It’s quite hard to believe. Here’s a 16th-century Baroque master whose bold naturalistic painting style first created a sensation, then a movement. A guy whose life was filled with turbulence and excess of a dozen Mario Puzo novels. A guy who, while troubled, ultimately found redemption — and immortality — in his art. But does the kid next door even know who Caravaggio is? Fuhgedaboutit.

This loss is incalculable especially when you consider how much children can learn from the conflicted life of someone like Michelangelo Caravaggio.

He grew up in less than ideal circumstances. Much of his family perished in the plague and he spent much of his youth on the notoriously treacherous streets of Rome. As a young man, he labored beneath others much less talented than he and had difficulty making a living. He faced adversity at every turn and when his legendary temper threatened to get the best of him, he created his most vital masterpieces. The angry contrast between light and darkness that he felt deep in his soul now hangs in stark evidence in countless museums around the world.

Caravaggio’s body of work is not only a great example of the Baroque period, but also a case study in the importance of art as an outlet. One we’re fast removing from our kids’ lives.

AN IMPORTANT LESSON.

Study after study shows that an overwhelming majority of parents believe the arts are integral to their children’s education. They like that dance and music teach kids to be more tolerant and open. That painting and drama allow children to express themselves creatively and that the arts help to promote individuality, while bolstering self-confidence and improving overall academic performance.

If only they knew that their kids spend less time in arts classes than they do watching commercials.

LET’S CUT TO THE CHASE.

If the arts are indeed a vital part of your child’s education and well-being (and they are) then you should demand your child’s fair share. To find out what you can do to help, or for more information about the benefits of arts education please visit us at AmericansForTheArts.org.

Because, as Michelangelo Caravaggio would no doubt tell you, a life without art is torture.
Make sure to give art a piece of your mind.

For more information about the importance of art education and how you can help, please contact Americans for the Arts by dialing 800-654-7654, 800 543-8907 or visit us on the web at americansforthearts.org.

MACOA Annual K-12 Art Show

Mineral Area Council on the Arts board members and volunteers celebrated a wonderful turn-out for the annual K-12 Art Show and Competition which was held on Saturday, May 1t. Students from area schools brought their art work to be displayed for the public and to compete for awards. In addition to the awards, winners had a photo bio displayed on the Lamar Digital Billboard located at the corner of Liberty Street and Black Knight Drive in Farmington from May 6 through May 15. Special thanks go out to Lamar Advertising for these wonderful displays of the 5 age division Awards for Achievement and the 2 Best of Show Awards.

CONGRATULATIONS
Alejandra Valencia & teacher Sheria Valencia, Fredericktown Home School
MACOA Art Show Award of Excellence

CONGRATULATIONS
Alex Politte & teacher Sharon Weston, Bismark High School
MACOA Art Show Best of Show

CONGRATULATIONS
Ashlee Boyer & teacher Nancy Lawson, Sunrise School District
MACOA Art Show Award of Excellence

CONGRATULATIONS
Eric Grundmann & teacher Sharon Weston, Bismark High School
MACOA Art Show Award of Excellence

CONGRATULATIONS
Jessica Newburry & teacher Phyllis Gibson, North Co. Intermediate School
MACOA Art Show Award of Excellence

CONGRATULATIONS
Paulina Keith & teacher Sharon Weston, Bismark High School
MACOA Art Show Best of Show

CONGRATULATIONS
Seth Polus & teacher Carol Crites, Washington Franklin Elementary
MACOA Art Show Award of Excellence

from left: MAC student and volunteer Joseph Lynch; board member Didi Von Fange; board member Alice Johnson; MACOA Executive Director Betty Schaper; board member Linda Ray; board president Mary Mack; board member Marty Skaggs; board member and Heimburger Construction sponsor Sue Heimburger; board member Greg Roberts.

- Submitted photo
Remarks to the Missouri Association of Community Arts Agencies (MACAA)

On November 13, 2009, First Lady Georganne Nixon addressed the MACAA Board and Membership. Here’s what she had to say:

As an art-lover and the honorary chair of the Missouri Citizens for the Arts, I’m delighted to join you for the annual meeting of MACAA in this beautiful setting at Les Bourgeois Vineyards.

On behalf of the Governor and the people of Missouri, I want to commend each one of you for your dedicated leadership. Thank you for all you have done, all that you’re doing today and all that you will do tomorrow to make the arts thrive in every corner of our state. Especially now, with the economic headwinds blowing against us, your selfless service to community arts agencies -- and hundreds of Missouri artists -- is making a real difference.

As you know, state revenues are down significantly. The arts have had to take a cut, just like the rest of Missouri government. The good news is that the Missouri Arts Council has been well-managed and has a significant fund balance that will allow it to operate through this fiscal year.

What brings us together today is a shared passion and a shared mission: To support and encourage the arts in all their varied forms: painting and sculpture, theater and dance, design and craft, film and poetry, literature and music.

Where did that passion start? If you’re anything like me – and I grew up in Jefferson City and went to school in Columbia – it was not what from I’d call a “Mona Lisa” moment, where I stood face-to-face with a great masterpiece in a major museum.

My passion for the arts grew from something much more intimate…and close to home.

I credit the books of author Louis Slobodkin for my lifelong love of literature. I spent many dreamy afternoons, lying on my bed (I must have been about 7 or 8) reading “The Space Ship Under the Apple Tree,” staring at its whimsical illustrations and wondering whether there was enough room in our backyard for a space ship to land. That got me hooked on reading as a kid, and on literature and writing as an adult.

Maybe your passion for the arts was kindled by the chance to sing or dance in a local production of Oklahoma. Maybe you saw a beautiful photograph of Missouri wildflowers at your bank, and that inspired you to buy a print, or buy a camera. Or maybe the sound of a community band playing Sousa marches on the 4th of July stirred you to pull that dusty trumpet case out from under the bed.

The arts are the bright, unexpected threads shot through the muted fabric of our daily lives. They bring us joy and deepen human experience. They stir our imagination. They connect us with one another. They create a tapestry that reveals who we are and what we value. The arts preserve for future generations what we think is worth listening to, looking at, talking about, remembering.

For years, community arts organizations like yours have been doing what some of our larger arts organizations are only now being forced to do by the current economic downturn. And that is – adapt or die.
You stay engaged with your community.

Even in times like these, when there may not be a pot of money large enough to stage a play or turn an old barn into a new gallery, you don’t shrivel up and blow away. You’re there, active and visible: collecting canned goods for food drives, helping raise funds for civic projects and neighbors in need. You use your downtime to tend your grassroots, recruiting new volunteers and supporters. That’s key to the survival of the arts.

You create community pride and economic opportunity.

You foster the hidden talents of musicians and actors, woodcarvers and weavers in every nook and cranny of the Show-Me state. You are matchmakers, too – finding audiences and patrons for art and artists. That, in turn, creates new economic opportunity that adds to the financial and cultural diversity of your communities.

I’d like to invite all of you to visit with art teachers and artists in your community, and think creatively about competitions you can encourage at the local level and carry forward to the state level. The State Fair is a wonderful place to see Missouri’s riches on display, and I hope you’ll put it on your to-do list. I’m also planning to bring back the First Lady’s pie contest next summer, so bring a friend .. and a fork.

I’d like to close with a little story about a couple of special pieces of artwork that I get to see nearly every day. After Jay was elected, art teachers from all over the state sent us more than 600 slides of children’s art to review. We had to select two: one to hang in the Governor’s office in the Capitol, and another in the Governor’s Mansion.

The piece in the Governor’s office is a block print in a quilt pattern created by a 10th grader, a young girl who was a cancer survivor. I didn’t know that about her when I selected her print, but I was so happy to learn how much it boosted her spirits to have been chosen. Art truly has healing powers.

The other is a painting made by a 7-year-old girl after seeing Monet’s paintings of his famous garden at Giverny. She brought her parents, her siblings and both sets of grandparents to the Mansion to see it. Art has the power to bring generations together.

So, please, keep up the good work. I look forward to seeing your projects in my travels, and to working closely with MACAA for many years to come.

Thank you.
WE NEED YOUR HELP

Sadly, this treasured piece of artwork from the MACOA K-12 Art Show went missing. If you know where it is or have found it, please contact Betty Schaper at 573-518-2125 or e-mail Betty@mineralarea.edu

Thank you!
Please Join

Missouri Citizens for the Arts

If you care about the arts, arts education and the quality of life in Missouri, we urge you to make your voice heard.

The arts sharpen the state’s competitive edge, fuel creativity and innovation, and are a sound investment in the economy and a vital part of Missouri’s future.

Take action now to urge Missouri lawmakers to support a sensible budget solution to appropriate important funding for the arts and arts education programs.

For more detailed information on MCA’s Citizens’ Day at the Legislature on February 10, 2010 in Jefferson City or how to become a member of MCA, please visit: www.missouricitizensforthearts.org

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