

# CENTERPIECES

CARROLLWOOD CULTURAL CENTER Winter 2013 • Vol. 6 No. 1



## ■ All Hail the Art!

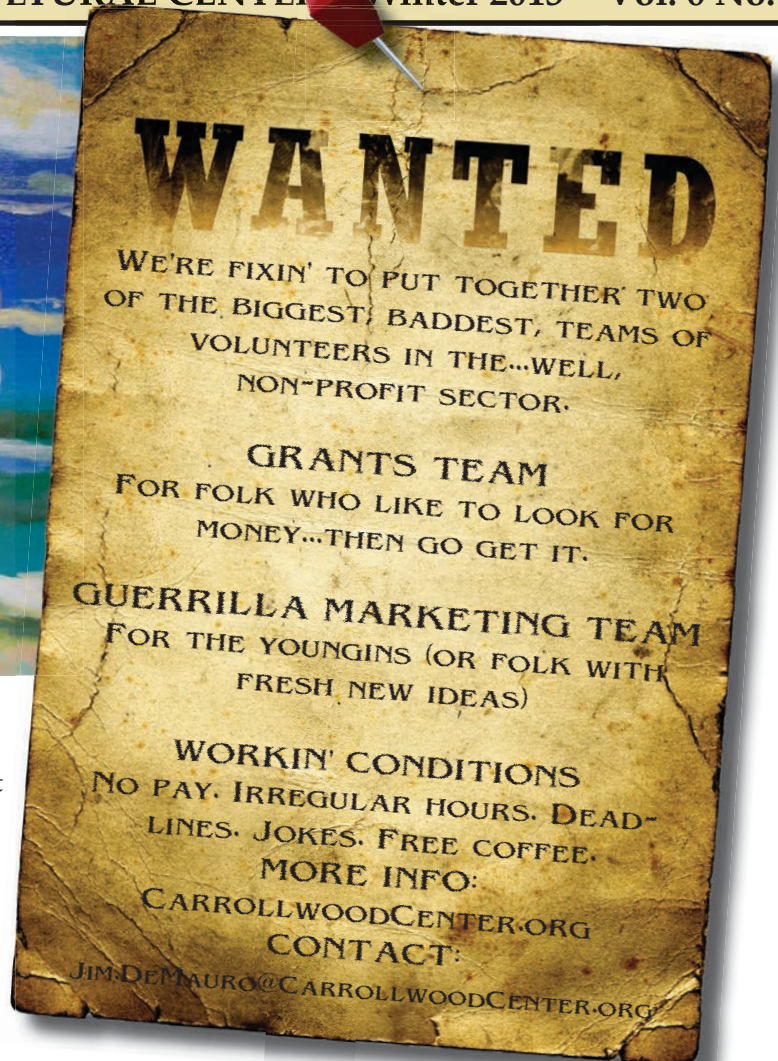
They say you only have one chance to make a good first impression. For most people who come to the Center, that first impression is: "beautiful!" They are not describing the building, although it has good bones. They are reacting to the art. The art on the walls gives the Center energy, personality and soul.

Why?

"Original art has presence. It has psychic energy," says Gainor Roberts, the Center's art curator. "We feel the vibrancy emanating from these pieces, even if we can't articulate it."

"We don't know how to describe this easily. If you've never experienced original art up close, you don't know the difference between originals and prints. Decorator art—what decorators select for spaces—is dead. It's been through a lot of different hands and has no identity any more. A painting changes the energy in a room. If you have a lot of paintings, they can dominate everything in the room, including the people."

"Actually," she adds with a smile, "years ago a decorator told me that's why they play it safe and only occasionally buy original artworks." (continued on page 4)



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- Linda & Craig Nowicke
- Center News
- The Singing Brain: the Right and Left of it

Banner Images:

*My Town USA* by Edie Rase (acrylic),

*The Larder* by Jean Dobbs (oil)

Also Featured:

*Pianos on the Surf* by Peter Stilton (acrylic)



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CULTURAL CENTER

Visit [CARROLLWOODCENTER.ORG](http://CARROLLWOODCENTER.ORG) for upcoming events and activities.



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At the Center, being a member is more than a way of showing support and staying involved; it's joining a family. Thank you to all of our members, including our Circles of Giving donors and corporate members listed below.

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## ■ Help our family grow!

For every person you send us who becomes a member of the Center, we will send you a \$25 gift certificate to the Center!

## ■ Visit us!

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*The Carrollwood Cultural Center is a partnership between Hillsborough County and the 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  
Winter 2013 • Vol. 6, Issue 1

*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](mailto: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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Editor: Evelyn Bless

Writers: Janet Bucknor

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Adrienne Hutelmyer

Pat Keeley

Kendra Langlie

Judy Schiavo

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Graphic Design: Adrienne Hutelmyer

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- Todd Dunkle, Development & Marketing Director
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- Robert Curry Jr., Facility Coordinator
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- Ruth Levy, Volunteer Coordinator
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### Carrollwood Cultural Center Board of Directors

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- Paul Sterzinger ([paul.sterzinger@carrollwoodcenter.org](mailto:paul.sterzinger@carrollwoodcenter.org))

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.



CARROLLWOOD  
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## ■ Spring Chicks – Hold the Door!

Attention, please. This spring, the Center has a lineup of female performers with international standing, including a nine-time Grammy nominee (and two-time winner!), a Carnegie Hall concert pianist and a musician whose first album already achieved gold record status in France. If you have the time, we highly recommend you peruse their full bios on our website. In the meantime, here's the short stuff on the ladies coming this spring—and remember there are many more women and men performers of note on the roster. Take a moment to savor the caliber of performances the Center is bringing us!

### Jonathan Edwards & Grace, Feb. 2, 8 pm

You may be familiar with the folk artist Jonathan Edwards, but are you familiar with his musician daughter, Grace? How to describe her music? Maybe "Folk/blues/reggae/world with a little bit of soul Americana music?" she suggests. With folk-musician parents, her roots are in Americana, but she has lived all over the world, most notably Kenya and France, and has incorporated many cultures into her music.

From the young age of 7, she learned the profound meaning of humanitarian work when she and her mother moved to Kenya for this reason. The good of "putting our lives in service to other people sets you for life. Suddenly you are part of something bigger than yourself." She takes this to heart and is helping, through her performances and publicity, an indigenous tribe in Brazil that is fighting against illegal logging (see: [graceforest.com](http://graceforest.com)); this is just one of the many ways she expresses her worldview of peaceful evolution.

Her first album, *Hall Of Mirrors* (2008), has already become a gold record in France and she released her second album, *Made for Change* last year.

Appearing with her father is very special. "I've always wanted to spend time performing with my dad," she notes. "We didn't always have a chance to be together" when she was growing up. Performing with her father is a mixture of "family reunion tour," songs from her childhood that her parents wrote and songs Grace or her father have written.

Jonathan Edwards has recorded 15 albums since 1971 and has been writing songs since he was a teenager—he's "the real deal" as Grace puts it. Best known for his Vietnam-war era protest song "Sunshine," he also produced a children's album, *Little Hands: Songs for and About Children* (1987), inspired by the birth of his daughter Grace.

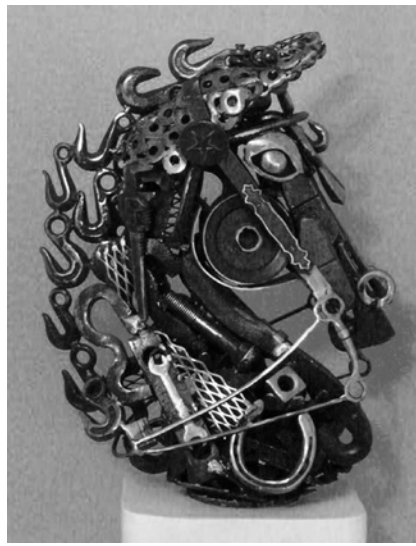
Visit [www.graceinmusic.com](http://www.graceinmusic.com) for more information about Grace.  
(continued on page 6)



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GRANT WRITING TEAM.

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*Charlene*  
by Matt Ellrod (oil)  
*Work Horse*

by Karyn Adamek (sculpture)

*Dancers in Buenos Aires*

by Jim MacNeil (photography)

## All Hail the Art! *(continued from page 1)*

The Center's art program exposes you to the energy of original art. When you come to the Center for a class, meeting or performance, the art is waiting. You can visit for the art or view it along the way.

Known as the Gallery at the Carrollwood Cultural Center, our art program is unique.

No other gallery in the area is like it. Commercial art galleries are small and focus on sales. Museums charge admission and show historically or culturally significant works. Public buildings have limited collections that typically are not for sale and have little security. In contrast, the Center has two or more exhibits each month. Almost all works are for sale. The exhibits change monthly or bimonthly. With about 1100 linear feet of wall space, it's also one of the largest display areas in the Bay area.

"I cannot overstate the importance of the Center to area artists," says Gainor. "Because of the economy and changes in public habits, we've lost most of our exhibition space. We don't have marketing venues to put our work in.

"An artist is like an actor. Art is a two-way street. Without an observer, the art doesn't live. An actor needs a stage, a play, to be whole. If you're an artist and no one sees your work, who are you?"

The Gallery's mission is to support local artists and to educate the public about art. "The Center has high visibility and it's very accessible," notes Gainor. Local artists are charged a nominal fee. They exhibit as part of a group or solo in one of the mini-galleries. Most important, the Center does not charge a commission—meaning that, unlike a commercial gallery,

each artist prices and receives the entire payment for a work. As a non-profit, the Center does not handle sales. It provides exhibition space and information only. To purchase a work or learn more, you contact the artist directly. This has the benefit of helping you and the artist to get to know each other. "Many galleries don't want artists to know their buyers," says Gainor. The Center has a more relaxed, organic approach. You can view a work of art many times before deciding to buy. You arrange payment terms and pickup with the artist. Like the art itself, the exchange becomes personal.

The most unique quality of the Gallery is the way it inspires, encourages and supports artists. In this, it is a direct reflection of the Center's mission. Gainor tells the story of a student in her class whom she asked about entering a show. "She said to me, 'I'm not good enough yet.' That told me she was comparing herself to the artists in the show—and that she also saw that she could get better. I said to her, 'Keep at it. You will get better.'"

Most galleries and museums erect a seemingly insurmountable barrier between the "successful" artists chosen for exhibit and other artists who may be equally good but less well known. The art world can seem closed off. New and even relatively experienced artists see no way in.

The Center gives them a ladder. Artists who teach classes and exhibit here are known locally, nationally and internationally. They are examples and a source of contacts. The Gallery's summer show is dedicated to the work of students in Center classes. For many, this is their first step on the ladder. Aspiring artists can take more classes, exhibit with group shows, move on to a solo show. And then they may aspire further, to new regions and galleries far away, like many of the artists—both teachers and students—who have gone before.

*Evelyn Bless*



## Permanent Collection

Did you know the Center has a permanent art collection donated by artists and generous donors?

The permanent collection has expanded dramatically in the past year with the gift of 13 works from Phyllis and Dr. Leslie Chisholm. The Chisholms (related to the family that created the famous Chisholm Trail) invited art curator Gainor Roberts to their home to select from a collection, most of which formerly hung in Dr. Chisholm's medical offices. "The art was chosen originally for a public space, so it's soothing and calm, while still very beautiful," says Gainor.

Other significant donations include Peter and Jill Stilton's gift of a large painting in memory of Mary Ann Scialdo, the Center's first Artistic Director. Artists Carole Flagg and Lenore Freeman have donated multiple works. The Center also has multiple works by Taylor Ikin. The Center's first art curator Mary Ellen Bitner, Steve Sperry and Mark Pericot have each donated a work. Other pieces have been donated anonymously.

You will find this art throughout the Center, in meeting rooms, classrooms, the reading room, administrative offices and hallways. The Center wishes to thank each of our generous donors. Enjoy.

## Thanks for the Hanging

The Center wishes to thank Dale Coram, who donated the hanging cables and sliding hooks for the Theater and Corridor galleries that make the Gallery's display of artwork more professional, efficient and secure.

### February

**Florida Suncoast Watercolor Society**

Doré Anderson (Lobby Gallery)

Magda Barsoum-Homsy (Corridor Gallery)

### March

**The Tampa Branch of National League of American Pen Women**

Michelle Curry (Lobby Gallery)

Trinidad Henaó (Corridor Gallery)

### April

**Music of the Soul with artist Peter Stilton**

*(Join us for a free performance April 5 with Stilton and pianist Joseph Schwartz!)*

Helen Mathysen Dobbins (Lobby Gallery)

### May

**North Tampa Arts League**

George Wilson (Lobby Gallery)

University Village Artists (Corridor Gallery)

Visit [CarrollwoodCenter.org](http://CarrollwoodCenter.org) for dates and details.

## Mini-galleries

The Center has several distinct areas used for different shows. All current exhibits and their locations are listed on a column in the main lobby and on our website. Check out the Main Gallery (theatre and upper balconies), Main Entrance Gallery (lobby and mezzanine), Corridor Gallery (second floor inside corridor), Alcove area (second floor space between corridor and balcony) and Atrium Gallery (upper lobby).

## WANTED GUERRILLA MARKETERS

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## ■ Girls Rock!

Here's a look at two more leading ladies coming to the Center this Spring:

Violinist **AMY SCHWARTZ MORETTI** will join pianist Franz Mantini for **Strings in the Spring** on March 9, 8pm

USF voice professor, **KYO-UNG CHO**, will direct some of USF's most gifted voice students in **An Evening of Vocal Music** on April 13, 8pm.

Visit [CarrollwoodCenter.org](http://CarrollwoodCenter.org) for a sneak peek at who is coming to the Center next, including girls who are funny and a young rising country star!

## Spring Chicks – Hold the Door! *(continued from page 3)*

### Robin Spielberg, Feb. 15, 8 pm

She has been described by one reviewer as a “piano goddess” whose “riveting one-woman show will change the way you hear music with an experience that is visual, emotional and intimate.”

Robin Spielberg always had musical talent, but she spent the first 10 years of her professional career in theater, as an actor. Then she composed music. She produced her first album of original piano solos, *Heal the Hand*, in 1993; it became the best-selling record in the history of her label, North Star Music. Then she founded her own label, playMountain Music. Do you get the feeling this woman can accomplish anything she wants?

Speilberg was named to the prestigious Steinway Artist Roster in 1996. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in a sold-out performance at the Weill Recital Hall in 1997 and has performed there twice since. A prolific composer, she has made 16 recordings and appears on over 40 compilations around the world, with millions of listeners.

Speilberg's performances are distinguished not only by her abilities in composition and piano technique, but by her ability to connect with audiences through her storytelling.

### Janis Ian, May 2, 8 pm

Janis Ian, singer-songwriter, is a nine-time Grammy award nominee with two wins, whose musical spectrum ranges from folk to jazz.

She was a bonafide child prodigy: Ian began her mostly stellar, sometimes stormy, professional life at 12 when she wrote her first song and was published by *Broadside Magazine*. She soon began performing in New York alongside Tom Paxton, Lou Gossett Jr., Judy Collins, Phil Ochs and a host of other singer-songwriters. She is most well known for her songs “At Seventeen” and “Society's Child;” both have been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.

To give you an idea of the buzz that Janis Ian created during her six decades of performing, here are some lesser-known facts...

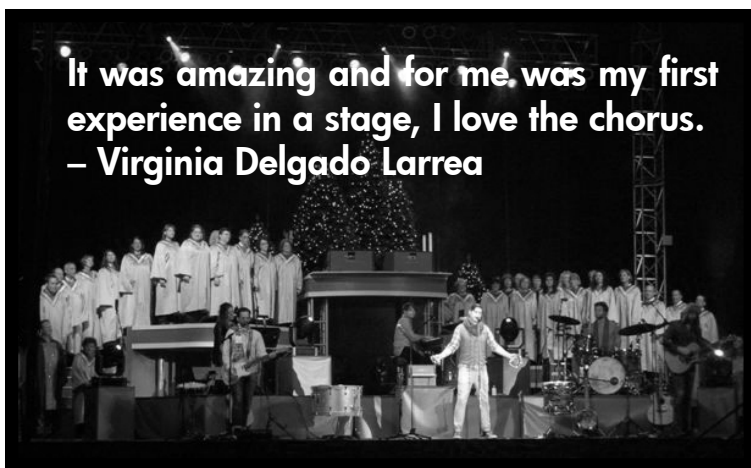
- She performed on the very first broadcast of *Saturday Night Live*.
- She was the first person asked to score *The Graduate*, but turned it down on the advice of her then-agent, David Geffen.
- She sang the first Budweiser Light and Egg McMuffin commercials.
- Her songs have been recorded by singers as diverse as Cher, John Mellencamp, Celine Dion, Hugh Masakela, Nana Mouskouri, Charlie Daniels and Roberta Flack.
- She is also a science-fiction writer and columnist.

By the time she performs at the Center, she may have won another Grammy in the “Best Spoken Word Category” for her autobiography, also named *Society's Child*. The award will be announced in February 2013. Stay tuned!

*Kendra Langlie*



**There's something to be said about being the first to help a community tradition get started and being invited back three times. What a legacy we will leave to future choirs and Tampa to help our local amusement park get started on a memorable venture... We love to sing for others and make their hearts joyful with music. – Pat Keeley**



**It was amazing and for me was my first experience in a stage, I love the chorus.  
– Virginia Delgado Larrea**

**We were greeted by wonderful and very positive employees of the staff who were so appreciative. Their praise of our performance gave us the confidence we needed. I feel so fortunate to live in a community that offers an opportunity to join a group of talented adults coming together to share their musical talents with others. — Pat Spauding**

## ■ Congratulations to our Chorus

*The Center's Community Chorus was one of the "best of the best" local choruses selected by Busch Gardens to participate in their new Christmas Town event last December. Judy Schiavo, a member of the Center's Chorus and Centerpieces writer, reports on the experience.*

We sang as one of the "Hallelujah Choirs" during the first season of Busch Gardens' *Christmas Town: A Busch Gardens Tradition*. Mary Jo Hahn, our Chorus Director, had suggested we try out for this by sending in an audition tape. We were competing against other choruses in the Bay area. Not only were we selected—we were asked to do additional shows! We performed five times at the Marakesh Theatre and sang backup to *Silent Night* for the Christian rock group Jars of Clay on the stage in Gwazi Park.

We performed on December 9, 20 and 21. At the first show, we were not sure what to expect. We were used to Mary Jo being in front. We were told that the stage didn't permit this, which made us apprehensive. However, Mary Jo saved the day: she enlisted Rusty Wirt, from her church choir, to direct us, and accompanied us on piano from the back of the stage.

For the two later dates, Mary Jo asked Mike Horton, of the First Baptist Church Choir and "Sing Live!" in Tampa Bay, to direct, and also asked her son Nathan to accompany us with percussion.

Busch Gardens Consumer Events Coordinator Heather Harrison and Stage Manager Maryhelen Groh handled our group with skill and ease. Betty Lavoy, our volunteer, helped out with everything.

All of us were excited, gratified by the large, enthusiastic audiences, and grateful to Mary Jo for giving us this opportunity. And for making it fun! We hope to be invited back next year to experience it all over again.

New members are always welcome. We practice on Mondays at 7 pm. Come see us!

# WANTED

## GRANT WRITER

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OF VARIOUS GRANT APPLICATIONS.

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## ■ Linda and Craig Nowicke



Linda and Craig Nowicke are big supporters of the Center. Linda's ReMax real estate office is a platinum corporate member. Craig, who runs the office with her, is a member of the Center's Community Chorus. They live nearby and frequently walk to performances and events. *Centerpieces* asked them a few questions about what the Center means to them.

### *CP: What do you see as unique about the Center?*

CRAIG: We love the fact that it's right in the heart of Carrollwood, where we live and work. It really is a "community" cultural center.

LINDA: The Carrollwood Cultural Center is a jewel in our community. It has elevated the status of Carrollwood Village in the eyes of both current residents as well as new people moving into the area. The Center has breathed new life into an otherwise mature community [and] is unique in our county... this concept was never done before. I expect the growth and development of the Center will continue to be exponential.

### *Do you have favorite programs?*

CRAIG: I am biased, because I'm in the Chorus! I also love that we have the Broadway Bound kids. I see this as a huge opportunity for young, aspiring entertainers to get professional quality training and exposure to the craft. And if I could make the time, I'd love to take the drawing class.

LINDA: I love plays and musicals. My New Year's resolution is to sign up for some of the arts, yoga and dance classes. I'm trying to get Craig to a dance class!

### *What would you like to see at the Center in the future?*

CRAIG: Just keep going! There are so many offerings we haven't tried yet that it would be hard to name something new or different.

LINDA: The leaders of the CCC are doing such a great job in its development and keeping us informed that I look forward to email updates to see what they are going to do next!! I'd like to see some of the more popular/mainstream plays that I've missed in the past—*Oliver!* and *The King and I* were WONDERFUL!!

### *Do you have a favorite anecdote to share?*

CRAIG: This is very recent ... but I'm thrilled that the chorus was invited to perform at Busch Gardens' Christmas Town event.

LINDA: For me, it's the rapid development of the Center with its carefully selected programs and events that appeal to all ages that I've found so exciting to observe. I'm thrilled that each time I go to an event, the attendance seems to increase.

### *Besides singing, we know that Craig has also acted. Is there more to know about your arts backgrounds?*

CRAIG: I have been a performing musician for more than 30 years, playing everything from banjo in a Dixieland band to folk guitar to bass in hard rock bands.

LINDA: I sing beautifully (in the shower!). At the moment, I'm a frustrated artist. In the past, BK (before kids), I've done acrylic painting, painting on glass, calligraphy, cloth and wicker weaving and things of that nature as an artistic outlet. I keep waiting for real estate to slow down so that I can enjoy creative arts activities again. I keep the CCC class schedule close at hand. My plan is to sign up for at least one class each session.

### *How did you decide to become realtors?*

CRAIG: Real estate is actually my third career. First was cooking. I started as a dishwasher at 17, then worked my way up. I was fortunate to cook in some fantastic places.

During college I got an internship at EDS, Ross Perot's first company. That led to a 5-year stint at EDS, followed by 7 years at Perot Systems when it was a startup. I got very deep into manufacturing and distribution systems and operations, ultimately becoming a partner with The Progress Group.

I absolutely loved that work. It involves solving huge problems for huge facilities, so when you can make an improvement it helps thousands of people. The downside was that I traveled 50 weeks of the year. At the time our kids were young, and I was missing their childhood. A friend suggested Linda go into real estate, which sparked the idea. This was something I could do that didn't require travel. *(continued on next page)*



## **Linda and Craig Nowicke** *(continued from previous page)*

LINDA: I bought my first business at the age of 24 in Michigan. I went on to design and develop the first Day Spa in the area back in the 1980s. When we moved to Florida in 1998, the children were in Carrollwood Elementary and Craig traveled with his work, so I was room mom to both of them for a few years. I became a full time Realtor in 2003 at the encouragement of several Realtor friends and have never looked back—I love all aspects of this work because I get to help people achieve their dream.

*You started out in different fields. How did you meet?*

CRAIG: We were both from Romeo, MI. I was playing my first paid gig playing guitar and singing in a quaint little place called “The Ugly Mug” on Labor Day weekend, 1980. Labor Day weekend in Romeo means it’s The Michigan Peach Festival. Which also meant the place was empty except for me and the bartender. The bartender also was a hairdresser who worked for Linda by day. Linda came in to support her friend ... and the rest is history!

LINDA: Ditto!

*How many children do you have?*

CRAIG: Alex and Tonia. We adopted both of them from Siberia in the early 1990s. Alex came to us in 1993 from Chelyabinsk at age 4. Tonia came to us in 1995 from Tomsk at age 3. Alex just started volunteering at the Center, where he hopes to learn to run sound and lights.

*Is volunteering something you encourage in the kids?*

LINDA: I love to volunteer and have found there is no better feeling than giving back. My son and I delivered almost 200 pounds of food to Metropolitan Ministries for their holiday drive—I have volunteered there on many occasions. I have also volunteered at The Ronald MacDonald House, Joshua House and The Children’s Home.

*Would you like to tell us something about each other?*

CRAIG: On the business side, Linda is a “doer.” One of her clients just told her, “I figured out why you are so successful. It’s because you’re aggressive on the deal, but you are also very nice to the people.” She loves her dogs and cats (two of each), her kids and her garden.

We both cook. I probably cook more often. Linda does the vacation planning, as it is a passion of hers. I absolutely do not make decisions about furniture or decorating. I think in the military they say, “that’s above my pay grade.”

LINDA: Craig can make friends standing in the grocery line or in line waiting to buy a ticket and has a quick wit and finds humor in almost everything.

*Judy Schiavo*

## ■ **Center News**

### **County Renews Contract**

We are pleased to announce that Hillsborough County has renewed its contract with the Friends of the Carrollwood Cultural Center for management of the Carrollwood Cultural Center. The contract has been renewed at the same level and conditions for an additional five years. The Center is a unique partnership between Hillsborough County and the Friends of the Carrollwood Cultural Center to offer programs and events that benefit our region. County financing covers about half the yearly expenses of the Center.

### **Annual Meeting**

The second annual meeting of members of the Friends of the Carrollwood Cultural Center will be held February 20 at 7 pm. If you are a member of the Center, you belong to the Friends. Whether you are a member, neighbor or someone who cares about the Center, please attend. Meet the Board members; learn about more the Center’s status and plans. We welcome your feedback, and this meeting is a great place to speak and be heard.

### **Key Club Still Open**

Groucho Marx said, “I’d never belong to a club that would have me as a member.” The Key Club is an exception. Consider joining this group of special people, who want to help the Center financially by making its little pianos our own. Reaching our goal will eliminate the Center’s long-term debt on the student pianos, saving the Center more than twice the Club’s goal in monthly payments. Our Shigeru piano, a gift from Kawai Piano Company in honor of Mary Ann Scialdo, is like the mother piano. The Key Club addresses the needs of the little pianos that accompanied her. Help rescue them from the dark side. The savings will sponsor additional programs and events. Your donation is tax-deductible.

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COMPLETING ACCOUNTING CONTENT  
OF GRANT APPLICATIONS  
(IF YOU WANT, WE’LL EVEN  
CALL YOU MONEYBAGS.)

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## ■The Singing Brain: the Right and Left of it

Burt Bacharach and Carol Bayer Sager. Lennon and McCartney. George and Ira Gershwin. David Bowie and Iggy Pop. I could continue naming great songwriting teams. But one thing stands out—more than one person wrote many of the songs we love. Even many of the great writers of operatic music did not write their own librettos. The music for *Carmen* was written by Georges Bizet, but Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy wrote the words. Antonio Ghislanzoni wrote the words for Verdi's *Aida*. Bizet and Verdi were operatic geniuses. But they needed poets and writers to express their music in words.

Other artists, such as Carol King, Jim Croce and Dolly Parton, produced both great tunes and lyrics. So what's going on? Are two brains better than one? Or will one do just fine?

The human brain is an intricate mechanism that is highly specialized and at the same time internally collaborative. The left side handles most of our language tasks and skills, and the right side handles music. But in writing songs, both right and left sides contribute. People who write both music and lyrics are in a sense using two brains—the two halves of their own. It is hard for most people to draw equally from both sides. Songwriting teams are often successful because one person focuses mostly on the music, while the other finds the words.

However, when you sing, the right side of the brain dominates. The words are bound to the music, not the other way around. Try this yourself: it is very hard simply to “say” the words of a well-known song without incorporating its tune. Singing, by the way, in common with many right-brain activities, generates feelings of happiness and well-being. These are the result of endorphins. The effect is most powerful when singing in groups, like the Center's Community Chorus. (*Disclosure: This is one of the reasons I joined the Center's Chorus!*)

What happens to singing and speech when the right and left sides of the brain don't work well together? A brief review of the brain's major parts will help us to see what is going on.

We store information in the grey matter (cell body of the neurons). The neurons communicate with each other by way of white matter (axons), which carry information, requests and orders. The signal goes from the axon across a tiny gap—the synapse—to the receiving tendrils (dendrites) of other cells.

The white matter is protected by myelin. This myelin thins out over time. That's one of the reasons we have “senior moments,” when we can't remember a word or name. It is perfectly normal. When myelin thins, the speed of response slows down. Even while you are doing something else, the little li-

brarian in your head is toddling back to the stacks to get you that word that seemed so elusive a few minutes, hours, days or even months ago.

The neocortex—the large, convoluted upper layer of the brain—handles higher thinking activities and problem solving, everything from writing a symphony to deciding what's for dinner. The brain uses a giant neural pathway (the corpus callosum) to interconnect the right and left hemispheres. The corpus callosum sends information from one side to the

other. If you imagine Tampa as the right side of your brain and Orlando as the left, the corpus callosum is Interstate 4. Many local and county roads take us in the same direction, but to get from Tampa to Disney World with any efficiency, you have to drive on I-4. You are driving very fast, by the way; brain cells fire in milliseconds: about 200 times/second.

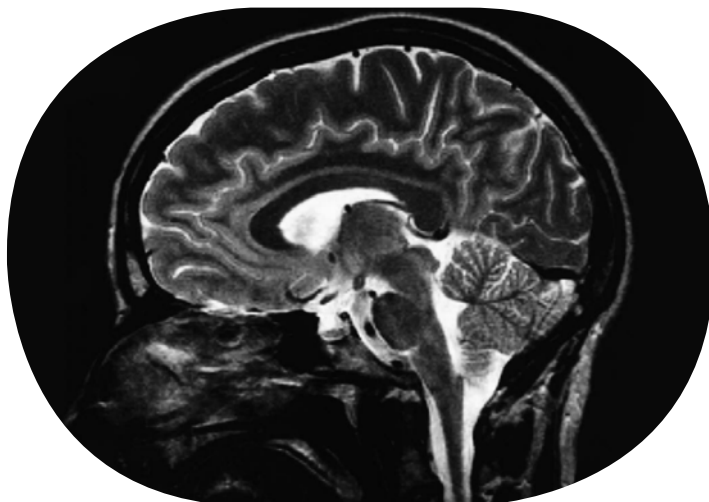
Sixty percent of the corpus callosum “highways” split up at the base of your skull and control activity on the opposite side of your body. If someone has a

Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA or stroke) on the left side, the right arm and leg are impaired. Since the left side has the language centers, a person with a left-sided stroke or other brain trauma (like Gabrielle Gifford) may have problems such as aphasia (difficulty finding words), and apraxia (difficulty moving the tongue, mouth, and lips when talking).

My mother had a stroke on her left side. She had Broca's aphasia. Both her word center and ability to produce speech were impaired. Mom, being a very proper and well-spoken lady, would take days to put together one sentence that came out grammatically correct. Then she wouldn't be able to say another intelligible word for the next few days. She could not put together pictures and their meaning. I remember her pacing around the house for hours one day, trying to communicate that she wanted to buy a birthday card. Yet she could sing... because singing used the right side of her brain.

What about a common condition known as stuttering? Medical scientists have found that when a normal person talks, the left side of the brain is active and the right side is dormant. In a stutterer, both sides of the brain are active. The right hemisphere, which should remain respectfully standing by during speech, wants to participate. The brain gets orders from both sides and is confused. The result? The person stutters.

Years ago, I was in a chorus of *Carmen* that was directed by Joe, a local high school teacher who couldn't speak without stuttering. It was very hard for us to listen to him. Yet when he sang, he didn't stutter at all. Amazingly, stutterers do not stutter when they sing! (*continued on next page*)





## ■Quiz: The Brain at the Zoo

Here are some questions about the brains of humans and other creatures. Try them with the whole family!

1. What can retard the “brain drain” of aging in both animals and humans?”

a) exercise b) a stimulating environment c) antioxidants

2. What part of the brain is unique to mammals?

a) occipital lobe b) neocortex c) corpus callosum

3. What part of the brain controls the “fight or flight” response?

a) right side  
b) neocortex  
c) amygdala

4. The smallest brain belongs to the:

a) earthworm  
b) fruit fly  
c) gnat



5. The largest brain belongs to the:

a) human being b) gorilla c) sperm whale

6. The largest brain cells found in nature belong to a:

a) human b) blue whale c) octopus

7. What mammal’s brain is closest in the way it works to humans’ brains?

a) chimpanzee b) elephant c) dolphin

8. Which of these species has the best color vision?

a) human beings b) tropical fish c) birds

9. Which mammal is closest to humans in the number of brain cells in the cortex?

a) chimpanzee b) dolphin c) elephant

10. Which animal has the most taste buds?

a) human b) mouse c) catfish

11. Spindle cells, which are neurons without a lot of branching, are important for the development of intelligent behavior and emotions. Besides humans, which animals, so far, have also been found to have these cells?

a) whales and dolphins  
b) great apes  
c) elephants

## The Singing Brain (continued from previous page)

People who stutter cannot sing all the time. Another way to trick the sides of the brain into their proper roles is to change the auditory feedback—how people hear their own voice. Scientists have discovered that if you engage the right side of the brain, it’s too distracted to compete with the left side when you talk. Researchers put head phones on stutterers that delayed the auditory feedback or altered the pitch of their voice. The patients did not stutter. Today there are hearing aid-sized devices that, when inserted into the ear canal, can stop stuttering cold. The effect may not be permanent; by age 14, stuttering is very difficult to cure.

As a school Speech Language Pathologist, I was assigned a new sixth grader who was a severe stutterer with behaviors like struggling, wincing, twitching of the eyes, etc. I thought, “Oh, boy, I’m really going up against a hard customer in teaching compensatory strategies.” When he walked into my office for the first time, he did not show a single sign of stuttering. Was this the same kid I’d just read about?

“How did you cure your stuttering?” I asked.

“I talked like Donald Duck all summer,” he replied. “When the summer was over, I no longer stuttered.”

This 11 year-old had altered the auditory feedback to his brain and “rewired” himself.

You may remember *The King’s Speech*, the story of an “elocutionist” who taught King George VI to make his famous broadcast speech about going to war with Germany. The speech corrector used a technique called Melodic Intonation Therapy. The teacher and the King used extreme pitches when talking; they altered King George’s auditory feedback, much like the boy who talked like Donald Duck.

Pat Keeley

Answers: The Brain at the Zoo  
1. all of these  
2. c) amygdala  
3. b) fruit fly  
4. c) sperm whale  
5. c) octopus  
6. c) dolphin  
7. b) tropical fish  
8. b) elephant  
9. c) catfish has 10x the taste buds of humans  
10. all of these

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**Did you know** that the Center helps other non-profits? Every year the Center donates thousands of dollars worth of space to area non-profits as well as gifts for fundraisers, raffles and door prizes to area schools and organizations.

The list of groups we've helped and worked with includes the American Cancer Society, Goodwill Industries, Girl Scouts of America, Learning Gate School, Samaritan's Purse - Operation Christmas Child, the Sertoma Foundation, Carrollwood Area Business Association, North Tampa Chamber of Commerce, the Children's Home, Suncoast Kid's Place, Tampa Bay chapter of the Sierra Club and more.



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