



LET THE MAGIC BEGIN. CENTERPIECES

The Carrollwood Cultural Center

Volume 2 Number 1

Serving all of Hillsborough County

Paul's Corner

A Great First Year and More to Come

*I*t is hard to believe that only a year has gone by since the Center first opened its doors. When I sit back and think about what the Center was like when we first opened, it astounds me how far we've



Paul Berg, Executive Director

come. The walls were bare and the scent of fresh paint permeated the building. Echoes bounced off the walls, perhaps in hope that the sounds vibrating back would eventually include music, applause and laughter. Throughout the year, the Center began to take on a life of its own. Landscaping was put in. Art started to blanket the walls. A

lobby was transformed into a café, thanks to a generous donation from Melitta Coffee. A new library was born, thanks to our friends at the BookSwap. The list goes on.

We have come a long way in a very short time and the future is full of new possibilities, from performances to community programs and member socials. I am grateful to the incredible people who have contributed so much to the success of the Center. I am particularly thankful to the community for welcoming me and my family with open arms.

We are including this anniversary issue of *Centerpieces in Village Views* so we can tell a wider community about the Center. We are here for all of you, and all of you make us what we are — and will be in the future. Come visit us in 2009.



March Anniversary Celebration

March 14 Arts in the Park – The Carrollwood Cultural Center will officially celebrate its anniversary with an outdoor art festival by resident artists and local craftsmen. There will also be live entertainment throughout the day. 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. FREE

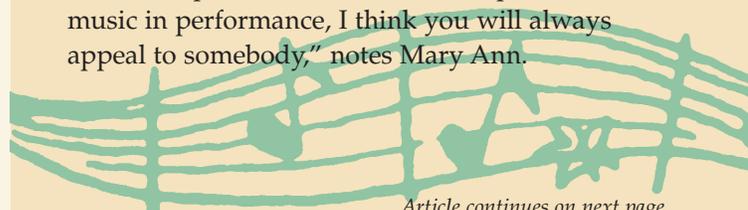
Kiss my Blarney – This original murder mystery is being written for the Center and will include audience participation. Corned beef sandwiches and beer will be served while the audience decides “who dun it.” 7:00 p.m.

March 20 Jazz with Jim – This monthly favorite will feature the Toasted Pheasant preparing handmade crepes for the audience. 7:30 p.m.

March 30 Mingle Magic – The Center finishes off its anniversary month with a member social which will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of Carrollwood. 5:30 p.m. FREE

A Year of Music

Since the Carrollwood Cultural Center's opening gala in March of last year, the Center has hosted over 20 musical performances. Artistic Director Mary Ann Scialdo says that “the first year was an experiment that worked. The success can be measured by the people coming in the door.” The Center has offered a broad range of music — from classical to pop, blues, and jazz. “If you are sensitive to the public and offer a broad spectrum of music in performance, I think you will always appeal to somebody,” notes Mary Ann.



Article continues on next page.

A Year of Music *continued from page 1*

Jazz and Pop

Jazz, big band and pop music have been the most popular. One of the Center's best attended events has been "Jazz with Jim," an informal concert — part education and part entertainment — that has been given five times so far; it will continue as a regular series. Led by Jim Burge, the show features traditional jazz along the lines of Ellington, Coltrane and Miles Davis.

The parade of jazz, big band, pop and blues continued all year. Highlights included:

■ **The farewell performance of the Tampa Bay Saxophone Quartet on April 13** marked the end of a group that has been a fixture in the area for 25 years.

■ **"A Piece of American Pie" (June 1)** was performed by Jim Burge (saxophone), Mary Ann Scialdo (piano) and Wanda Solmonte (voice), and was narrated by Business Director Vicki Cuccia and Executive Director Paul Berg. Blending live music and narration, the show was a retrospective of all things American.

■ **The "Big Band Bash" (October 26)** combined the University of Tampa Jazz Band under the direction of Jim Burge and the HCC Jazz Band under the direction of Robert Winslow. The concert featured standard to contemporary big band jazz.



■ **The Fanfare Concert Winds performed twice last year (May 4 and December 14).** The 60 piece concert band featured pop standards in each of its performances, as well as blues, Broadway and march favorites.

■ Finally, the Center hosted the unique **"A 60's Experience" (November 8).** Members of the community dressed in retro style and enjoyed the music of Blue Dice, a nine-piece powerhouse group with elements of funk, jazz, rock and heavy blues.



Classical

The Center's offerings in classical music have been equally varied.

The March 2 "Gala Concert" at the Center featured Mary Ann Scialdo, Jim Burge, New York soprano Deborah Horne and

Program Outreach Director Helen

Michaelson, and also included performances by members of The Florida Orchestra.

The Center's Shigeru grand piano has inspired its own music programs. This hand-crafted piano, one of seven in the United States and only 50 in the world, has put the center on par with some of the greatest music venues in the country. The September 7 "Shigeru Dedication Concert," performed by Mary Ann Scialdo, included music from Scarlatti, Scriabin, Kabalevsky and Gianni. On November 17, Franz Martini performed a "Shigeru Piano Series," playing works of Haydn, Beethoven, Chopin and Granados.



Chorale music was showcased in two performances of Chorus Angelorum, a popular *a capella* choir that performed in April and December.

"Music Reborn, the Lost Composers of Theresienstadt," in remembrance of the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, was presented by the Center and the Tampa Ameet Chapter of Hadassah on November 18. The event introduced previously lost music written by inmates in the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt. "This performance was especially powerful in terms of community outreach and the people it touched," says Mary Ann.

The Center also started "Music Notes," which continues in 2009. The four-part series will discuss music featured in the Florida Orchestra's Masterworks Series. In addition to learning about the composers, attendees listen to music selections and learn about the era in which the musicians lived. The series featured Haydn and Brahms in 2008; 2009 programs will include Mussorgsky/Ashkenazy's *Pictures at the Exhibition*, Verdi's Requiem and Bruckner.

John Byrnes

Volunteers Help "Jazz with Jim" How Sweet It Is

It's Friday around 6:30 p.m. in the Center's theatre. Chairs are arranged in intimate groups and the lighting is dimmed. Jim Burge walks in carrying several large cases and begins to set up his instruments. "Jazz with Jim," a month-



ly jazz concert hosted by Jim and featuring guest performers, will soon begin. The smell of

Melitta coffee fills the air as volunteers Terry La Rosa, Chris Martel and Betsy Mosak arrive, each carrying large wrapped plates. They go into the kitchen. In a moment, mouthwatering smells emerge — chocolate, caramel, pecan, mysterious spices.

And that's when it happens. Staff members and musicians quickly converge on the kitchen to get a look at the sinfully delicious desserts that will be for sale that evening. Amid the "ooh's" and "aaah's," money changes hands as staff members purchase the treats. The Center's Executive Director Paul Berg is seen walking toward the kitchen with \$10 in his hand; he walks back to his office a few minutes later with a plate of cookies, bars, candy and other homemade desserts.

"I look forward to this every month," says Paul. "We are very fortunate to have such talented volunteers who love to bake and who go through so much effort on behalf of the Center."

In fact, it was Jim Burge's idea to serve baked goods during the very first "Jazz with Jim" last fall. The original batch of goodies came from Jim's wife, Doris. Soon after, Terry, Chris and Betsy become involved with the event.

"Chris and I decided that we would take on the baking for this fun event," recalls Terry. "We both enjoyed the music as well as Jim and his 'boys.' Betsy was one of our customers. In talking with her, we found out that she was an avid baker who donated her services to the Hillel School of Tampa, which her grandchildren attend. She was recruited on the spot! Both Chris and I knew from her personality that she would be a fantastic addition to our team. And that is what we are — a team."

"I really enjoy jazz, and it's fun working with Chris and Terry," adds Betsy.

Artistic Director Mary Ann Scialdo recalls that Jim's original vision was to play in a café-inspired setting. The trio's hard work, with occasional assistance from other volunteers, has helped make this a reality.

"Oh, the desserts are decadent and delicious," Mary Ann states dreamily. "Pounds are added to the already delectable musical sounds of 'Jazz with Jim.' I'm going to have to start tapping my mouth shut to keep me from eating everything!"

The "Jazz with Jim" dessert concession is completely managed by the volunteers. In addition to deciding on the monthly menu and baking, Terry, Chris and Betsy actually run the concession area, pouring coffee and cheerfully passing out confections. The desserts, which often sell for a dollar or less, have earned an average of \$100 per concert. The money is donated back to the Center for future performances.

"We offer reimbursement for the ingredients, but the ladies always refuse," says



Volunteer Coordinator Adrienne Hutelmyer. Adrienne's offer to help bake has never been taken up. She notes with a smile that it's just as well, as her chocolate chip cookies might have a hard time selling next to Chris' Grasshopper Chocolate Chunk Cookies with crème de menthe.

As it turns out, the volunteers are happy to be able to make a little extra money for the Center doing what they love.

This project is a special ingredient that is both a great experience for concertgoers and a boon for the Center, courtesy of these talented volunteers. Kudos to Terry, Chris and Betsy...and *bon appetit* to the rest of us.

Adrienne Hutelmyer

Art in the Heart

When you come into the Carrollwood Cultural Center, the first thing you notice is the art. High up on the lobby walls, large paintings stand and deliver. Smaller paintings cover the inner walls and march up the staircase. Almost everything is for sale. As in commercial galleries, you'll see "artists' statements" and little cards listing medium, date, title, artist and price.

More and more often, people come to browse. They wander up and down the stairs and through the theatre, looking at the works on display.

If art curator Mary Ellen Bitner has her way, every wall in the Carrollwood Cultural Center will be hung with pictures.

"I grew up with original art on the walls," Mary Ellen comments. "In New York, everyone was exposed to art all the time and you always had art in your house. It wasn't necessarily expensive. People here need to have that exposure, too. They need to see original art more often — then they'll want it in their homes."

A year ago, the walls were bare. Mary Ellen, an accomplished artist in her own right, was asked by Artistic Director Mary Ann Scialdo to take charge of selecting the Center's art. Mary Ellen started with the theatre and worked her way out from there. She needed only to send out the word, and artists started contacting her.

"We have so many fabulous local artists that no one knows about," she observes. "This is the people's building, a County facility, so local artists should have the opportunity to show here. The people should be able to show their art, and the people who come should have it to enjoy." Mary Ellen relied on her personal contacts as well as artist groups in the area. Hillsborough County has four artists' associations: the North Tampa Arts League, Tampa Realistic Artists, the Brandon League of Fine Art and

2009 Art Calendar

Many shows will include a "Meet the Artist" evening reception.

Exhibition	Date	Location
Featured local artist	Every 2 weeks	Lobby
Resident artist	Quarterly	Lobby
Special guest artist	On occasion	Lobby
Westchase Artists Society	February	Theatre
Tampa Realistic Artists	March, April	Theatre
North Tampa Arts League	May, June	Theatre
VSA Arts of Florida Exhibition for children with disabilities	June	Theatre

the Westchase Artists Society. Mary Ellen is one of the founders of the North Tampa Arts League. After she had started her work as curator for the Cultural Center, she founded a new organization, the Hillsborough County Visual Arts Alliance. The Alliance, which meets at the Center, is an umbrella organization for all the others; it coordinates among the groups and helps artists share opportunities to show.

Mary Ellen, who thinks of herself as a teacher, painter and poet, didn't set out to create a new organization. But like many other people who work with the Center, she wound up forging stronger community ties. "We are the permanent resident artists of the Center, so the Alliance will always have works on display here," she notes. "The Alliance came out of my work with the Center, and everything is helping the community as a whole."

Mary Ellen interviews all prospective artists, ensuring that their work is properly framed and that it exhibits consistent quality. She personally decides on how paintings will be hung.

Nevertheless, the first hurdle she faced as curator was to find a way to hang the pictures. The pictures suspended from staircases are easy; the problem was the walls.

"The County didn't want a lot of holes in the walls," she says. The Center eventually settled on two gallery hanging systems, both of which suspend the paintings from wires.

Her second challenge was to find large



Florida Room by Peter Stilton



Lonliness by Gainor Roberts

Art in the Heart *continued*



Oak Dance by Mary Curran Bitner

works by Peter Stilton and Gainor Roberts. The large paintings in the reception area have to be hung from scaffolding by County technicians; they will be moved only once a year.

Mary Ellen, whose "nom de brush" is Mary Curran Bitner, has organized a constantly changing feast of art in 2009. She has booked featured artists through September for most of the Center, and in the theatre area through 2010. In addition to filling the meeting rooms and upper halls, her future plans include installing spot lighting, creating a permanent collection for the Center (so it will become, in effect, a museum), and perhaps starting a sculpture garden.

paintings for the theatre and lobby. "Not many artists work really big," she notes, "and smaller pieces will be lost in these large public spaces." She found paintings that met the challenge, such as some luminous

Wild and Woody

During February, the Center lobby was home to an extra-terrestrial zoo. Visitors were fascinated by Candace Knapp's wooden sculptures, which are sleek, humorous, anthropomorphic and seem to be as curious about you as you are about them. They have names like "Bruce" and "Dorothy." They haunted you like a stray dog; you wanted to adopt them. (They were not for sale.)

Young children, if left alone for two minutes, came over and petted the pieces. Mary Ann Scialdo was seen giving Bruce a surreptitious kiss. If you missed the show, the Center and Candace are making plans for another installation later in 2009.



Same Time Next Year

Theatre: Coming Events

February 20, 21 Sweet Dreams
February 28 for the kids
March 14 Thomas Moore
March 27, 28 Kiss My Blarney
April 3, 4 The Butler Did It
July 17, 18 The Butler Did It
July 24, 25 Oliver
Oliver



Theatre: On the Boards

This month we welcome the Salerno Theatre Company, a professional company that writes and produces Broadway-style performances, for a performance of *Sweet Dreams*, an original musical that remembers Frank Sinatra, Bobby Darin and Dean Martin.

In March, The New Tampa Players will return to perform *The Butler Did It*, a classic "whodunit" set off the coast of San Francisco on Turkey Island.

Centerpieces

Newsletter of the Carrollwood Cultural Center
Vol. 2, Issue 1

Centerpieces reports on activities, people, and issues associated with the Carrollwood Cultural Center. *Centerpieces* is published quarterly.

Letters to the editor and reader submissions are welcome. Please mail submissions to *Centerpieces*, Carrollwood Cultural Center, 4537 Lowell Road, Tampa, FL 33618. Include your name, address, evening 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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Centerpieces Staff

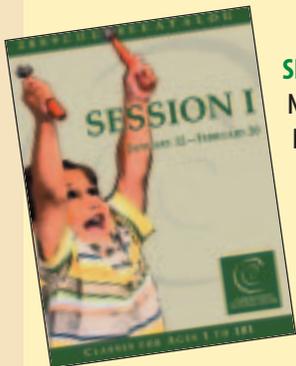
Editor: Evelyn Bless
Proofreader: Barbara Kime
Photographer: Bob Kerns
Writers: John Byrnes, Selma Santos
Copyeditor: Phil Cutajar

Carrollwood Cultural Center Staff

Executive Director: Paul Berg
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Center Classes: *Flashback & Fast Forward*

Every class registration period gets a little more hectic, as the Center adds more classes and more people sign up. Since the first session less than one year ago, classes at the Center have continued to grow. Here is a quick flashback to where we were and a fast forward to where we are today.



SESSION I classes started in...

Number of Sessions offered throughout the year...

Number of classes offered during SESSION I...

Number of Community Programs offered during SESSION I...

Number of youth classes offered in SESSION I...

Number of students in SESSION I...

Faculty members during SESSION I...

In fact...

FLASHBACK to 2008

March

5

59

0

0

60

19

The Carrollwood Cultural Center wasn't even open to the public in January 2008!

FAST FORWARD to 2009

January

7

65

6

27

191

25

We will be celebrating our first anniversary during SESSION II.

SESSION DATES

SESSION II: February 23 – April 3

SESSION III: April 13 – May 22

To receive a catalog or register for a class, visit the Center, visit www.CarrollwoodCenter.org or call (813) 269-1310.

Community Programs

The Center hosts a growing number of community programs. In addition to Café Philo, the CCC Book Club and Women Author's Book Club meet at the Center. Music and theatre groups include the Center's Concert Band, the Adult Chorus and Broadway Kids, a professional theatre troupe for children.

Visit our website www.CarrollwoodCenter.org or drop by the Center for more information.

Coming: New Lecture Series

The Center is proud to offer free lectures followed by discussion on topics of general interest to our community. Watch for more details!

March: Thinking about the Universe

April: The Islamic Doctrine of Jihad

Band and Chorus

The Carrollwood Cultural Center Band and Chorus took to the stage in front of a sold-out crowd for their first official concert in December. Now they are hard at work getting ready for more performances in 2009.

Broadway Kids

We look forward to producing a full-length play this summer in conjunction with our Broadway Kids program and the Center's Concert Band and Adult Chorus. The kids have been working hard and everyone's excited...it looks to be a great time for everyone.



Broadway Kids



Carrollwood Cultural Center Band and Chorus

Visit us at www.CarrollwoodCenter.org for more information about exciting programs coming to the Center!

Socializing 1-2-3

Starting in 2009 we've scheduled regular evenings of meeting, greeting and eating this year. *No excuses — come and enjoy yourself.*

Schmoozing

On the last Monday of each month, the Center will host themed parties where you can meet staff, members and other people in the community. There's no charge and no RSVP necessary. *Bring a guest and let us do the rest.*



February 23 Gasparilla Continues
March 30 Carrollwood Celebrates
its 50th Year
April 27 Ice Cream Social
May 25 Law Day

Eat Your Way Around the World in Tampa Bay

Interested in food, good company and other cultures? Who isn't! Each month, we'll sponsor a group dinner at one of Tampa's most authentic ethnic restaurants. February is Spain by way of Vizcaya Restaurant. March is Ireland; April is France; May is Mexico.

For more information about socials or dining, visit www.CarrollwoodCenter.org or contact Development Director Dawn Hudson at (813) 269-1310, ext. 207 or dawn@CarrollwoodCenter.org.

What is Café Philo?

I've been coming to Café Philo for about six months. Many people ask me, often with casual intensity, "What's it like?" All I can tell them is that it's like an itch that you've got to scratch.

Let me explain.

Café Philo is a group of people who meet weekly to sit around a table and talk about philosophical questions. There's coffee and cookies to keep us alert. We usually have a topic set in advance. For example, in one of the last sessions of 2008, we discussed what "wisdom" is. Our various opinions easily filled more than an hour of conversation.

Café Philo is mental exercise. It's like going to a gym for your mind. You look within for what you think and try to express it rationally; the workout machines are ideas from other people. After a while, you find that you crave meaningful talk in the same way your body begins to crave physical exercise.

Originating in Paris in 1992, Café Philo (short for "philosophy") is a place where ordinary people can explore philosophical topics. There are Café Philo groups all over the world. Everyone is welcome. You don't have to say anything. The aim is to give you the opportunity to think and talk about "big" issues — the things we all ponder late at night when howling at the moon.

All Café Philo participants get an e-mail or paper bulletin before the meeting. This gives us some material about the subject under discussion. Here's a sampling of recent topics:

■ *Do we have free will?* ■ *What's the Big Bang, and why should we care?* ■ *Is there life after death?*

I have a confession to make. I was drawn to this group like a bee to honey. Here was a chance, at last, to reacquaint myself with my inner nerd. But I was intimidated. If you are like me, you haven't thought about

things like this since high school — or ever. I had no idea what I thought about the topics. I had no idea how to talk about them. But I soon realized that everyone else felt the same way. Each meeting starts with every person who wants to speak briefly voicing his or her opinion. After this, other people start to comment. The open exchange begins. And thus, by baby steps, Café Philo explores a topic.

The ongoing surprise of Café Philo is that we do this every week. Most of us (I, certainly) couldn't speak for more than 30 seconds on any of these subjects...but the group keeps a discussion going for 90 minutes. The moderator, Phil Cutajar, who has been leading groups like this for almost seven years, does his best to keep the discussion focused and interesting.

Different people come every week. This isn't a social club in the ordinary sense. You and complete strangers share your thoughts about life. It's exhilarating. If we were smoking and drinking wine, it would be like a French movie. (Or perhaps like the original Café Philo in Paris.)

Yet I cannot say that Café Philo uncovers the truth about any topic. My inner nerd has learned not to expect answers. All questions, like life itself, turn out to be much more complex than we thought. Café Philo discussions are far-ranging, enlightening, maddening, and often go in circles. They stick in the mind because, as a philosopher said, "the unexamined life is not worth living" (that was Socrates, before drinking the hemlock). In Café Philo, you *examine* something: a topic, other people's beliefs, your own. The discussion is its own reward.

Want to scratch your own itch? Check it out.

The Café Philo at the Carrollwood Cultural Center is the only one in the Tampa Bay area. The group meets Fridays at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. The program is free.

Evelyn Bless



CARROLLWOOD CULTURAL CENTER

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Music Watch

Notable groups coming in 2009 will include **Brotherhood**, an a cappella group that has performed at the White House, and **Co Co CaChu**, a local group that performs 60's and 70's music with flair.

Mysteries Revealed: *Who Funds and Runs the Center?*

For many people unfamiliar with the Byzantine organization of nonprofits, the Carrollwood Cultural Center appears to be a freebie, funded and run by our tax dollars. It's not.

The Center is a public building, open to all. However, it is run as a partnership between Hillsborough County and the Friends of Carrollwood Cultural Center. The County, which owns the land and buildings, maintains them and gives the Center a set amount toward operating expenses.

The Friends of Carrollwood Cultural Center, the group that brought the Center to life after 10 years of effort, is responsible for all operational matters. The Center's Executive Director, Paul Berg, reports to the Friends' Board of Directors.

What does this mean for funding? The County grant covers about 80% of the Center's current expenses. The Friends and income from Center programs must cover all other expenses — including "seed money" for theatre improvements and performances.

When you join the Center, you become a member of the Friends. Memberships are one of the main sources of the Friends' revenue. But they are also looking at regular fundraisers. "For the Center to become all it can be," observes Board member John Miley, "a healthy and aggressive fundraising effort is more than icing on the cake; it is a critical necessity."

Comments from Mark Thornton

Mark Thornton, Director of Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation, recently answered a few questions for *Centerpieces*.

What is the county's role in Center operations at this point?

We are the contract managers of the agreement between the County and the Carrollwood Cultural Center. All operations are controlled by the Friends of Carrollwood Cultural Center. Basically, the Friends is a contractor operating a county/public building.

Are you pleased with the way the Center has been developing this year?

Very much so. Since the agreement has been effect, and with the hiring of Paul Berg, the mission of the Center is being fulfilled with no additional staffing or costs to the County than what was originally budgeted.

Any wishes for changes or new programs this year?

Continue to move forward and grow cultural arts and programs for all citizens of Hillsborough County.