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## 2014 YOUTH ART SHOW BIGGER AND BETTER

One of the most popular events sponsored by the Monroe Arts Alliance is the Youth Art Show. Each spring, young people of all ages from throughout the county put forth their best artistic efforts in a show and competition. Each year since its inception, the show has grown.

Over 100 people attended the awards ceremony and reception at the Monroe Motors showroom in March. Awards were presented in a wide variety of ages and classes including painting, drawing, mixed media, visual arts and creative writing.

The Arts Alliance expresses its appreciation to the many volunteers who helped in the event. We would like to also thank the West Virginia Division of Culture and History and the West Virginia Commission on the Arts for their continued support of the youth art shows.

## NATURE AND WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW

The Monroe Arts Alliance first annual Nature And Wildlife Photography Show is now underway. Classes include Woodlands and Landscapes, Hunting, Fishing, Wildlife, and Farm Life.

Photos can be submitted now through December 6th, 2014. Information and entry forms are available at county libraries and the Monroe Tourism office. The photos will be displayed Dec. 7 through 13 at the Union Senior Center for the public to enjoy with an awards ceremony and reception on Saturday, December 13. at the Union Senior Center at 3 PM.

Contestants must be residents of Monroe County or surrounding areas and all the photos must originate in Monroe County.

Further Information, including rules and applications, is also available online at the MAA website, <http://www.monroeartsalliance.org>. or by calling 304-772-3128.

# ARTS UPDATE

Below: View of the crowd at the Arts Alliance 2014 Youth Arts Show



Randon Perkins with his second place prize drawing at the Youth Art Show.



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

My mother grew up in the backwoods of Monroe County during the Great Depression. Her family included father and mother and 8 children. This was a time of great hardship for folks who were barely able to survive with the bare necessities. Since cameras were hard to come by there were very few photos taken at that time. But the few that were provide a great deal of insight into the culture and values of the folks in this area of Appalachia. The photos, since they were so uncommon, were given great importance by family members, all of whom dressed in their finest. One item which appeared in every photo is particularly revealing, a musical instrument.

Music was a bright light in a world of pain and suffering. The family members played wherever there was an outlet; at church events, at Saturday night dances after a long week of arduous farmwork and in private get togethers at someone's home.

Musical abilities were handed down through generations, parents teaching children, older siblings teaching younger ones.

The importance of music cannot be overemphasized whether rich or poor or from whatever culture one originates. This is just as true with painting, writing, dance, or any of many other forms of art practiced throughout the world. Art is universal, every culture in the world practices some form. It seems in today's world there is less opportunity for people to "find their art". Organizations which promote this process are, I believe, critically important in this process.

That is why I joined the Monroe Arts Alliance several years ago and I now have taken the position of Director of this organization.

Dale McCutcheon

**Arts Update** is a regularly published newsletter of the Monroe Arts Alliance sent to all members and others who may be interested in the activities and programs of the Alliance.

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THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETS MONTHLY ON THE THIRD SUNDAY AT 4:00 PM IN THE SUMMER AND 3:00PM IN THE WINTER AT THE MONROE COUNTY LIBRARY IN UNION, WV.

The Monroe Arts Alliance is a member driven 501C3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion and support of the arts in Monroe County, WV and the surrounding area. Programs and initiatives of the Arts Alliance are funded by the public, private foundations and businesses, WV Division of Culture and History and the WV Commission on the Arts.

## **THE POWER OF ART: PORTRAIT OF AN ART STUDENT**

It has often been said that the power of art knows no boundaries. The transforming effect of exposure to and immersion in art upon the individual, be it music, painting or any of many other art forms, is limitless.

Monroe County native Brenja Doan epitomizes this effect that art can produce.

A few short years ago Brenja had no inkling that her life would be altered so dramatically by art. She had always enjoyed looking at paintings and photos but felt that being able to create works of art such as these was beyond her capabilities.

When an opportunity finally arrived for Brenja to “try her hand” at painting she jumped in wholeheartedly. And the results have been nothing short of exceptional.

Brenja started art lessons with well known Greenbrier County artist Jeanne Brenneman who immediately recognized her potential. Ms. Brenneman says of Brenja, “She studies hard and follows instructions well, and brings joy and enthusiasm in her work. I always enjoy having her in my classes.”

Noted Monroe County artist Genevieve Gillen is captivated with Brenja’s artistic development. “It has truly amazed me how Brenja has taken to the world of art. She had had no experience in any of art media nor in exhibitions.

She has plunged in to learn watercolor, acrylic, colored pencils, and pastel painting.”

Brenja has displayed her work in the Greenbrier Tourist Center, the Monroe Fine Artist and the Greenbrier Artists Annual Show. In July of this year she was Artist of the Month at the Monroe County Library, displaying 35 of her works.

As Brenja states it about how art has affected her, “Art has just opened a whole new world to me. I have people talking to me about art. I don’t even know these people. They just walk up to me and start talking. They have seen my art.”

Brenja applied to the Monroe Arts Alliance Scholarship Program in December of 2012 and was accepted into the scholarship program. She is now studying with Rose Dobbins, another very well known Greenbrier County artist.

**Below: Brenja Doan studying under noted Painter Jeanne Brenneman.**



## **MONROE ARTS ALLIANCE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM GROWING**

A major ongoing activity of the Alliance is the Arts Scholarship program. This program, the only one of its kind in the state, provides scholarship money for county residents to study their chosen art forms under the guidance of professional instructors. The students range in age from 5 years old to adulthood.

There is a strong tradition of art in Monroe County and surrounding areas and many talented people who are willing to pass on their skills to others. The scholarship program helps those who want to develop their artistic skills in a variety of forms but could use some financial support to help with the cost of the lessons.

The program now supports 13 students with more applications being regularly received.

For more information about the Arts Alliance Scholarship program go to the website at [www.monroeartsalliance.org](http://www.monroeartsalliance.org) or call 304-772-3128.

### **2014 Membership Drive is Underway**

The Monroe Arts Alliance operates on a limited budget that is stretched to the maximum. With increasing requests for services, especially with our scholarship program, we struggle to find the funds needed. You can help by giving generously and by recruiting new members.

#### Annual Giving Levels

Individual \$15    Family \$25    Fan \$50    Star \$100    Contributor \$250    Sponsor \$500

**Donations may be mailed to:** Monroe Arts Alliance, PO Box 4546, Union, WV 24983

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## **MONROE ARTS ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: Individual \$15; Family \$25; Fan \$50; Star \$100; Contributor \$300; Sponsor \$500 and above

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donors at the Star level or above will have their names included in performance programs. Please indicate how you would like your name to appear: \_\_\_\_\_

*The Monroe Arts Alliance is a 501C-3 non-profit organization. All membership donations are fully tax deductible.*

