonderful day of music, artistry, and community spirit.

Please share this announcement with students, families, and music educators who may be interested.

Warm regards,

Carol Twardowski-Heap

Competition Director / President - Windham Regional Arts Council

 (860) 933-8015  1880house@sbcglobal.net

And the Award Goes To.....



Kindred Spirits



Safe Harbor

Congratulations to Scott Rhodes
Scott's painting titled "Kindred Spirits" was awarded Best in Show at the Mystic Museum of Art. That same night, Scott won the top award, the Marty & Don Wilmot Award at the Granby Land Trust exhibit for his artwork titled "Safe Harbor".



Gristmill on Cape Cod

WRAC member Lorraine DuBois won two awards for her photograph "Gristmill on Cape Cod" at the Beckish Senior Center in Columbia, CT. She was awarded 1st prize overall and the senior's choice for "Best in Show".
Congratulations Lorraine

Call for Entries & Upcoming Exhibits



Call for Artists from Fletcher Memorial Library

Interested in showing your paintings, prints, or photographs? Fletcher Memorial Library's Top Shelf Gallery is looking for artists willing to display their work for a month or two. This safe, well lighted venue is available during library hours.

Contact John at jobrienart@yahoo.com or call the library at 860-455-1086. More information is also available on the library website, www.fletchermemoriallibrary.org.



Please visit artcentereast.org for all upcoming events and classes.



Visit lymeartassociation.org for all upcoming 2026 "Call for Entries"



Jonathan Trumbull Library

The 26th Annual Equinox and the Arts Show will return to JTL in March 2026

Watch for further information as it becomes available.

2025 Artists' Open Studios
OF NORTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT
www.aosct.org



Nov. 28, 29, 30
Dec. 6, 7
10am – 5pm



Burton Leavitt Theatre
779 Main St., Willimantic

Get Your ACT Together!

The Importance Of Being Earnest
By Oscar Wilde
Directed by J. Michael Spencer

Auditions Early December

Show Dates: February 27th-28th, March 1st, 5th, 6th, 7th, 11th, 12th

Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus
by Bob Cooner

Directed by Scott Stephen Kogler Assistant Directed by Bella Walls

December 5th-7th, 11th-14th

Please visit windhamtheatreguild.org for show dates, tickets, other scheduled events & more information.

"My World" Exhibit

by Jean McNally





Currently on view, now through December 30, 2025, at The Corridor Gallery in the Putnam Municipal Complex, 200 School Street, Putnam, CT. Featuring a fantastic collection of oil paintings that capture the beauty of our local area. Exhibit is free and open to the public. Visit www.PutnamCtArtsCouncil.com for gallery hours and more information.

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:

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

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



2026 Hospital Shows

January: Susan Hunter - *Acrylic and mixed media*

July: Bev York - *painting/sculpture in frames*

February: The Quiet Corner Camera Club -
photography

August: WRAC Group Show - TBA

March: Heather Brunelle - *watercolors*

September: Robert Denton - *acrylics*

April: WRAC Group Show - "*Pretty in Pink*"

October: Scott Rhodes and ? - *acrylics*

May: Janet Dassau - *photography*

November: Micky Welles and ?

June: Lorraine DuBois - *photography*

December: WRAC "Small and Affordable"

Thank you to all of the artists who have signed up to show at Windham Hospital in 2026. If you have not exhibited at the hospital before, please visit the gallery before your month. If your work is small, 11x14 and smaller, you will need about 30 pieces to fill the space. Please call Trish Fabish 860-617-5326 or email ftwart@gmail.com if you have any questions.

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

MUSIC
 to Warm the Heart

Winter Concert
 to benefit the
Covenant Soup Kitchen

Sunday, December 7, 2025
3:00 p.m.

The First Church of Christ in Mansfield
 549 Storrs Road, Mansfield Center, CT
 (Rt. 195 at Rt. 89)

Donations gratefully accepted
 at the door

Take Note!
 a cappella ensemble

www.covenantsoupkitchen.org www.take-note.org

The Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra
 is
Going for BAROQUE

Bach
 Handel
 Vivaldi

At Clark Chapel, Pomfret School (on Rt. 44)
 Friday, November 21, at 7 pm
 Sunday, November 23, at 2 pm

Admission Free • Donations Welcome