

Laurel Arts

Arts for everyone



ArtLink • A Newsletter for the Members of Laurel Arts • **Holidays 2024**

18th *Rhythms of Christmas* performance set for 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14

Run, Run Rudolph and all the reindeer to the 18th annual Rhythms of Christmas performance at 1 p.m. Saturday, December 14 at Somerset Area High School!

The show will open with **Christmas at the North Pole**, a show that our performance company will also present to elementary schools around the county the day before Rhythms. Children (of all ages) will be delighted to see gingerbread cookies, elves, poinsettias, jack-in-the-boxes and more dancing to their favorite Christmas songs.

Almost all of the other dance numbers in the show were choreographed by members of our senior performance company. The girls select music, choose costumes, create the choreography and teach their dances to their students beginning in October. They have four hours with each group to get their dances ready for the stage.

Somerset Community Band will perform 10 pieces, including **Jingle Jam**, which will be danced to by our choreographers. Being able to dance to live music is a special treat for our students.

There will be a cookies and punch reception following the show in the high school cafeteria.



This year's choreographers are (left to right) Kylee Mallory, Tiana Augustine, Hailey Bowlby, Ashley Ciepiela, Teegan Pugh, Emma Klahre (seated), Mirabella Tweardy, Kyleigh Bailey, and Isabelle Schmuck.

There is no admission charge for **Rhythms of Christmas**, although we are grateful for donations, which help support our scholarship fund.

Laurel Highlands Chorale to present annual Christmas concert

Laurel Highlands Chorale will present its annual Christmas concert, **'Tis the Season** at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, December 8 and at 7 p.m. Monday, December 9 at Somerset Church of the Brethren, Berlin-Plank Road. Selections will include favorite carols including **It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year**, **Angels from the Realms of Glory** and **It Came Upon a Midnight Clear**, plus a few surprises! There will be special entertainment during intermission.

The chorale is under the direction of Jan Burkett. New to this Christmas concert is Rick Showers, assisting Jan at the director's podium, and Stephanie Pesi, accompanist. The chorale has also grown with new and returning members.

Tickets are \$5 and will be available at the door, or from any chorale member. Please contact Dorene Friedline at (814) 926-3610 or (814) 442-0460 for tickets or more information.

CREATING KINDNESS in our galleries now through December 19

Upcoming exhibits ...

Creating Kindness

November-December

This unique exhibition explores our understandings of kindness and the impact it has on our lives and communities. The exhibit opened in November to coincide with World Kindness Day and will run through December 19. Our hope is that the exhibit will inspire, inform, and remind visitors to be kind even on bad days.

Cutting Edge: Contemporary Papercutting

October 1-April 1, 2025

Somerset County Elementary & Junior High Art Exhibit

January 14-February 1

Opening Reception

2-4 p.m. Sunday, January 19

Somerset County Senior High School Art Exhibit

February 11-March 1

Opening Reception

2-4 p.m. Sunday, February 16

Somerset Area School District Art Exhibit

March 11-March 29

Opening Reception

2-4 p.m. Sunday, March 16

3rd Annual Off The Wall 3-D Exhibit

April 10-May 8

Opening Reception

6-8 p.m. Friday, April 11



Larry Brandstetter, left, is the featured artist in our ***Creating Kindness*** exhibit on display now through December 19. Larry gave a wonderfully fun presentation (below) about his career as an artist at the opening reception.



Children and adults contributed to our exhibit by writing messages about kindness on Post-it notes that were displayed along the walls in our 'kitchen' gallery.



Susan Wilson, far right, and her sidekick Koda took her ***Art of Being Kind*** presentation to the sixth grade class at St. Peter's School. Students were asked to do an act of kindness and have a picture taken of themselves with their "flat person." Their pictures will be added to the ***Creating Kindness*** exhibit on display through December 19.



From the director ...

Expressing gratitude ...

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."
— William Arthur Ward

Can you believe we are standing at the threshold of 2025? In just a year's time, so much unfolds, yet the holiday season always invites us to pause and reflect on the 365 days that often feel like a blip in the time-space continuum.

As the days blur into weeks, it's easy to lose track of the simple yet meaningful gestures—checking in on loved ones, texting a friend you haven't seen in a while, or trying something new to break the rhythm of daily routines. Through shared traditions, we connect with one another, but what happens when those traditions fade, or when we don't carve out moments to recognize and appreciate the people who make our lives richer, whether they're in our inner circle or part of the larger community around us?

One of the things I treasure most about Laurel Arts is how it serves as a bridge for connection. Whether it's meeting someone for the first time or greeting a familiar face, the experiences shared in our Centers become a tapestry of creativity and meaningful interactions.

Over the past seven years (hard to believe), I've been profoundly moved by the people I've encountered through Laurel Arts. Every day, I am reminded of the immense kindness and generosity that thrives in our community. From the volunteers who give their time so freely, to the patrons and members who support our mission, and our dedicated and selfless Laurel Arts team, I am humbled by how much people care—not just about our organization, but about each other.

Our **Creating Kindness** exhibition, on display at The Philip Dressler Center for the Arts through December 19, is a direct reflection of this spirit. It was inspired by the countless acts of kindness I've witnessed—moments of selflessness that ripple through our community without expectation of recognition or reward.

As we approach the new year, I am filled with gratitude for all of you—our members, supporters, and friends. Your commitment to Laurel Arts, your care for our community, and your kindness in both big and small ways make this truly a wonderful place to live and work.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Together, we create something extraordinary—a community rooted in creativity, compassion, and connection.

From all of us at Laurel Arts, we wish you a joyful holiday season and a bright start to 2025. — **Jaclyn McCusker**, Director of Development

Our Dressler staff ...

Jaclyn McCusker
Director of Development

April Davis / Shelly Ibbs
Bookkeeper

Mike Baker
Maintenance Staff

Alison Leer
Gallery Coordinator &
Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Long
Office Coordinator

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

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The Philip Dressler Center for the Arts

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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.

You are invited to experience the magic of Laurel Arts this season!

Stop by Laurel Arts and immerse yourself in our **Creating Kindness** Exhibition, on display now through December 19. This inspiring showcase celebrates the power of art to spread joy and bring people together.

We would also like to invite you to a **Membership Mixer** from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, December 13 at The Philip Dressler Center for the Arts. See the exhibit, have some refreshments, and allow us to thank you for your continued support of Laurel Arts!

Our Affiliates

NOT ALL AFFILIATES ARE MEETING REGULARLY. CONTACT INFORMATION IS INCLUDED FOR EACH GROUP SO PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL FOR MORE INFORMATION!

Botanical / Culinary Arts

Somerset Garden Club: Contact Sheila Croushore, 814-233-7679, sheshore@ymail.com.
Meets 2nd Monday, 11 am, Dressler Center.

Needle / Fabric Arts

Crochet Guild: Contact Kathy Martin, 814-443-3054. The Guild meets at 2 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

Knitting Guild: Contact Lee Ann Schrock, leann265@yahoo.com, 814-233-6434.

Performing Arts

Laurel Highlands Chorale: Contact Jan Burkett, 814-443-3085 for more information.

Mt. Union Sacred Harp Singers: Rehearsal 2nd Thursdays of the month, Kingwood Church of God (Jan-Mar), Mt. Union Church (other months).

Roof Garden Barbershop Chorus: Contact Lee Hoffman, 814-279-1733, or Larry Shober, 814-267-4042. Rehearsal 7 p.m. Tuesday evenings at Grace United Methodist Church, Somerset.

Somerset Auxiliary JSO: Contact Sam Hanson, 814-754-5230, or Gay Reed, 814-279-7134.

Somerset County Community Band: Rehearsals for the summer season will begin again in March. Watch for details or contact Dave Breen, 814-701-1515, photo@davebreen.com. New members are always welcome.

Visual Arts

Somerset County Artists Association: Contact Dave Greene, 814-442-3934.

Laurel Highlands Photo Friends: Contact Carol Saylor, barbados741@hotmail.com, 814-442-9519.

Woodcarvers: Contact Jeff Baltzer, 814-442-6617.



The Garden Club got together recently to prepare the bows and pine cone decorations that will be attached to their Christmas wreaths. Club officers brought a delicious array of soups and chili for lunch. The wreaths are pre-ordered and will be picked up between 9 a.m. and noon December 3; if you didn't order this year, mark your calendars for next year, and let a Garden Club member know you'd like to order one. The wreath sale supports the many projects of the Garden Club.

Celebrate Christmas by attending performances of these Laurel Arts affiliates

Laurel Highlands Chorale Concert 'tis the Season

3:30 p.m. Sunday, December 8 and
7 p.m. Monday, December 9
Somerset Church of the Brethren
606 Berlin-Plank Road

Director—Jan Burkett and Rick Showers
Accompanist—Stephanie Pesl

Tickets are \$5 at the door

Somerset County Community Band Rhythms of Christmas

1 p.m. Saturday, December 14
Somerset Area School High School Auditorium

*No admission charge (donations welcome!)
Reception following the show*

**Thank you to our affiliated organizations and their members
for keeping the Arts Alive in Somerset County!**

There's still time to take a holiday class

Holiday Charcuterie Boards Workshop (for two!)

Friday, December 6, 6-8 pm

Join Elizabeth Miller for a fun evening and learn the art of decorating a charcuterie board. Learn to arrange an assortment of meats, cheeses, nuts and more to impress your guests at your next gathering. Bring a friend, a sibling, parent, child, or your significant other for a night out. Bring your favorite beverage to enjoy while you arrange your edible art. Class will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, December 6 at 601 Georgian Place, Somerset. Cost for one couple: \$28 members / \$35 non-members plus a \$35 materials fee all payable to Laurel Arts. Preregistration is required at least one week before. Call or text 814-442-6217 or call 814-443-1835 to register. A nonrefundable payment of 50% of the fees is required at the time of registration.

Ugly Sweater Party

Sunday, December 15, 2-4 pm

The celebration will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, December 15 at 601 Georgian Place, Somerset. A donation of \$5 per person plus a donated canned item for the local food pantry is requested. The fun will include crafts, a photo area, decorating ugly sweater cookies, and a best sweater contest. All ages are welcome! Bring the whole family!

Christmas Crafting with Jenga Blocks

Monday, December 16, 6-8 pm

Join Marsha Schmuck for a fun evening of Christmas crafting. Students will be using Jenga blocks to create some festive holiday decorations. Participants will make two trees and their choice of three ornaments. There will be a selection of paints, stains, and decorations to make the two trees unique. Class will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday, December 16 at 601 Georgian Place, Somerset. Cost is \$20 members / \$25 non-members plus an \$18 materials fee all payable to Laurel Arts. Preregistration is required at least one week before. Call or text 814-442-6217 or call 814-443-1835 to register. A nonrefundable payment of 50% of the fees is required at the time of registration.

Quilted Ornament Making

Wednesday, December 18, 6-8 pm

Learn to create beautiful no-sew quilted ornaments. Christmas-themed fabric and all supplies are included in the materials fee. Step by step instructions will be provided. These ornaments would be a great addition to your Christmas decor! Class will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, December 18 at 601 Georgian Place, Somerset. Cost: \$24 members / \$30 non-members payable to Laurel Arts plus a \$15 materials fee to Marsha Schmuck. Preregistration is required by Friday, December 13. 50% of all fees are due at the time of registration. This is nonrefundable. Call Laurel Arts at 814-443-1835 or text/call Marsha at 442-6217 to register.

Education & Dance Center staff ...

Amanda Bergstresser
Dance Creative Director

Elizabeth Miller
Administrative Assistant-LAEDC

Angela Horner-Parrish
Office Assistant

Dance Instructors

Cindy Breen
Megan Edwards
Melissa Gindlesperger
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Madison Troy

Angela Fullard
Preschool Teacher

Patricia Ohler
Preschool Aide

Marsha Schmuck
Preschool Aide
Classes & Programs Coordinator
Summer Camps Instructor
Fundraising Coordinator



Studio Kids
PRESCHOOL

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Somerset, PA 15501
814-443-1835
office@laurelarts.org

Follow us on Facebook
Laurel Arts Education
and Dance Center

Laurel Arts
PO Box 414
Somerset, PA 15501



Holiday Greetings from our
Teen Art Club

The Teen Art Club is for ages 13 & up. The group meets twice a month from 6 to 8 p.m. Mark your calendars for the new year ... January 9 & 23. For more information, call/text 814-442-6217.

Non-Profit Org.
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