

CELEBRATING

CARROLLWOOD CULTURAL CENTER • Spring/Summer 2013 • Vol. 6 No. 2 & 3



“We're an arts and community resource for everybody. You are the reason we're here.”

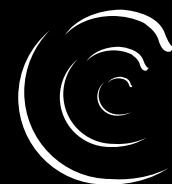
—A quote from Executive Director Paul Berg that appeared in the first issue of *Centerpieces*



50 Years

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CARROLLWOOD
CULTURAL CENTER

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The Carrollwood Cultural Center is a partnership between Hillsborough County and Friends of the Carrollwood Cultural Center. The Friends of Carrollwood Cultural Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

■ Centerpieces

Official Newsletter of the Carrollwood Cultural Center
Spring/Summer 2013 • Vol. 6, No. 2&3

Centerpieces reports quarterly on activities, people and issues associated with the Carrollwood Cultural Center. Letters to the editor and reader submissions are welcome. Please email the editor at centerpieces@carrollwoodcenter.org or mail to *Centerpieces*, Carrollwood Cultural Center, 4537 Lowell Road, Tampa, FL 33618. Include your name, address, phone number and the date. *Centerpieces* may edit your submission or withhold publication.

Centerpieces is produced by volunteers of the Carrollwood Cultural Center. New staff members are welcome.

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Thank you to all of the volunteers who contribute to the success of the Center. We couldn't do it without you!

■ Center Mission

Our mission is to provide cultural and educational programs and events to our region that enhance learning, creativity, and a sense of community across groups and generations.



A message from the Executive Director

■ Looking Back and Forward

When I sat down to write this article, my brain initially instructed my fingers to type something that was completely different from what you are reading now. At first, I felt like I would be repeating myself, saying things that I had said before. I tried to come up with something new and then thought, why? We should never get tired of talking about our accomplishments from the past five years; it's what drives us forward. We are not the same organization we were five years ago. We still see many of our friends who have been here since the beginning, but we have met many new friends along the way.

Many do not realize that the idea for the Center actually began in 1997. A lot of hard work went into the organization before we opened our doors in 2008. On page 4 is a list of individuals who should be recognized for their dedication. I am talking about people that were there at the inception. Some of them are no longer with us, some have moved away, but their importance to the Center should not be forgotten. Without their hard work and dedication to a dream, we would not be where we are today.

While the structure itself has not changed a whole lot since opening—a new stage floor, hot water in the bathrooms, soap and towel dispensers, a coffee bar, etc.—what we refer to as

"The Center" has changed. The Center has become so much more than even I anticipated back in 2008. Ideas evolved as different people came into the mix and the Center began to take on a life of its own. People have heard me talk about how cold and sterile the building was when we first opened. It felt more like a hospital than a cultural center. What changed, quite simply, was you. This amazing facility was waiting for you to breathe life into it. Your participation at the Center has made it a living, breathing manifestation of our community.

(continued on page 13)



I am grateful. I am grateful to an amazing staff, board of directors and dedicated group of volunteers. Thank you for going above and beyond to ensure quality programs and a quality experience.

—Paul Berg

■ Do you remember when...



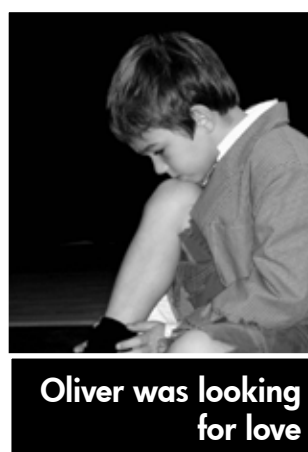
the building was just a rendering



Peter Stilton inspired a T-shirt



Jazz with Jim was in the lobby



Oliver was looking for love



When the MAGIC was just beginning!

From the President's Desk

■A Look Back with Nancy Stearns

My earliest memories of the Center began one day in the late 1990s when I received a phone call from Phase 1 Homeowners' Association (HOA) President Dick Woltmann, asking me if I would be interested in meeting with a few folks who were putting together an idea for a community center to be located within the boundaries of Carrollwood Village. Those other folks were none other than John Miley and John Paré, and thus began a long relationship culminating in 2008 with the grand opening of the Carrollwood Cultural Center.

Way back then, I was President of the Board and a founder of the Carrollwood Players, and Dick and friends thought it would be a good fit for the Players to be the resident theater company in their yet-to-be-named endeavor.

The church that owned the building at the time was approached for a possible sale and sadly, we were turned down.

Our group of hard working and dedicated volunteers could not be discouraged and went on many field trips looking for another suitable location. We had on board Dan Ruskiewicz, Village Property Manager, and a local architect, the late Peter Tagliarini, who tramped through the swamps right along with us. As we all know now, the church finally came around to our way of thinking and decided to sell. By this time our group had a working relationship with Hillsborough County.

Skip ahead about nine years. I ran into Tom Jones one day and he asked if I would be interested in joining the Board of the new Carrollwood Cultural Center. At the time I was serving as President of the Board of the Northdale Civic Association as well as editor of our bi-monthly newsletter. I was flattered, of course, as I had been involved since day one, but had to turn him down as I was too heavily involved in my community. "BUT" I said, "when my term in office is over, I will contact you" and we would see where I fit on the Center's board. I think we all know what has occurred since then. I am proud to be part of our wonderful Center and its successes of the past five years. Happy Birthday, Carrollwood Cultural Center, and many, many more.



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: February 14, 2008

Keeping in Touch

■A Letter to the Center

Dear Paul,

Thank you for refreshing our memory of 5 years ago when we opened the Center. I really appreciated the pictures as they brought back many memories. Most of the "players" have changed since then, but the Center endures. You, the Board of Directors and your staff are to be commended for your dedication and achievements over these years. As you know, it was a challenge to start from scratch and survive those early years. As you said in your interview, it took some time to determine the true needs of the community and adjust accordingly. You are to be commended for providing the leadership to overcome those early challenges. Betty and I sincerely miss everyone at the Center and look forward to returning to Tampa to visit the Center and see for ourselves the wonderful accomplishments that have evolved from a dream that a small group of community leaders had several years ago to develop a Center in our area of Hillsborough County. Continue the good work and we look forward to the celebration of many more anniversaries of the Center.

Tom Jones
FCCC President 2008-2010

5 YEARS

We want to thank the following individuals who contributed to the vision and pre-planning of the Center prior to its official opening in 2008.

Mindy Ambler, Trevor Bailey, Jim Carver, Vicky Cuccia, Kate Davis, Jo H. Deck, Maria Hochwarth-Alvarez, Ken Hagan, Ken Hoyt, Gerald Jacobs, Holly Keating, Tom Jones, Richard McLaurin, Terry LaRosa, Frank LaRosa, John Miley, Jim Norman, John Paré, Alan Preston, Ed Radice, Jenny Lind Olin, Mary Ann Scialdo, Dan Ruskiewicz, Judy Siling, Nancy Stearns, Marlene Strobl, Peter Tagliarini, Ken Tinkler, Bill West, Dick Woltmann, Henry Woodroffe, and all of the staff and volunteers.

Note from the Editor

■ In Search of the Center

People routinely describe the Center as an “undiscovered jewel.” After five years, it is ever more jewel-like and still being discovered. Part of this has to do with its uniqueness. Describing the Center to people who have never been here can be difficult, because it covers so much ground.

What’s the Center about? Executive Director Paul Berg sums it up as culture and community. At the Center, one is inseparable from the other.

“Culture” is a broad term—it includes the entire spectrum of artistic and intellectual pursuits. The Center offers art, music, theatre, crafts and discussion groups—sometimes in combination. It’s a mix of first-class entertainment and participatory culture: you make it and you share it with others, be it singing, music, theatre, pottery or writing (like this newsletter).

The Center’s most distinctive quality is its intimate, family feel. It manifests in countless ways. After every performance, the audience can meet and talk with performers—whether they are a national act or a local garage band. People of all ages discover their own talent in community bands, chorus and theatre groups. The volunteers, staff, teachers, artists and patrons are on a first-name basis and help each other out. The groups overlap; they welcome newcomers. All this intermingling creates friendships, bonds and a sense of community.

The late Mary Ann Scialdo, who is mentioned by many in this issue, once said that the Center was like a sunflower, and we were its petals. Now the Center is like a garden. It is composed of many different areas which make a harmonious whole. This issue, which celebrates the Center’s first five years, gives you stories about what people found when in search of the Center. – Evelyn Bless

■ How it Made a Difference

Here are three remarkable stories of many illustrating what people have found at the Center.

“This place saved me.”

This place saved me. It kept me painting. All my gallery representation went under during the recession, so the Center was the only place I could show my work, and it gave me an incentive to keep working as an artist. For example, I never tried

working in black and white until the Center had the black and white show. Plus, it was “in the neighborhood” and attracted some very nice people who became active members. The informality and inclusion of children is very important to me as a parent as well.

– Peter Stilton, artist

“It rose from the floor and dropped me to my knees.”

I was still learning my way around...still getting to know the regulars. I was working part time doing room setups. We had to get some folding chairs to the dance studio on the second floor for a recital. I knew there were some musicians rehearsing in the main theater, so I was being careful to be as quiet as possible. Carrying folding chairs under each arm, I slowly opened the door to the walkway above the main theater, making my way to the dance studio.

And I heard Mozart. It was a melody my heart knew innately, though not by name. But I think it was the first time I ever

really *heard* Mozart. I quietly set the chairs down behind me and peeked over the railing at the musicians below. A very slight, older woman was reclined across two green chairs...fully reposed yet clearly in charge. Her eyes were closed, yet she seemed to observe every movement of the three musicians.

Ah, the musicians! A gentleman who appeared to be in his 60’s played on a clarinet. A girl in her teens carried the melody on an upright piano just behind the clarinetist. And just beyond the piano, a lovely blonde woman, not more than 40, strummed and plucked a large golden harp. Four people, four different generations, combined to make the sweetest music I’ve ever heard.

It rose from the floor and dropped me to my knees. I stayed low, not wanting to draw attention to myself. God was in that moment. Seeing these musicians being led by this unlikely-looking maestro, and hearing the magic in every note, I felt an understanding of the Garden of Eden I had never had before. I couldn’t keep myself from crying. When I became aware that my sobs were getting too loud I found my way down to an exit and went outside, where I didn’t have to be in a hurry to recover.

That was the first magic moment I experienced at the Carrollwood Cultural Center. There have been many since.

– Todd Dunkle, Development & Marketing Director

“The class changed my life.”

The class changed my life. I found a talent that I didn’t know I had. When I took an art class at an arts institute, they said, ‘where did you learn to do that?’ We have university-level art instruction here at the Center.

– Libbie Jae, Center committee volunteer and student

Trying to get that perfect photo...



■ What Performers Think about the Center

As regular contributors and admirers of our Center, we're greeted by familiar faces when we walk through its doors. Under one vaulted roof we form friendships, discover and hone our talents, teach others and express our appreciation of visual and performing artists.

But like anyone, we're susceptible to growing partial to the places where we spend a lot of time. Stepping back for a fresh perspective gives us a clearer vision by letting us see what the Center means to others, including those outside the community. And who better to ask than the musicians and agents who work with us? They've become acquainted with many venues over the years and keep coming back to us.

The New Christy Minstrels

The New Christy Minstrels have made the Center a stop on their tour three times in the five years since our inception, and have their next show in the works for February 2014. Randy

Sparks founded the folk band in 1961 and is still touring at 79 years old. "I live in a Motel 6," he jokes. Their debut album, *Presenting The New Christy Minstrels*, won a Grammy for Best Performance by a Chorus.

Today The New Christy Minstrels have their own non-profit foundation dedicated to exposing younger generations to "old-fashioned" folk music. On their last visit to the Center, they performed one concert for the public and a free concert for their kids' program the next day. "They bussed all the kids in," says Becky Jo Benson, one of the group's eight members. "Richard Haerther invited everyone he could think of, and the sound check guy Joey was just super. We just love working with Joey and his sound company. He set up all the sound for us, and also came back to set up the next day.

"It's our mission to spread the body of work of folk music, because people don't know what it is. They're like, 'what's that?' Randy keeps writing songs about places and the history that happened there, so the kids end up getting a history lesson too." (continued on the next page)

This fits right in with the Center's own mission. We're not just a venue that draws international acts. We help others to actualize their goals of cultural education.

"We do a lot of school shows, because we want to provide a legacy to the world," Randy says. "It's our contention that music is something more than that which vibrates your car. It's a family experience, so you can be in a station wagon or an SUV and sing together."

In the background at Becky Jo's home in Sutter Creek, California, I can hear her parrot, Green Monkey, singing "Oh What A Beautiful Morning," in what Randy identifies as the key of A-flat. "He's green and he behaves a little like a monkey, you know—monkey see, monkey do. If you wave at him he'll wave back," Randy says. Even over an Internet phone line, it's evident that this bird has been exposed to music. He travels on tour with the group, along with their show dog Vecca, who makes her entrance on stage with them and then sleeps through the concert. "She has only missed four shows in ten years and has been to all 50 states, except Alaska, Hawaii and Vermont," he says. Once they scheduled a show inside a mosque before finding out that Vecca wasn't allowed on stage. They argued down to the wire, until finally, after nearly canceling, they talked the staff into letting her participate.

"It's really special because the people there [at the Center] treated us like family. They came out and set up a barbeque behind the theater and said, 'We're going to feed you, because you don't have time to go out to eat dinner before the show.' We have a good time everywhere we go, but these people were really nice to us."

Phil Lee

Across the country in Nashville, singer-songwriter Phil Lee is getting ready to play some local gigs to "stay in shape" for his upcoming Midwest and UK/European tours. Described in his biography as a "hipster Huck Finn meets Jack Kerouac," Phil writes songs ranging from rockabilly and original roots to country ballads, folk rock and the blues. He's been making music for 30 years, starting on drums and now playing a harmonica and resonator guitar. Some of his past work includes recording with Neil Young's band Crazy Horse and making his silver-screen debut in *The One Who Loves You*. He recently released his fourth album, *The Fall and Further Decline of the Mighty King of Love*.

He remembers playing at the Center in October 2012. "I love everything about that place. Those are the types of places that I'd play once a month if I could work it out," he says. "They didn't even know who I was, and everybody there treated me like royalty. They put a huge billboard out in front, and I'd played a barbeque joint the night before, so one night it's a little chalkboard marquee, the next they've got a billboard, which they offered to give me. And I thought, 'what am I going to do with this, put it up in the barn to keep the cats out?'" He laughs.

Phil spent a couple of decades driving trucks, adding to his vast experience traveling as a musician, so he notes even the little things about the Center, like our dressing rooms. "It's not like you're changing clothes in the bathroom."

Even though his show wasn't sold out, he recalls it as being "a good payday."

"There wasn't a big turnout, but the executives showed. They all danced and sang and had a great time listening to me berating them. I thought maybe I had to tone it down, but Richard said, 'just be yourself.' It helps not having to rewrite my act, so I have to thank those guys for letting me be myself. I'll go back every time they ask me to, even if I have to make a special trip."

William Clare Entertainment Agency

As president of William Clare Entertainment agency, Gerry Cachia represents acts including the Ultimate Blues Brothers Revue, Keith Coleman's Johnny Cash Tribute, and the Motown Revue. Gerry used to run a theater called ShowOffs that seated 330 people, and describes the Center as having a "homey kind of feel."

"I think for us it's interesting because that venue, for most of our acts, is not a real huge venue, it's a small intimate venue... a little bit of a cabaret venue as opposed to a theater. We've had our Motown groups there, and they feel like they're right at home."

That's because the staff treats performers like guests, Gerry says, greeting them when they arrive and saying goodbye when they leave. Richard is known for getting everyone everything they need as far as pre-production.

"It's kind of like the old days when you did shows in places like that. We're very honored to be working with them."

William Clare Entertainment of Clearwater provides us with the marketing materials for each of its groups, and Gerry praises our staff for the job they're doing. "Every show we've had there has sold out." (continued on page 9)



"I'll go back every time they ask me to..." – Phil Lee

"This place is like my own private arts organization."

—Linda Bernstein

■ Monday Night Live

Ever wonder how much is going on here? Let me tell you about a recent Monday night.

The team that writes this newsletter, *Centerpieces*, meets once a quarter to plan the next issue. The newsletter staff is all volunteers. We all love to write. We enjoy the rare times we come together, and we've become friends. We are also always looking for new writers (hint, hint...).

But back to our meeting. The month and week vary but we meet on a Monday, in the upstairs reading room, at 6 p.m. Our meeting is one hour because some of the writers belong to the Chorus, which meets on Mondays at 7 p.m.

Prelude: Hug-a-rama.

I arrive a bit early. I see Allen Levy, a volunteer, on the stairs; we talk about Alaska and give each other a hug. Ruth Levy, Allen's wife and the Center's volunteer coordinator, walks up. Allen jokes with her that he and I are going to Alaska. Ruth and I hug too. Marianne Galaris, our gifted intern who is continuing to write for the newsletter after graduating from The University of Tampa, enters the front door. We hug. On the way up the stairs I pass Craig Hartfield, singer and acting coach for Broadway Bound. While I've never talked with him, we know each other by sight. I tell him I'm collecting hugs tonight, and we hug too. Upstairs in the reading room, I look into the adjoining computer room and see Gainor Roberts teaching her class in digital photography. Gainor and I go back a few years. I walk in and give her a big hug and kiss, then close the door between her class and the reading room.

The meeting.

I wait. I know some of the writers can't make it tonight. Marianne walks in; then Judy Schiavo and Pat Keeley. We start brainstorming stories and assignments. This will be an anniversary issue about what makes the Center special. (My assignment? You're reading it.)

The interruption.

Twenty minutes before the hour, two women walk in. They are here for the CCC Book Club, which meets at 7. I invite them to sit down and join our meeting. Do they have any story requests? They don't, but start reading the current issue. We continue talking. More book club members arrive. Suddenly we have a crowd of people milling around; the room is so full that we are too distracted to continue. This is a first for us. Kathy Smith, leader of the book club, announces that they have too many people for the reading room and will find another. The book club people all go downstairs. We wrap up.

Judy and Pat leave to join the Chorus. Marianne and I walk downstairs. Marianne's assignment is a story on a pottery class, and tonight is the first night of the class. I want to introduce her to Gilda Butler, our pottery manager. The pottery room is directly off the theatre, so we go through the lobby and open the inner theatre doors.

The music.

We are hit by a wall of music. Loud and beautiful, it stops us in our tracks. On the stage, a man stands and conducts; a large group of musicians sit on chairs around him. I realize it is the Carrollwood Winds, our community band, in rehearsal, and the conductor is Mark Watson. After listening for a few minutes, we duck into the pottery room. The music fades away.

The pottery studio.

Gilda steps up. Gilda and I have been exchanging wisecracks since I took her pottery class a few years ago (I was a terrible potter). Marianne will hopefully have more success. I introduce the two. Marianne rolls up her sleeves and takes a lump of clay. My work is done.



Gilda Butler (standing) with her pottery class.

The long goodbye.

I go to the Center office to say goodbye to Brenda Heiss, who does the Center's accounting. Tonight Brenda is by herself in the office and is constantly interrupted by people asking for information. As she returns to her spreadsheet, a young woman walks up. I decide to make myself useful. I smile and say, "Can I help you?" Her name is Sally (Note: not her real name) and she wants to transfer credit from Gainor's digital photography class ("I don't even have a camera. I don't know what I was thinking!") to something else. We look at the catalog together. What is she interested in? What else is on Monday night? I mention a Monday night drawing class, because people have told me it's exceptional. Sally is excited; she's an artist. Yes! I take her to the art room. *(continued on the next page)*

"I should be thanking you all at the Center! I am so grateful that you have a pottery studio so I can reconnect with a long lost passion of mine. Gilda Butler has been an inspiration and a wonderful teacher."
—Miriam Zohar

Interruption redux.

The art room adjoins the other side of the theatre. As soon as we open the theatre doors, it's like we've flipped a switch; we are surrounded by music again. We enter the art room, briefly letting the music in with us. Ten people sitting at the table look up. One of them is Kathy Smith from the book club. We all look at each other in silence. I say, "Uh...this doesn't look like a drawing class." Kathy says, "This is the book club. The front desk gave us this room since we needed more seats." More silence. I realize there is no sign of art materials anywhere, and I am interrupting them. I back out the door (music leaks in again), "Sorry...I seem to keep on turning up, like the proverbial bad penny!"

**"Maybe I could take Chorus," she says.
"Oh, it's not a class, it's free," I say.
"I can't believe it's free! I love choruses! That would be great!"**

The meeting rooms.

OK, the art class isn't in the art room. Where is it? I take Sally upstairs, to see if the class is in one of the meeting rooms. On the left, there is a Carrollwood Phase I HOA Board meeting. On the right, a group of people from Spunky Spirits appear to be practicing how to pour.

I wonder if the drawing class is in the Theatre room, and then remember that the Chorus is there right now. Maybe it's in the Studio—but I don't want to walk over to the building in the dark unless I'm sure. I tell Sally all this while we walk down the stairs.

"Maybe I could take Chorus," she says.

"Oh, it's not a class, it's free," I say.

"Free!?"

"Well, we'd like you to become a Center member, but there's no charge for the singing."

"I can't believe it's free! I love choruses! That would be great!"

The singing.

We walk up the stairs again, and I take Sally into the Theatre room. Mary Jo Hahn, the director, is in front. I wave to Judy and Pat from our newsletter meeting. The room is full. Everyone is singing. Someone is playing piano accompaniment. It's lovely. I see only two empty chairs with printed music on them.

"I've brought Sally, who wants to sing tonight," I say to the room at large. A woman emerges from a row and takes Sally by the hand. Together they disappear into the singers. The voices rise up again.

Me? I don't stay. I'm grinning like a Cheshire cat. I just sampled the Center's cultural variety, and it was like a box of chocolates. My work is done! *Evelyn Bless*

Jonathan Edwards

"The sound filled the room," says Jonathan Edwards of his February show at the Center.

Jonathan is a folk and country singer-songwriter/musician best known for his hit *Sunshine*, which earned him a gold record in 1971. He's recorded 14 albums including *Little Hands: Songs for and About Children*, which features a title track that was inspired by the birth of his daughter Grace. The National Library Association honored the album as a Notable Children's Recording.

Jonathan has run a record label, composed a score for a movie and collaborated with musicians including Emmylou Harris and Mary Chapin Carpenter. Lately, he's been touring with Grace, who is herself internationally renowned through her band Grace and the Victory Riders.

He describes their show here as "a welcome experience that was so easy, symbiotical and warm."

"They just got it about what we were trying to do and made our experience really friendly and supportive, and at a time when we felt like we were shooting in the dark, bringing Grace and her accompanist Jerome in to tentatively explore the possibility of putting the two bands together."

His favorite places to perform seat 200 to 300 people, allowing him to interact with the audience. "I feel like I get to know the people in the crowd, especially if I can see them. I get to know the town, a sense of the political views, and how often the people go out to shows through their responses to my offhand comments."

But there's more to it than our size that makes us unique.

"We run into a number of venues that defy imagination," he continues. "If you were out there with us you wouldn't believe the places they call venues. The level of commitment to present artists varies wildly. The Carrollwood Cultural Center was high on professionalism and commitment... When we encounter a place on the tour, and it's not that often, where we feel that level of cooperation with the staff saying, 'Yeah, sure we can make that happen. Oh, you need six more monitors? No problem!' it really helps the show get elevated to its proper heights. When that happens the crowd feels it and it gets reflected."

Gaining this new perspective on what makes us stand out, we can celebrate the fact that our dedication to hospitality and the arts does not go unrecognized. Musicians and agents alike deeply appreciate the special attention they receive in venues. What truly makes the Center unique is our combination of professional support and welcoming environment. It makes all the difference that artists know they can be themselves when they come here to perform.

Marianne Galaris

■Nostalgia for the Gala....

As we commemorate the 5th anniversary of the Center, it is impossible not to reflect on the joy and inspiration that continuously emanated from the Center's founding artistic director, Mary Ann Scialdo. Considered by all to be the "heart and soul" of the Center, her contribution and energy touched everyone deeply.

A child prodigy who received a Julliard Scholarship at the age of six, Ms. Scialdo was a Steinway Artist who performed many times at the Center, including the inaugural gala concert.

Thinking back on the gala concert, musician and Jazz with Jim founder Jim Burge notes with a chuckle how important it was to her. "We had already been giving small concerts in the Annex (now known as The Studio) to raise money. She would call me up and tell me I had to show up somewhere to play." Mary Ann, entirely confident of her ability to summon musicians and talent, had a reputation for not taking "no" for an answer. "Well, the gala, she planned ahead of time, which shocked me! She actually made us rehearse!"

The Center's education director and founder of the Center's community band, Helen Michaelson, recalls how exciting it was at the time. She, Mary Ann and Mary Ann's sister, Vicki Cuccia, then the Center's business manager, grouped their desks together and spent their days readying the Center for its grand opening—planning the ribbon cutting ceremony and taking inventory of everything, even measuring the Center's numerous windows by hand for blinds.

Mary Ann put together the gala, which was March 2, 2008. Helen explains, "Mary Ann planned it all, bringing musicians from all over. It seems like a century ago now, so much has happened since."

Indeed, the gala, which was black tie ("Mary Ann insisted we

wear tuxedos," says Burge), was an event to be proud of. The program included music by favorite composers, from classical masters such as Haydn and Schubert to Broadway composers, including a suite from *West Side Story* by Leonard Bernstein (Mary Ann's mentor, incidentally). The music filled the Center's halls and was performed by soprano Deborah Horne from New York, Helen Michaelson on flute, Jim Burge on clarinet, Mary Ann Scialdo on the Center's Kawai Shigeru concert

grand piano, and The Arioso Quartet, made up of members of the Florida Orchestra.

In addition to founding the community chorus and youth musical theatre troupe, Broadway Kids (now known



as Broadway Bound), Ms. Scialdo was instrumental in bringing community theater to the Center, initiating the tradition of an annual summer musical in 2009 with Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* Ms. Scialdo's passion for directing and leading the musical accompaniment for each production was an inspiration to all, until her untimely death just weeks before the opening of the Center's production of Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* in 2010.

Her legacy lives on through the Center's chorus and youth musical theatre groups; through the community theatre MAS, named after her; in the Center's stage dedicated to her, and in our hearts and memories. As she would say, "The show must go on!" and it is, five years strong!

Kendra Langlie

"By the time Mary Ann completed our tour of the Center, we knew we belonged there. That day was the beginning of a life-enhancing experience for me that continues to this day."
—Ron Manning

■ Fond Memories of a Special Lady

It's hard to believe that five years have passed since the Grand Opening of the Carrollwood Cultural Center. In my quest for stories about people's experiences, one theme has stood out: the impact of Mary Ann Scialdo, our first Artistic Director.

Mary Ann was my original reason for exploring the Center. Jerry Myer, a longtime friend, had recently joined the Center's Chorus and told me about their very interesting and vibrant choral director. I wanted to see for myself and soon fell under the spell of a person who always encouraged us with, "you can do it!" Executive Director Paul Berg told me later that Mary Ann encouraged even him, inspiring him to play the lead in *The Music Man*.

As for myself, Mary Ann assured me that I could learn to sing a new voice part (women were singing tenor then because there were few men in the Chorus) as well as write. During my first writing assignment, I met Dr. Ralph and Carolyn Tennant, their daughter Georgia and her husband Ed, and grandson Sebastian. Sebastian was playing Oliver. He went on to play Winthrop in *The Music Man*, both at the Center and on a national tour.

Although we were all saddened by the loss of Mary Ann, a new door opened when Mary Jo Hahn became our choral director. She has led us on new adventures, including two flash mob performances at Citrus Park Mall and performances at Busch Gardens' Inaugural Christmas Town event.

In my writing for *Centerpieces* I have met many fascinating individuals, such as Jim Burge and Ron Delp, who provide banter, humor and music history during Jazz with Jim concerts. My co-workers on *Centerpieces*, including Kendra Langlie, who encouraged me to join the newsletter, and the wonderful Adrienne Hutelmyer, the Center's Marketing Director, have also been inspirational.

I've also interviewed many volunteers, which has given me an in-depth understanding of their value and devotion to the Center. They provide countless hours behind the scenes.

Here is a sampling of memories, many of which overlap with my own. Like me, each of these people experienced something at the Center that has changed his or her life. *Judy Schiavo*

I remember rehearsing for *Oliver!* and I brought my youngest son with me who was two at the time. While I was on stage, Mary Ann put him on her lap and put his hands on top of hers while she played the piano. He became completely still, transfixed and very serious about the work at hand. Although he could barely talk, he later told me that playing the piano with Mary Ann was the best part of the day. She touched everyone this way.

— **Kendra Langlie, Chorus member, *Centerpieces* writer**



I joined a women's group to meet new people and I did. One of them was Kim Rostas, who told me she belonged to a Community Chorus which was lots of fun. According to the Choral Director, Mary Ann Scialdo, all I needed was a song in my heart and that spoke to me. So I joined the Chorus and not only was it a great experience but the word was, if you were part of the Chorus, you were automatically considered part of the chorus for the summer musical. A chance to be in a musical....singing, and acting, and dancing on STAGE in front of an audience sounded so thrilling, and it was.

None of this would have been possible without the Carrollwood Cultural Center and their vision to bring the community together to create great moments. I will keep my day job, but my heart belongs to the Center.

— **Eve Hanna, Chorus member**

At the beginning, I started as a volunteer at the Center and met many wonderful, talented people and members. Then, the Chorus started up under the direction of our Artistic Director, Mary Ann Scialdo. I always called her the "Energizer Bunny." She was only about 5 ft. tall, but what stamina! She gave her heart and soul to the Center and everyone loved Mary Ann. What fun we had! And the next year, she was looking for a person for this one part. It was a small part, but an important part of *Oliver!* I'll never forget this; she asked me to read for the part and her sister, Vicki Cuccia encouraged me, too.

Now, you have to understand that I had never acted on stage. You just could not say "no" because they both had so much enthusiasm and deep down love for the Center that you did not want to disappoint them. The show went on and I did my little part. Thank goodness! What wonderful, beautiful memories and some sad memories, but isn't that what life is all about?

— **Ellia Sliwiak, volunteer, Chorus member**

■ A Conversation with Mark Thornton

The Carrollwood Cultural Center is a public/private partnership between Hillsborough County and the Friends of Carrollwood Cultural Center (FCCC). The building and grounds are owned by the County. The County's Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation pays a management fee to the FCCC to operate the Center. The arrangement covers about half the Center's costs.

For our anniversary issue, *Centerpieces* writer Janet Bucknor talked with Mark Thornton, Director of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, to find out how he views the County's unique experiment in supporting cultural arts.

CP: What are the advantages to the County in this? What does the public get for their investment?

MT: When the Parks and Recreation Department was exploring partnerships for a facility to offer cultural arts within the community, they spoke with resources such as the Arts Council and representatives from the Planning Committee. However, the Friends of Carrollwood Cultural Center offered the relevant flexibility in their programs, have done well in the management of the facility, and the County is very pleased with the Center's services.

CP: Do you see this partnership as a model for other communities in Florida or elsewhere?

MT: Yes, other communities such as Temple Terrace come to mind.

CP: Do you have expectations and hopes for the Center's growth? What would you like to see in 5 or 10 years?

MT: As the Center continues to provide quality services, the goal is for the facility to become self-sustaining and financially solvent with a positive economic outlook for both the County and FCCC.

CP: Do you see the Center as an economic and tourist draw for Hillsborough County?

MT: Not certain as this is a quality of life issue. However, as the Center increases its programs and cultural arts offerings, the expectation is that it will be marketed to not just Carrollwood but other outlying areas.

What impresses you most about the Center, its staff, and the impact on the community?

MT: Having seasoned staff on site is very important to the success of the Center as well as its cultural arts programs. This was the County's first formal foray into a partnership with this type of facility geared towards the arts, and it has turned out better than anticipated.

CP: Have you or your staff had an opportunity to experience one of the Center's programs or attend an event? If so, what are your thoughts/views? What was memorable for you?

The Parks & Recreation Department advertises events for the Center on their internal site which allows staff to be informed about upcoming events/programs at the Center. In addition, I attended the opening ceremony for the Center and I'm aware that the Center is focused on providing quality entertainment and programs for Carrollwood and neighboring communities.

CP: If you had to describe the Center in one word, what would that be?

MT: Beneficial to community.

CP: How do you see your partnership with the Center evolving in the future?

MT: The Center will continue to be successful and get even better.

CP: In recognition of the Center's milestone year, do you have a message to share with Centerpieces?

MT: I would like to congratulate the staff for the current success of the Center and am pleased to have the Center as a venue that provides cultural arts for the community.

Centerpieces and the Center staff and Board extend a warm thanks to Mr. Thornton for his time and continued support of the Carrollwood Cultural Center.



Crazy Wonderful

The months leading up to our grand opening were a wonderful whirlwind. I spent my 2007 Christmas holiday deciding among four job offers: one was running the theatre department at my *alma mater*, and another was as the executive director for a brand new facility that was scheduled to open in March. My wife and I had put off the decision until after Christmas, on the drive back from seeing family in Illinois to our home in Orlando.

As we crossed over the Georgia/Florida state line, she said to me, "So, I guess we should decide where we plan to live next year, huh?"

"I guess so," I said.

"Well, what are you thinking?" she said.

"I'm thinking about the job in Tampa," I replied.

"Really? But I thought running the theatre department at Illinois State University was your dream," she said, surprised.

"It was," I said. "But the job in Tampa is really exciting. I like the people, the area and it's a chance to build something from the ground up. I really think I want to go to Tampa."

The decision was made in less than 15 minutes. We were moving to Tampa.



That's me. At our Ribbon Cutting Ceremony...dancing with a balloon. You would later see my "dance moves" in *The Music Man*.

When I began as Executive Director in January 2008 I didn't have a staff, phones or Internet. In fact, I couldn't even occupy the building. My first order of business was to arrange the final inspections so we could get our Certificate of Occupancy. I was on a deadline: our ribbon cutting ceremony was already scheduled for February 14. We made it. My next two tasks? Host a grand opening ceremony on March 2 and begin holding classes two weeks later.

We did it, and we did it on the cusp of one of the country's worst recessions. Despite the economic chaos that was happening outside our walls, we still managed to move forward and build the Center. In

our first five years, we operated three of the five years in the black—an amazing achievement for a new business, and an even greater one for a new non-profit.

Growing Pains

Among all of our successes, we have experienced our fair share of growing pains. Most of them come from misunderstandings about the Center. We still receive some of the same questions and comments, even five years later:

- "I live right around the corner and had no idea you were here!"
- "Do I have to live in Carrollwood Village to come here?" (The answer is no. We are open to everyone!)
- "Can I renew my car registration here?" (The answer to that question is also no.)
- "I see you have rooms for rent. I'm looking for something with a washer and dryer."

I don't blame the people who ask these questions. A cultural center is a mysterious concept for some. Our job is to share our story and educate the community.

Perhaps the biggest misconception about the Center is our relationship with Hillsborough County. Many think we are a government entity and are financed 100% through the County.

While the building is indeed a County facility, the operations are run by a non-profit organization called The Friends of Carrollwood Cultural Center (FCCC).

The County, unable to manage the operations of the building, outsourced the operations to FCCC in late 2007. As part of this agreement, FCCC receives a quarterly management check. We are pleased to say, the County renewed its contract with us in October 2012. (For more about the County's involvement with the Center, see the interview with Mark Thornton on page 12.)

In 2012, the County's management check accounted for approximately 50% of the Center's income. The other 50% came from performance tickets, classes, room rentals, membership dues, special events, donations and grants. We depend on those other sources of income to help us continue with some of our programming and enhance other areas.

We need to build these revenue streams to maintain the Center's financial health and growth in the future.

Our partnership with the County puts some restrictions on the grants we are eligible to receive. For example, The Arts Council of Hillsborough County receives county funding; we are not eligible to receive any of those funds.

(continued on the next page)

"I have three jobs and now am learning to play percussion in the Center's band. CCC has unique opportunities for the whole community."
—Trish Papadoupoulis

■ Looking Back and Forward

(continued from page 13)

We are, however, eligible for some state-wide grant money. The Division of Cultural Affairs is a great financial resource for arts organizations throughout Florida. Every year, we apply for the grant, and last year we were awarded \$25,000. Our artistic director, Richard Haerther, was enthusiastic over the prospect of an additional \$25,000 for school field trips and other programming initiatives. All we had to do was wait until the state budget was approved and we would receive our grant money.

We waited patiently. Finally, we caught wind of something troubling. The state was going to cut arts funding by 75%. So, instead of receiving \$25,000, we are looking at receiving \$6,250. (At press time, the state budget had not been approved and the final amount awarded was not known.)

Needless to say, this was a major blow to our programming budget. We had planned to use these funds to expand our current programming. Unfortunately, some of our plans will have to wait.

A Worthy Investment

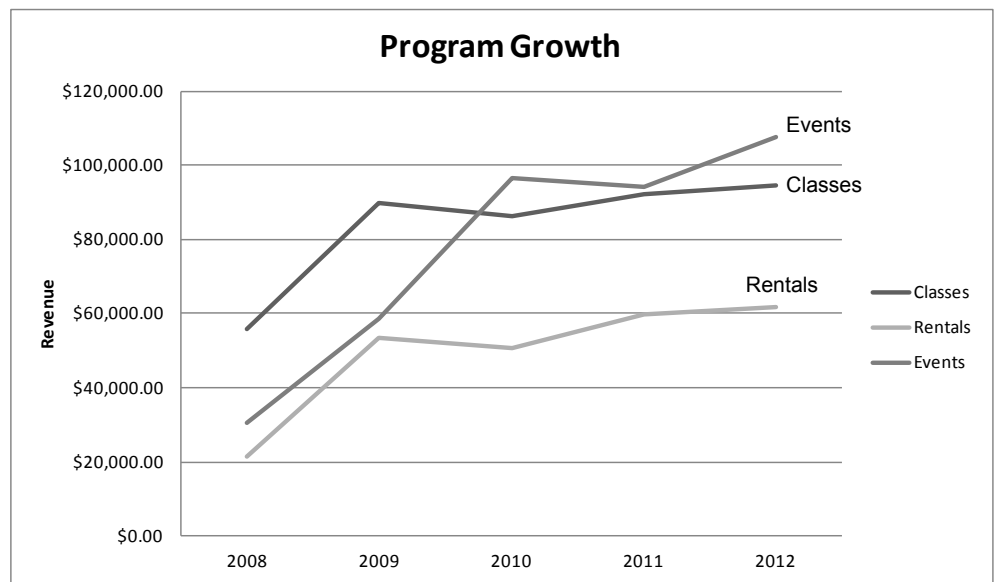
Despite challenges like this, we have grown. In recent years, we have installed a theatrical lighting system (a work in progress), sound system and a gallery hanging system. Our gallery has grown into three separate spaces and includes an expanding permanent collection with 30 pieces.

We have also gained a reputation as a great place to perform (check out the article on page 6). In the last few years, we have been able to book national touring groups, a task that does not happen overnight. It takes a lot of time and effort to work with agents and performers.

Earlier this year, we paid off our only long-term debt, which was a loan for several of our pianos. Five years young, and no long-term debt! We have many of our supporters to thank for helping us accomplish that goal.

Our events, classes and rental programs are all growing, with revenue from events almost doubling between 2009 and 2012.

Looking forward, the future is bright. We hear the economy is coming back to life and have started discussions on the next "phase" of the Center. What will it be? What will it include? As we get moving and get organized we will be asking you what you think. Do you want more outdoor events such as concerts, theatre or festivals? Would you like glass blowing, guitar making, would you like to design your own outdoor art project? Look for us to hold some town hall meetings to get your feedback on the future. We will be embarking on a capital campaign to gather support for expanding the Center. Not a small project by any means, but we are ready for it.



As we grow, we will continue to need your help. We have so many things we want to continue and more we want to try. For example:

- We *want* to continue to offer inexpensive ticket prices. Did you know if we sold out every Jazz with Jim, we would still barely break even? Donations will help keep our ticket prices low.
- We *want* people to continue to join the chorus and band for free. Donations will help keep it that way.
- We *need* a new outdoor marquee. The one we have doesn't need just a little TLC, it needs to be wined, dined and given a nice vacation. Donations will help us get a new monument for our entrance.
- We *want* to "test" classes with only 1 or 2 enrolled students. However, without donations, we can only run classes based on what is financially feasible.
- We *want* to keep the Center open seven days a week. We just need the funds to do it.

We know people want to invest in something that is worthwhile. The Center IS a worthwhile financial investment. Our growth charts are all headed in the right direction. A donation to the Center is not just for arts and culture, but for the community. **Your** community.

It's been an exciting five years and I look forward to the future. Thank you for supporting the Center!

Three ways to donate:

- 1.) **Online:** Visit CarrollwoodCenter.org/make-a-donation. You can easily set up a monthly, annual or one-time membership contribution, donation or sponsorship.
- 2.) **Phone:** Call (813) 269-1310.
- 3.) **In Person:** Visit the Center and make a contribution.

Also, consider volunteering on the Grant Writing Team. For more information, email Todd Dunkle at todd@carrollwoodcenter.org.

Thank you!

■ Don't Stop the Music

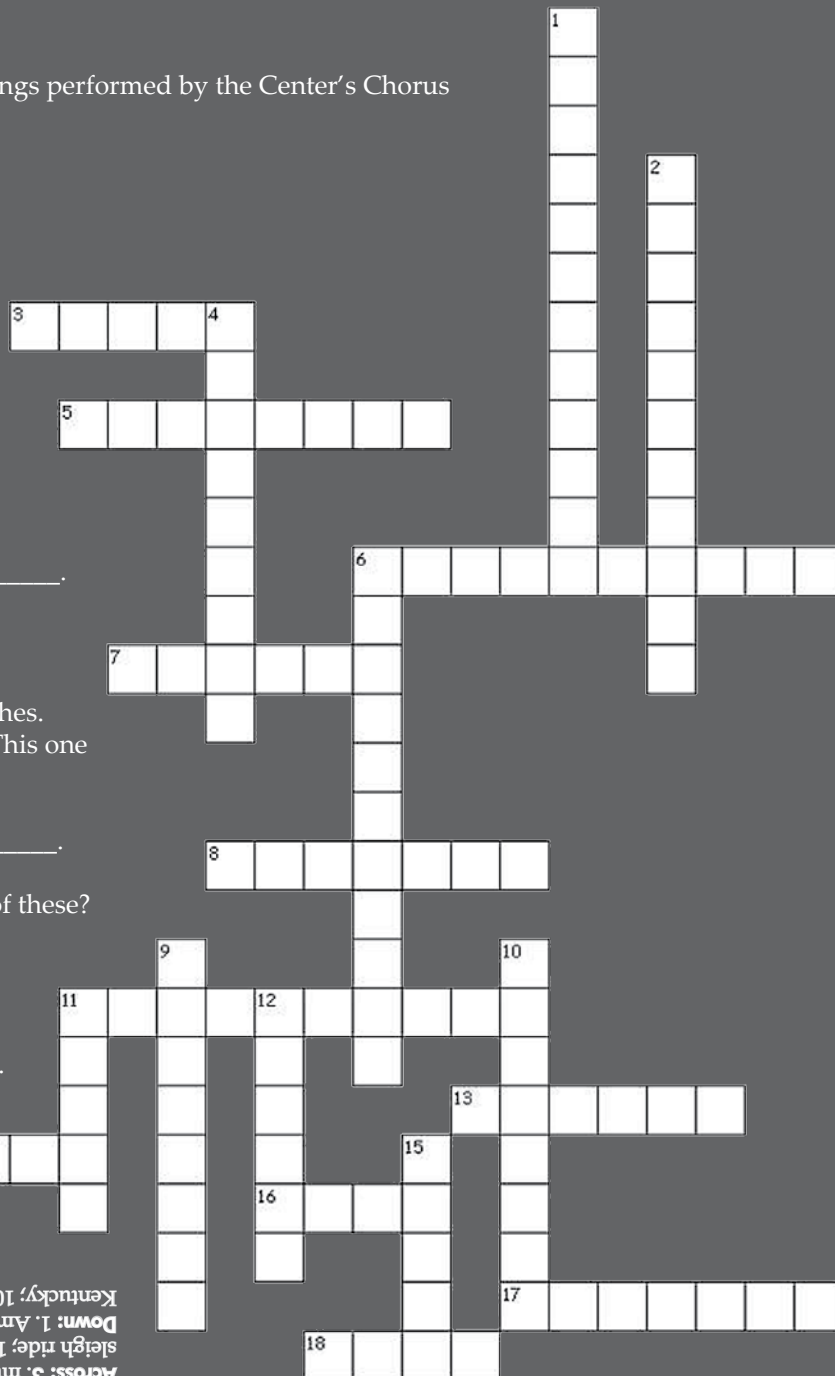
Here's a crossword puzzle based on music and songs performed by the Center's Chorus and Band. See how many answers you know!

Across

3. This is the sound we don't want to stop.
5. In the beginning there was the ...
6. Not Alice in, but a winter ____.
7. English Baroque composer.
8. At Hannukah, the celebrants light this.
11. Both the Carrollwood Winds and Community Chorus touted this method of transportation.
13. The Air Force flies off into the wild blue ____.
14. What we're all dreaming of.
16. You want us to let it do WHAT????
17. A modern day trombone is descended from a ____.
18. Baby it's ____ outside.

Down

1. Old folk hymn sung on Sundays in many churches.
2. A piece with a repeating underlying base line. This one was An Old English Carol.
4. The Phantom's love.
6. When I'm in the country, I like to pick colorful ____.
9. You'd find a barn dance here.
10. If cats have nine lives, do they also have nine of these?
11. The March King.
12. Poodle skirts, Pink Ladies, and DA's on men; what musical?
15. "I'll take your hat, your hair looks ____".
(Hint: one of the two words you should never say. The other one is lousy.)



Answers

—Pat Keeley

Across: 3. music; 5. overture; 6. wonderland; 7. Handel; 8. menorah; 11. sleigh ride; 13. yonder; 14. white Christmas; 16. snow; 17. sackbut; 18. cold
Down: 1. Amazing Grace; 2. passacaglia; 4. Christine; 6. wildflowers; 9. Kentucky; 10. memories; 11. Sousa; 12. Grease; 15. swell



■ Special Thanks

At the Center, we are often blessed to know people whose love for the Center inspires them to make a positive impact on our organization. Often, these folks never seek recognition or the spotlight.

The *Centerpieces* staff would like to thank two such individuals. This special anniversary edition of *Centerpieces* is also our 18th issue. As you can see by our cover, that is a lot of issues and a lot of wonderful stories.

We would like to thank and congratulate editor Evelyn Bless and photographer Bob Kerns, who have lent us their talents and have been with us for every issue.

Thank you for your dedication to telling the unique stories of the Center. We appreciate your help and look forward to many more interesting issues!



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