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PAUL LEAVY | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Opening night at the arts center

ABOVE: Maria Alvarado left, with her sister-in-law Sandy Alvarado and her sister Norma Hartmann, look at a Lamar Dodd painting in the Sallie Harmon Boyette Gallery at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts during the opening night for the center's new series, featuring art from Lamar Dodd, Irene Dodd and Dr. Ronald Zaccari, plus the People's Choice Photo Contest and 'Explorations: Creations' by Boys and Girls Club students. **BELOW:** Tiffany Christie looks over some of the 87 entries in the Valdosta 2011 People's Choice Photo Contest, sponsored by the City of Valdosta. Christie and others entered photographs in the annual exhibit that features pictures taken in Valdosta, with the top photographs being announced July 15.





"Three Tugs" by Lamar Dodd.

Wizard of Dodd

Georgia's master returns to Valdosta

BY DEAN POLING
THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

VALDOSTA — A giant in Georgia's art scene and art history returns this week to the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

Lamar Dodd: 1909-1996.

Life magazine once described Dodd as being "more responsible than any other man for the renaissance of art that has swept the Southeast."

The University of Georgia's Lamar Dodd School of Art is named in his honor.

He had a versatility of style so that his canvases did not so much bow to new conventions but reflected the changes in society and art throughout his lifetime.

His legacy includes his talented daughter, Irene Dodd, a masterful artist in her own right. She once taught art at Valdosta State University and still paints. The Annette Howell Turner Center for the Art also opens a new exhibit of Irene Dodd's work this week along with the work of her father. On June 13, Irene Dodd leads a discussion on her work and her father's paintings.

This is not Lamar Dodd's first time at the arts center. Following the 2003 Spring Into Art, the arts center featured Dodd's works as its second show.

This show shares works from C.L. Morehead's Lamar Dodd collection. It is a different show than the 2003 exhibit. Morehead, a philanthropic entrepreneur, was a friend of Lamar Dodd and an avid collector of his works. Morehead's house has been described as a Lamar Dodd museum.

Bill Shenton, arts center's curator, says Morehead has hundreds of Dodd works. Morehead invited the center to essentially take whatever it wanted to show from his walls.

This exhibit should express Lamar Dodd's ability to change styles throughout his long career. But Dodd was not only innovative as a painter. Rather, he had an ingenuity for versatility throughout many aspects of his life.

Lamar Dodd "has doffed many a hat in his life, among them the mortar board of the doctor of letters, the top hat of the statesman, and the Stetson of the advocate," William U. Eiland writes in his book, "The Truth in Things: The Life and Career of Lamar Dodd," "but the one he always preferred is the beret of the artist. Were he not able to don the latter, none of the others would have fit so well."

Born in 1909, Lamar Dodd grew up in LaGrange, Ga. At an early age, he became interested in art and studied it with a passion. At his family's insistence, he briefly studied architecture, but Dodd did not care for it. He wanted to be an artist. In 1928, he traveled to New York City, where Dodd studied art at the Art Students League. Influenced by the robust life of New York and the League's teachers, Dodd learned



"Behind the Curtain" by Lamar Dodd.

GALLERY

Several new shows open this week at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts: Lamar Dodd, Sallie & Harmon Boyette Gallery; Dr. Ron Zaccari's "Transition," Price-Campbell Gallery; Irene Dodd, Josette's Gallery; Art Explorations: Creations by Boys & Girls Club students, Roberta George Children's Gallery.

Where: Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.

Reception: A free, public reception, 5-7:30 p.m. Monday, June 6.

Run time: Shows run through Aug. 3.

Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; closed Sundays and Mondays, except for opening receptions.

Admission: Free.

More information: Visit www.turnercenter.org; or call (229) 247-2787.

his craft while exploring the spirit and terms of being an artist.

"Indeed, Dodd's days at the Art Students League were exciting ones in a pivotal moment in American art, when local tradition and insularity were coming closer and closer to international modernism," Eiland writes.

Dodd's associates included Isabel Bishop, George Grosz, Ashile Gorky, etc. — names that "suggest the tension as well as the direction of the confrontation of ideas on the American cultural scene ... In the early 1930s, the art market began to reflect the changes in taste and intellectual outlook of this fertile moment, and Dodd was in the thick of it in New York."

The American art scene was

loosening its long, passionate affair with the French and other European schools of art and beginning to seek an American school of art that reflected the scenes and themes of the United States.

Joining numerous other artists across the nation, Dodd's young style reflected regional scenes. Having grown up in Georgia, Dodd's work centered on scenes from the South. And his vision, skills and talents garnered him placements in an increasing number of galleries and local shows.

At a 1932 one-man exhibit at a New York gallery, Dodd received numerous accolades for his Southern-themed paintings. One critic thankfully noted that Dodd had not centered his works in imaginings of European settings but instead focused on American themes, or more specifically, images from the artist's native state.

"Not one scene of the Scottish moors with their purple heather. But a glorious painting of the washerwoman hanging out clothes. Not one scene of the fountains of Rome! But a magnificent thing showing the cabins of tenant farmers. Nothing of Paris or London or Athens or Pompeii. But Georgia, Georgia, Georgia."

By 1933, Lamar Dodd was ready to leave New York and return to the South. He took a position at an art-supply store in Birmingham, Ala., which allowed him a steady job during the day and an opportunity to paint in the evenings.

Though he worked as a clerk in the art-supply store, Dodd continued making a name for himself as an artist and as a proponent for regionalism in art. His works were not only accepted in major shows throughout the United States, but they won acclaim and prizes.

In Birmingham, Dodd contin-

ued expressing his thoughts on "the nearness of beauty" in his paintings and through his words. In a Birmingham News-Age Herald interview, Dodd praised the South's beauty, while taking to task the local residents who failed to see the magnificence around them.

"... And they say that travelers write letters home about how 'quaint' the shops are in Jerusalem and Bombay," Dodd said, "but they drive at 50 miles an hour along the side streets of Birmingham where there are hot dog stands and shoe shops and pawn shops and antique shops and book shops that are as colorful as anything that even Port Said has to offer."

While his Southern scenes and advocacy of regional beauty gained him prizes, praise and esteem, Dodd also became a magnet for artists throughout Alabama. They visited him at the shop and in his studio, where he critiqued their works, discussed art and worked alongside of them.

His growing reputation soon opened a larger chapter in his life.

In 1937, at the age of 28, the University of Georgia invited Dodd to join the fine arts department as an artist in residence. Dodd and his wife, Mary, returned to Georgia.

At Athens, the Dodds found an art department in chaos, with only one full-time art instructor and the other two art teachers assigned to art and other academic interests. Charged with increasing interest in the arts at the university and throughout Georgia, Dodd faced several cultural problems. In the South of the 1930s, Eiland writes, "ladies painted pictures; men painted houses."

Such was the world Dodd entered, and this is the Georgia art

DODD

FROM PAGE 1C

culture he changed.

Lamar Dodd stayed with the University of Georgia for four decades. The art department and curriculum came to be considered one of the finest in the Southeast and the United States. As a teacher, he became admired, while

the enrollment of art students increased and the state's thoughts on art shifted to a more progressive stance. By the late 1940s, Dodd had become instrumental in founding the Georgia Museum of Art. He developed and participated in cultural-arts exchanges with other countries, which



"Self Portrait" by Lamar Dodd.

took him to Europe, the Soviet Union and Asia, while bringing artists from those nations to Georgia. He served as a government ambassador for the arts.

Dodd expanded the role of art in the state's daily life while moving from the regional/realism of his youth to exploring further frontiers as an artist in his later years. Despite his duties as an administrator, instructor, traveler, and public speaker, Dodd continued producing dozens of canvases annually. He continued growing as an artist.

"Changes in perceptions and reactions, (Dodd's) and the rest of the world's, required new means of expression," Eiland writes, "which Dodd found in cubism, abstraction, and, back again to complete the circle, in a new realism."

In his September 1996 obituary, The New York Times mentioned Dodd's NASA commission to paint the in-house reactions to the space program. It mentioned his numerous shows in New York as well as his finding New York "uninspiring."

It mentioned a New York Times review of Dodd's work: "Lamar Dodd's latest semi-abstractions embody a pictorial report of a Mediterranean sojourn. Dodd is cagey with his subject matter, never going after it head on, but catching its flavor and look in one or more oblique ways."

He was 86 years old.

Photo contest celebrates life of city

BY SHARAH DENTON

THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

VALDOSTA — The Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts and the City of Valdosta are hosting the third Annual People's Choice Photo Contest.

The contest is a way of celebrating city life in Valdosta. Amateur and professional photographers will have their work displayed at the Annette Hall Turner Center for the Arts from June 6 to July 13.

There was not a payment or purchase necessary to enter into the contest. Entries will be judged by a people's choice voting

process, which begins Monday, June 6.

On July 15 a winner and an honorable mention will be announced at 6 p.m. at the Arts center.

Entries for the contest have to be originally photographed by the entrant and taken in Valdosta.

Themes include, A City at work, Night Life, Go Green, Hidden in Plain Sight and Live, Laugh, Love. All entries will be displayed in the gallery through August 2.

First place winners and honorable mentions will be selected in the four categories and for the overall People's Choice award.

The Power to DO MORE



Seated: Martha Douglas, Cheryl Oliver, Tracey Timmons;
Standing: Linda Facile, Nancy Smith, Bill Shenton



ANNETTE HOWELL TURNER
Center For The Arts
CELEBRATING THE ART IN LIFE

The Board of Directors and staff of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts treasure our long-time relationship with First State Bank. The celebration of our 24th Annual Spring Into Art event makes our partnership even more meaningful. First State Bank originated this unique event two dozen years ago in the same building the art center now occupies, formerly the home of First State Bank.

Please come tour our galleries while the SIA exhibit is showing through June 1. There's no admission fee and the public is welcome. Our hours are Tues-Thurs 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Fri-Sat 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

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PHOTOSCAPE



PAT GALLAGHER | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Checking out some art

Essence Divine, left, and Grayson Baker look at William Massey's 'Break Fixation' in the main gallery of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Wednesday afternoon.

Opinion

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WHAT WE THINK

Spring into Art tonight

The delightful 24th annual Spring Into Art event is tonight at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

The show will feature hundreds of pieces by more than 200 artists, ranging from photographs to paintings to pottery to sculpture to jewelry and more. Creativity, diversity, and the ability to invoke emotion and thought through art are the essential ingredients of the pieces.

Every artist who registers may enter, which is incredible and very unique compared to similar shows. Amateurs and professionals may see their pieces hanging side by side, giving attendees a vista of artistic creations to view.

Tonight's event is even more exciting as the winners will be announced live, rather than waiting until a later date. Artists will be on hand to learn the winners this evening, and one never knows what the judges will select as their favorites each year.

The event is from 6 to 9 p.m. and tickets are \$45.

And if you can't make Spring into Art, then you may view the works during the gallery's regular hours for no charge. The important thing to remember is that this is a truly wonderful way in which local artists are encouraged, nurtured, and given the opportunity to showcase their creativity, so take the time to visit the Arts Center. The works will remain on display until June 1.

Spring Into Art

Valdosta's biggest art show opens with a difference

BY DEAN POLING

THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

VALDOSTA — The 24th Annual Spring Into Art show doesn't just promise to be a different event this year.

It will be.

This year, the show returns to announcing the winners on the evening of the show's gala reception, say Cheryl Oliver, the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts executive director, and Bill Shenton, center curator.

"We think it will increase the excitement for the evening," Oliver says.

With hundreds of people traditionally attending the Spring Into Art reception, that evening's announcement will allow more people to recognize the winners.

For the past several years, artists and guests know what pieces have been selected for the follow-up Best of Spring Into Art show, but the actual Spring Into Art winners weren't announced until several weeks later during the reception for the Best of show.

Which brings us to another change: No follow-up Best of Spring Into Art show this year.

With Spring Into Art lasting through June then a Best of show usually lasting through August, chosen artists and patrons who purchase selected works would wait more than four months to either have their art returned or ready to take home.



PAUL LEAVY | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Bill Shenton checks the placement of a piece of artwork for the Spring Into Art exhibition.



PAUL LEAVY | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts curator Bill Shenton is surrounded by artwork as he figures out the placement of over 470 pieces of art for the opening of the 24th Annual Spring into Art Exhibition at the center Monday evening.

ART: Calendar art selected

FROM PAGE ONE

It was the first time in several years that the center announced the show's winners during the opening-night gala reception.

First-place winners are Janet Schrader-Seccafico, "The March of the Queen," drawing, printmaking and painting; Erin Barfield, untitled landscape, digital arts and photography; Graham Eggleston, "Butterfly No. 4," mixed media; Barbara Balzer, "Poet/Stories Come Like Charms," sculpture; Michael Schmidt, "Oil Can and Oil Bottle," ceramics; Dot Dowling, "Blue Spirals," jewelry crafts.

Second-place winners

ON THE WEB

The Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts
turnercenter.org

are Aliyah Jones, "Psycho Self-Analysis," drawing, printmaking and painting; Ray Tarrant, "Vacancy," digital arts and photography; Travis D. Simmons, "Research #1," mixed media; Nathan Grimes, "Voluminous Structure," sculpture; Julie Hilliard, "Blue on Red," ceramics; Jack Smith, "Hers," jewelry and crafts.

Artists receiving honorable mentions are Heather Boyd for two pieces,

Yamileth Bullard, Harold Griner, Sue Ellen Knowles, Wayne Morgan, Kelly Rowell, Mary O. Smith, Susan Wehling-Hassouna and Suzanna Winton.

Art was also selected for the 2012 Colson Calendar Monday.

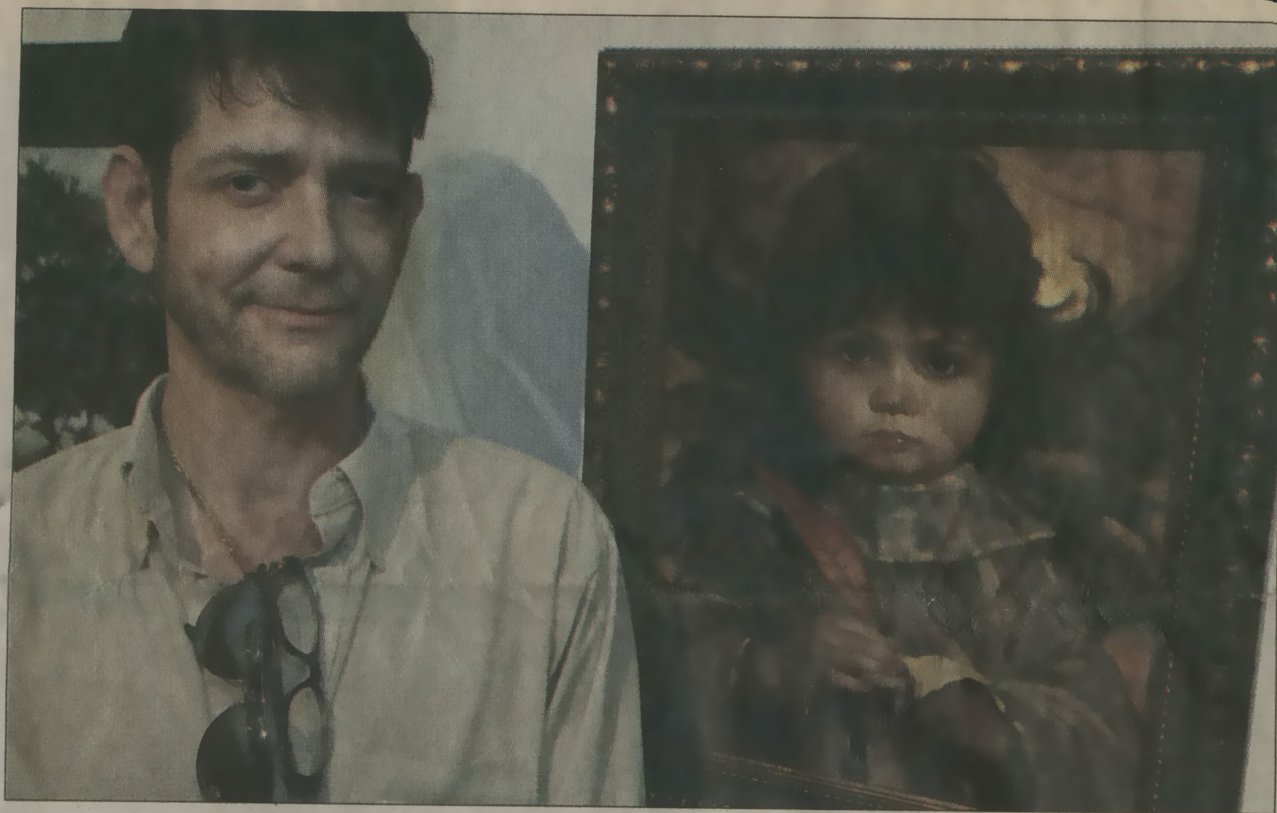
Wendy Colson of Colson Printing said choosing 12-13 works from the hundreds of works available is "difficult because there are so many great pieces of art."

Colson has selected Spring Into Art works for its calendar for many years.

Spring Into Art continues at the arts center, 527 N. Patterson St., through June 1.



PAT GALLAGHER | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES
Winners take the floor with curator Bill Shenton, fourth from left, during the 24th Annual Spring Into Art exhibition at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Monday. From left to right: Barbara Balzer, Michael T. Schmidt, Thomas M. Thomson, Shenton, Ray Tarrant, Nathan Grimes, Aliyah Jones and Travis D. Simmons.



Thomas M. Thomson takes Best in Show for his oil on canvas painting 'Ink Well' during the 24th Annual Spring Into Art exhibition at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Monday.

PAT GALLAGHER | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Fla. artist takes top honor at Spring Into Art show

Tuesday, April 12, 2011

BY DEAN POLING
THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

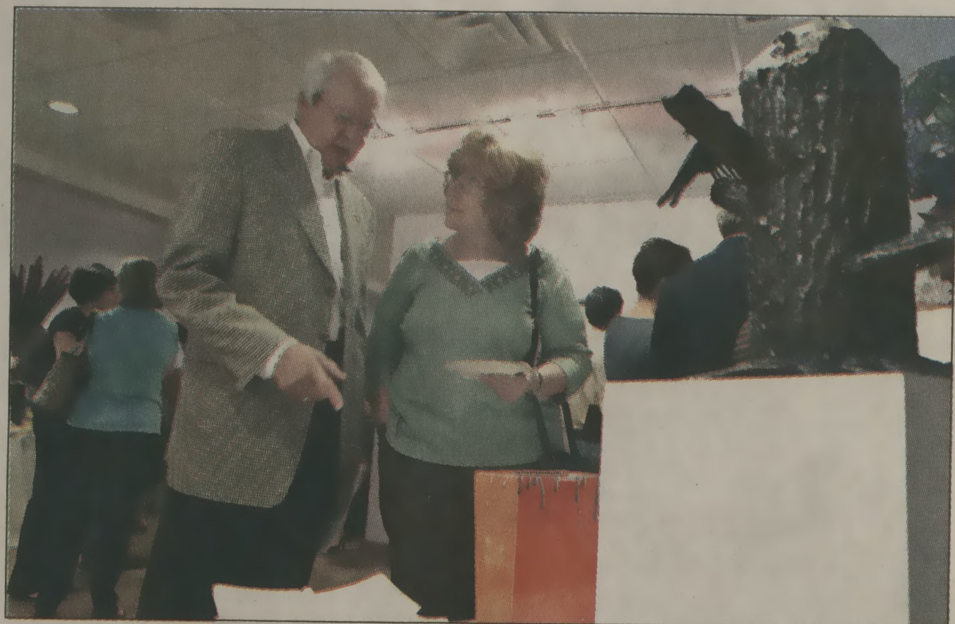
VALDOSTA — Havana, Fla., artist Thomas M. Thomson has spent a lifetime creating art. On Monday night, his work won him the Best of Show award in the 24th Annual Spring Into Art show.

Thomson's delicate yet stunning oil painting "Ink Well," a portrait of a young girl, captured the show's top prize out of the 464 artworks entered by approximately 240 regional artists at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

This is the third year that Thomson has entered Spring Into Art. A full-time artist, he has worked in graphics for several years while concentrating on fine art for the past few years.

"I have been involved with art my entire life," Thomson said.

His works are on exhib-



Dr. Ron Zaccari and Dr. Maureen Schloss discuss ceramic art during the 24th Annual Spring Into Art exhibition at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Monday.

PAT GALLAGHER | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

it in the Florida gallery operated by his mother, D. Arthur McBride, who had two pieces entered in the show. Both of her sons are artists.

Cheryl Oliver, the arts center's executive director, and Bill Shenton, the center's curator, announced the show's winners before a crowd that reflected the

exhibit itself. Every gallery was filled with art and filled with the bustle of people.

SPRING: More than 460 pieces of art involved

FROM PAGE ONE

Yet, some things will remain the same about Spring Into Art.

With an estimated 460-plus pieces of art from approximately 240 artists, Spring Into Art remains the most diverse and democratic art show of South Georgia.

Anyone who entered by the registration deadline and followed the rules will have their art displayed. Most shows invite artists to enter then jury works selected for display. Spring Into Art dares to show every piece by every artist registered, making it a strikingly inclusive show.

As Shenton explains, an art student's work may be exhibited beside an art professor's work in Spring Into Art; an amateur

GALLERY

The 24th Annual Spring Into Art

Where: The Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.

Reception: 6-9 p.m. Monday, April 11. Ticket: \$45.

Show run: Spring Into Art will be exhibited in all of the center's galleries through June 1.

Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; closed Sundays and Mondays with exception of receptions.

Admission: Free, during regular gallery hours.

More information: Call (229) 247-2787; or visit www.turnercenter.org

artist's work beside of the professional artist's work.

Viewers will find paintings, drawings, photography, sculpture, ceramics, multi-media. Paintings will again be this year's dominant medium though viewers can expect to see a large number of photographs return this year,

Shenton says.

"The beauty of Spring Into Art is its diversity," Oliver says.

Mining winners from this diversity are two judges this year. One judge is from North Alabama, the other from Athens. The judges determine what will be this year's winners. One

never knows what they will pick.

One year, the judges may select a traditional painting of a still-life or portrait. The next year, a different set of judges may select a work not so much for its technique but the power of its statement. Another year, judges may select an abstract work.

Shenton uses the example of a past Best in Show piece. The work contained writing in various languages. It made a political statement.

"Art should make a statement and provoke ideas," Shenton says.

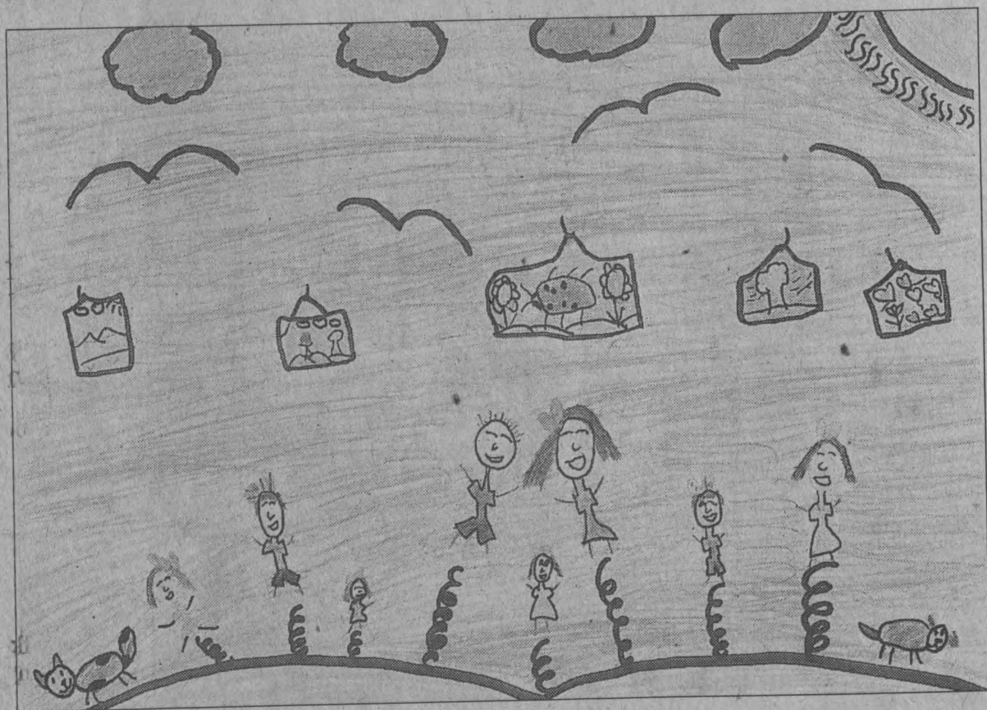
Come Monday night, the 24th Annual Spring Into Art winners will be selected. Depending on one's views of what makes good art, the selections will likely provoke plenty of statements.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Spring Into Art winner

Kalyn Cooper, daughter of Brian and Carolyn Cooper of Lake Park, has won the annual Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts' 2011 Spring Into Art Invitation Design Contest. The Lake Park Elementary fourth-grader was one of many students to enter the contest. Her art is being used on the Spring Into Art invitations. Kalyn, her parents, brother Chase, and her teacher will be the center's guests for the Spring Into Art reception, scheduled for 6-9 p.m., April 11, at the arts center. She also won a complimentary week of art classes at the center's Summer Art Camp. Each year, the center invites area elementary school art teachers to encourage their students to enter the contest. Pictured: Deb House, the center's education committee chair, Kalyn Cooper, and Heather North, Lake Park Elementary School art teacher.





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grease is the word tonight

Members of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts board of directors want you to know that it's not too late to get tickets to the grand finale of the 2011 Presenter Series season. 'Grease' plays 7:30 p.m. today, Mathis City Auditorium, with the Vince Fontaine character set to warm up the audience at 7:15 p.m. Tickets for 'Grease' will be on sale through the website (www.turnercenter.org) through 2 p.m.; at the center (244-2787); or at the door after 5:30 p.m.

Scrapbook

LIFE

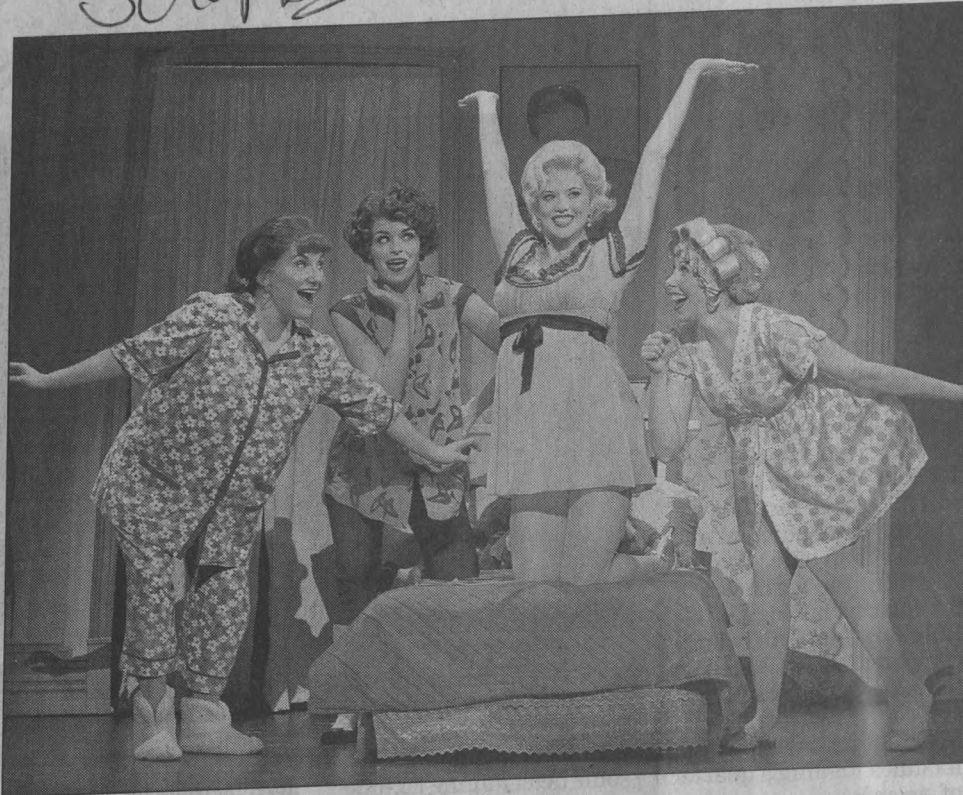


PHOTO: GREASE NATIONAL TOUR

Wigs by VSU Theatre graduate and Lenox native Tera Willis will be on display this week when the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Presenter Series hosts the national tour of 'Grease.'

VSU graduate keeps 'Grease' well groomed

BY DEAN POLING
THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

At Valdosta State University, Tera Willis starred in plays such as "Proof," and acted in "The Laramie Project" and "Macbeth." This week, when the professional tour of "Grease" comes to town, audiences will see her work in the wigs adorning the performers' heads.

"I miss performing," the 2005 VSU Theatre graduate told The Times Tuesday during a phone interview. "Performing is still my first love, but, for me, I wanted to stay in the business of theatre. I didn't want to work as a temp or wait tables between acting jobs. I want to work in the theatre."

Since September, Willis has traveled across the United States with the national tour of "Grease" as the production's wig supervisor. "Grease" stops Thursday night in Valdosta as the closing show in the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Presenter Series 2010-11 season.

For Willis, the Valdosta stop will be a short homecoming. A Lenox native and the daughter of Michael and Teresa Willis, Tera Willis expects a few of her Cook County family to see the show and visit her.

The visit will be brief. The "Grease" crew arrives Thursday morning in Valdosta. After the show, the crew loads back onto the bus and travels to the next performance site in Clearwater, Fla.

Typically, Willis and her fellow crew members leave a location a couple of hours after the performance. This means their travel to the next location begins at about 1 a.m. The crew travels on a sleeper bus with crew members having their own bunks. They regularly arrive at the next show destination at approximately 8 a.m.

By noon-1 p.m., Willis begins combing, styling and preparing the 20 wigs that will appear on stage each evening. With understudies, etc., she cares for 40 wigs for "Grease." The wigs are predominantly



FILE PHOTO: DEAN POLING | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Tera Willis seen here in VSU Theatre's production of 'Proof.' She now works professionally in theatre as the wig supervisor in the national tour of 'Grease.' She says VSU Theatre prepared her for a career in theatre.

worn by the actresses, but some of the men also wear 1950s-style wigs.

By the time the cast arrives, the wigs are ready. Willis helps each performer put on her or his wig. She helps a few performers make their wig changes during the performances. Willis remains in the wings in case something happens during a show. There are usually no wig malfunctions, but the performers' microphones are under the wigs. If a mic malfunctions, Willis helps the performer remove the wig and put it back in place once the microphone is replaced.

At VSU, Willis earned a bachelor's degree in theatre performance. In addition to "Proof," "The Laramie Project" and "Macbeth," she appeared in other shows, including "Chicago" and "Seussical" from the inaugural season of Peach State Summer Theatre.

"VSU prepared us for the business of theatre," Willis says. "Some schools

SHOWTIME

Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Presenter Series hosts "Grease."

When: 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 31.

Where: Mathis City Auditorium, 2300 N. Ashley St.

Show ticket: \$45.

More information: Visit the arts center, 527 N. Patterson St.; or call (229) 247-2787.

concentrate only on performance, but VSU prepares you for other aspects of theatre."

After VSU, Willis earned a master's degree concentrating on makeup and wigs from the University of North Carolina School of Arts.

She worked on various shows. "Grease" is her first national tour. With "Grease" concluding in May, Willis has applications into various summer theatres. She may seek another national tour following the summer months.

The Valdosta Daily Times

Proud to serve TitleTown USA!

VSU grad keeps
'Grease' well
groomed — 3A

valdostadailytimes.com

Wednesday, March 30, 2011

The Turner Center for the Arts
Presenter Series
brings to Valdosta....

It's the one that you want!



GREASE

Thursday,
March 31, 2011 at 7:30pm
Mathis City Auditorium

For ticket info, contact the Turner Center
229-247-ARTS (2787)
527 N. Patterson St. Valdosta, GA
www.turnercenter.org

Opinion

Monday, March 28, 2011

WHAT WE THINK

'Grease' is the word

This week, Valdosta turns the hands of time back to the 1950s as a professional, touring company brings the musical "Grease" to Mathis City Auditorium.

The Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Presenter Series sponsors this show, which features the well-known love story of greaser Danny and good-girl Sandy.

"Grease" is the big finale for the 2010-11 Presenter Series season. This season's shows have included "S'Wonderful: The New Gershwin Musical," "Satisfaction: A Rolling Stones Experience," "The Aluminum Show," and "The Music Man."

Each show has been a professional performance, stopping in Valdosta as part of nationwide tours. The season proved diverse with something for everyone and all ages.

Now, one of the most popular musicals of the late 20th century comes to town with this national tour of "Grease." Until last week, this production included Eddie Mekka who played Carmine "The Big

Ragu" Ragusa on TV's "Laverne and Shirley." Last Monday, the production company announced that Mekka was no longer playing Vince Fontaine and he had left the show. He has been replaced by the actor who played the role in the recent Broadway revival of "Grease." No matter. "Grease" still has the songs, the story, the characters, and more for those hot "Summer Nights" or any night of the year.

Thanks to the Presenter Series committee for again bringing a schedule of fun and fascinating shows to Valdosta.

SHOWTIME

Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts presents "Grease."

When: 7:30 p.m., March 31.

Where: Mathis City Auditorium, 2300 N. Ashley St.

Show ticket: \$45.

More information: Visit the arts center, 527 N. Patterson St.; or call (229) 247-2787.

'Grease' gets a change in Fontaines

BY DEAN POLING
THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

VALDOSTA — Local organizers of the coming professional, touring production of "Grease" have good reason to recall the old adage: The show must go on.

On Monday evening, the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Presenter Series committee learned that headliner Eddie Mekka would not be playing the part of Vince Fontaine next week when "Grease" visits Valdosta.

Best known for his role as Carmine "The Big Ragu" Ragusa in TV's "Laverne and Shirley," Mekka has apparently left the production.

"Eddie Mekka will no longer appear in the national tour of 'Grease,'" according to a release from the "Grease" tour producers. "Over the past six months, Eddie had audiences rockin' and rollin' in the aisle, but will use this opportunity to spend more time with his family."

Mekka is being replaced by Dominic Fortuna, a star of the recent Broadway revival of "Grease." He reprises the role of Fontaine from the Broadway production and another national tour of "Grease." The Atlanta Journal Constitution wrote of Fortuna's past performances: "Dominic Fortuna, as WAXX deejay Vince Fontaine, wins the Mr. Congeniality Award of the night with his infec-

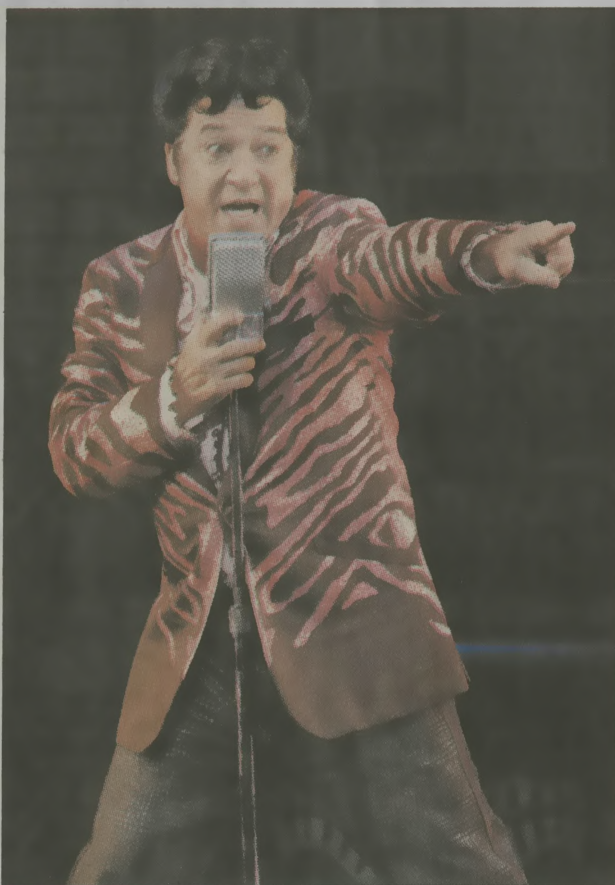


PHOTO: TROIKA

Best known as the Big Ragu from TV's 'Laverne and Shirley,' Eddie Mekka is no longer part of the professional, touring production of 'Grease' coming to Valdosta next week. The cast change was announced Monday evening. Mekka played Vince Fontaine.

tious crowd warm-up, his delightful smile and genuine sense of fun. He's the real deal."

While the show goes on, the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts moved to change its publicity. Nancy Warren, a Presenter Series committee member, worked to see if the programs can be

changed in time for the March 31 show.

The Times had to scramble Monday evening, too.

The newspaper had planned to present a story based on a phone interview with Mekka on Tuesday's front page. The story and photos had been prepared for press until

'Eddie Mekka will no longer appear in the national tour of 'Grease.'

according to a release from the 'Grease' tour producers

SHOWTIME

Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts presents "Grease."

When: 7:30 p.m., March 31.

Where: Mathis City Auditorium, 2300 N. Ashley St.

Show ticket: \$45.

Dinner & a show: An optional, pre-show dinner is available, 6 p.m., for an additional \$15. Covington's menu includes chicken breast, rice, green beans, corn pudding, peas & tomatoes, cheese biscuits, salad, dessert selection, tea or coffee; cash bar available.

More information: Visit the arts center, 527 N. Patterson St.; or call (229) 247-2787.

learning Mekka was no longer with the show.

During the phone interview with The Times, Mekka said he had not missed any of the show's performances since this nationwide run of "Grease" opened in September. Undoubtedly true, but he won't be making any more dates with "Grease" any time soon.

Spring Into Art

Blooms Again in Valdosta!

The Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts presents the 24th Annual *Spring Into Art* juried exhibition. Our mission is to provide cultural diversity. We do this by displaying the works of talented artists from our community and from all over the United States. We expect nearly 500 pieces for this exhibit. The opening reception on April 11 is an eagerly anticipated annual event in our community featuring a catered buffet.

As a non-profit organization, we rely on our supporters to make this event an extraordinary success. Not only does this fundraiser allow us to showcase outstanding artwork for several weeks, but it also gives us the means to implement other cultural events.

No matter the size of your donation, we value your support for our organization. As a token of our appreciation, your name or business name will be displayed for any amount of \$250 or more, and you will receive tickets to the gala opening reception.

Thank you for your support. Please make plans to attend this magnificent occasion.



ANNETTE HOWELL TURNER
Center For The Arts
CELEBRATING THE ART IN LIFE

Sponsorships for Spring Into Art

Platinum \$3000 and above

- ◆ Business logo (or name) prominently listed on Center entrance wall and in program
- ◆ Four plus tickets to *Spring Into Art*

Gold \$1000—\$2999

- ◆ Donor name listed in program and name or logo on lobby wall
- ◆ Four tickets to *Spring Into Art*

Silver \$500—\$999

- ◆ Donor name listed in program and name or logo in larger font on gallery wall
- ◆ Two tickets to *Spring Into Art*

Bronze \$250—\$499

- ◆ Donor name listed in program and on gallery wall
- ◆ Two tickets to *Spring Into Art*

(All logos will be printed in black.)

*To assist us in planning this
event, please respond by
March 18.*

Thank you!

Sponsorship donations are partially tax-deductible

I will sponsor as:

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<input type="checkbox"/> Platinum	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Bronze	\$ _____

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