



SPRING 2014

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Welcome to the first edition of the PA Legislative Arts & Culture Caucus Update! This quarterly publication will bring you the latest in research on arts and culture as well as highlights on what is happening across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

GOVERNOR INCLUDES INCREASES FOR PCA AND PHMC IN BUDGET PROPOSAL

In early February, Gov. Tom Corbett delivered his budget address for FY 2014-15. The \$29.4 billion budget is a \$1 billion increase over the current fiscal year's budget of \$28.4 billion. This budget includes a 5% increase to the appropriation for the **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA)** grants to arts organizations bringing the total appropriation to \$8.59 million. This is the first proposed increase to the Grants to the Arts line item in eight years. He also proposed holding steady at \$886,000 in the line item for the administration of the PCA.

Both the PA Senate and the PA House of Representatives held hearings on the budget proposal in late February/early March. A budget bill is expected to be proposed in late spring and deliberations on the bill will begin shortly thereafter. Constitutionally, a budget bill must be passed and signed by the Governor no later than midnight on June 30.

Below are the line items dealing with arts and culture in Governor Corbett's FY 2014-15 Budget Proposal:

Department/Appropriation	2013-14 Available	2014-15 Proposed	Difference 2014-15 Proposed vs. 2013-14 Enacted
Executive Offices			
Council on the Arts	\$886,000	\$886,000	0
Grants to the Arts	\$8,179,000	\$8,590,000	5%
Community and Economic Development			
Marketing to Attract Tourists	\$7,435,000	\$3,806,000	48.8%
Tourism – Accredited Zoos	\$550,000	\$0	100%
Conservation and Natural Resources			
Heritage and Other Parks	\$2,250,000	\$0	100%
Historical and Museums Commission			
General Government Support	\$17,293,000	\$18,744,000	8.4%
Cultural and Historical Support	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	0

Source: [Governor's Budget Office](#)

ARTS & CULTURE CAUCUS

The PA Legislative Arts & Culture Caucus is the largest caucus in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Currently 89 members strong, the purpose of the Arts & Culture Caucus is:

1. To provide access to caucus members on the latest research, education, and policy developments on arts & culture;
2. To support caucus members in their efforts to draft and pass legislation that advances arts & culture in the Commonwealth;
3. To provide analysis on pending legislation;

4. To provide caucus members with periodic briefings on pertinent issues confronting and relating to the Commonwealth's arts and culture infrastructure; and,
5. To develop issue specific talking points and press materials for caucus members' use.

The caucus is co-chaired by [Sen. Patrick Browne](#), [Sen. Jay Costa](#), [Rep. Stan Saylor](#), and [Rep. Tim Briggs](#). Legislators interested in joining the caucus may contact the co-chairs representing their caucus. A current list of the members of the PA Legislative Arts and Culture Caucus may be found at <http://bit.ly/15kuAXB>.

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OPENING UP THE MUSEUM

Rusty Baker, PA Museums

Museums are working on ways to expand access to their programs whether it's a change in hours that are friendly to the working individual, exhibits to reflect the diversity of a community, or in programs which accommodate those with special needs. In the fall of 2013 the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology launched its "Insights into Ancient Egypt" [Touch Tours](#) designed with and for Museum visitors who are visually impaired. The Touch Tours explore the scent of fluids used in the mummification process and encourage the touching replicas of small Egyptian and selected stone artifacts with guidance from museum staff and volunteers, some of which have visual impairments themselves.

Trish Maunder, Project Coordinator for Special Tours and a disabilities program consultant for the Museum, worked with Egyptian section Associate Curator Jennifer Wegner, the Museum's Community Engagement Department to develop the program and its expanded offerings. Through focus groups and feedback from visually impaired guests, she learned that participants

wanted more information, educational opportunities, and even outlets for artistic expression—all included in this season's offerings.



Photo Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania

"Many visitors from our program last year reported a significant shift in awareness and a sense of inspiration from the ancient world," noted Ms. Maunder. "We wanted to honor that experience,

and help create opportunities for further discovery."

There are many reasons this success story at The Penn Museum received worldwide media attention. Anyone who has seen a "Please Do Not Touch" sign in a museum or has drifted too close to something and set off a gallery's motion alarm or has been asked to step back by a museum worker is sure to understand that touching an ancient treasure is not usually what one can expect as part of a museum experience. Museums are thoughtfully and carefully moving away from blanket rules of no touching and no taking pictures so visitors can have a profound experience and share it with others. Museum success today depends upon accessibility in multiple directions—to every sort of visitor including those with digital access, to patrons, funding sources and advocates, to news outlets, to everyone.

ARTS ADVOCATES USE PHONE BANK TO REACH OUT TO CONGRESS

Nicole Allen, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance



As part of National Arts Advocacy Day on March 25, 2014, supporters in SE Pennsylvania had the opportunity to advocate right in their own backyard.

GroundSwell, the grassroots advocacy program of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, along with the Artistic Rebuttal Project (ARP) partnered with local arts organizations in four southeastern Pennsylvania counties to host phone banks that allowed arts supporters to reach their federal legislators from a distance.

The "Go Forth by Phone" event took place at four different locations. Supporters were encouraged to bring their lunch, phones and computers, and spend their break making sure their voices were heard. A phone script and suggested language for emails was provided. The locations were as follows:

- The Philadelphia County phone bank will be hosted at CultureWorks Greater Philadelphia
- The Chester County phone bank will be hosted by Arts Holding Hands and Hearts at Coatesville Area Public Library
- The Delaware County phone bank will be hosted by Community Arts Center
- The Montgomery County phone bank will be hosted by Creative MontCo at Valley Forge Convention & Visitors Bureau

The phone bank idea was originally conceived by Artistic Rebuttal Project Executive Director Amy Scheidegger, who thought of the project when she realized she would not be able to attend this year's National Arts Advocacy Day conference in Washington. "I knew there had to be different ways of advocating, especially for the type of person who can speak easier when

there's less pressure," says Scheidegger. "This phone bank idea came from wanting to provide people with a low-pressure environment and everything they need at their fingertips so that they serve as back-up to those in Washington. It also hopes to convince people that advocating can be done from anywhere at any time, not only in DC on designated advocacy days."

Scheidegger then brought the idea to GroundSwell, who partnered with ARP to coordinate the phone bank in Philadelphia as well as the suburban counties. "We're very excited to be part of this event, and to be doing it with such a wide reach," said Cultural Alliance Interim Executive Director Michael Norris. "We need representation from as many districts as possible, especially in the suburbs."

More information about the "Go Forth by Phone" events and other grassroots advocacy activities can visit www.groundswellpa.org.



PHC'S TEEN READING LOUNGE: MODEL FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING

Laurie Zierer, Pennsylvania Humanities Council

Teen Reading Lounge is a unique program created by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council (PHC) exclusively for teens ages 11-18. Unlike traditional book clubs, it's interactive and reflects teen's personal interests and love of popular series like *Divergent* and *Harry Potter*.

The centerpiece of the program is the humanities which teach us about ourselves and our values through the stories and ideas we find in literature, history, and the arts, as well as aspects of everyday life like the foods we love to eat. Through discussion and hands-on activities that encourage innovation, collaboration, communication, and creative problem-solving, Teen Reading Lounge helps young people to understand themselves and others and to build skills that will prepare them for a life in the 21st Century. Because teens help design their program with librarians and arts educators, each program is unique.

For example, one library in a lower income area of SW Pennsylvania saw their program blossom into a community service project. Through a combination of the teens' love of hands-on activities and discovery that the characters in all of their books were looking for a place they could call home, the Birdhouse Project was born. Over

several sessions, the teens painted and assembled birdhouses for the trees outside of the library. On Arbor Day, the teens cleaned, mulched, and placed birdhouses in the surrounding trees. They also invited the local fire department and the community to participate in a pro-



Photo Credit: Sunday Dispatch in Pittston – photographer Bill Tarutis

ject that had real-world implications.

Teen Reading Lounge helps to engage our youth by establishing libraries as legitimate and safe hangout places for many young people who

do not have other places to go after school, on weekends, or during the summer. The program serves as a model for out-of-school learning. The program teaches 21st century learning skills and allows teens to explore questions that are important to them.

From mid-February through June, PHC is launching Teen Reading Lounge in eight libraries in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Additionally, Teen Reading Lounge continues at two libraries in Allegheny County: Community Library of Allegheny Valley and the Allegheny branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. [YALSA](#) recently featured the Community Library in their blog series celebrating teen services around the county.

Teen Reading Lounge provides an important step towards helping young adults learn to better articulate and share their opinions and beliefs, engage with others, and overcome differences – all vital skills that will help them become civically engaged and responsible adults. Crafting an innovative and interesting program for teenagers is indeed possible — Teen Reading Lounge makes the process both rewarding and thought-provoking for library staff and teens.

ERIE TEACHING ARTIST TO PRESENT AT NATIONAL VSA CONFERENCE

Holly Nowak, Erie Arts & Culture



In the Fall of 2013, a long-term residency with artist & animator Jude Shingle began at the Barber National Institute (BNI) in Erie PA. This was

a life changing experience for the artist, teachers and students who participated in the residency. Jude Shingle, rostered teaching artist with Erie Arts & Culture in Erie PA, spent 70 days in residence with the students of the Elizabeth Lee Black School at BNI. The goal of the residency project was to bring Mr. Shingle to the school to work with the teachers and their students and enhance the learning experience throughout the school year. Jude and Judy Stewart, Critical Skills Specialist at BNI, worked together to develop lessons that helped their students explore and create unique multi-media

productions, animations and movies with their iPads.

A strong emphasis on choice helped the students, who traditionally could not participate in art making activities, become enthusiastic creators. Their work had such an impact on the school that Holly Nowak, Program Director for Erie Arts & Culture, suggested they submit a proposal to the Kennedy Center to present at the 2014 VSA Intersections: Arts and Special Education Conference. In March, the BNI Residency team was notified that they were selected to present at the VSA Conference in Washington DC, July 23rd to 25th. The 2014 Intersections: Arts and Special Education Conference is a VSA program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This unique conference presents practices, policies and research that are at the forefront of serving students with disabilities through arts and special education.

The transformation occurred during this residen-

cy when the iPads became, not only the tools, but the voice for the students. The transformation continues as the artist, teacher and students use the iPads to share their stories and build support for arts infusion. You can watch their story on [YouTube](#) where you'll see a short video Jude recently completed that tells the story of one student, Mackenzie, and the power of the arts. Mackenzie is very verbal, however, her interactions with her teachers and peers were inappropriate. She only spoke to imaginary friends and cartoon characters. She loved the iPad but only used it for leisure which put her deeper into her imaginary world. Once she began to work with teaching artist Jude Shingle, her conversations with her teachers and peers became more appropriate. She even began to create stories and interview a variety of people on different topics. This learning experience brought her into the reality of her own environment.



PITTSBURGH ARTISTRY

David B. Pankratz, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

The Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council's (GPAC) strategic plan has four goals. Number 3 is "to create an environment and opportunities that are supportive of individual artists."

Why prioritize individual artists? Creativity is one of GPAC's five core values. It is our belief that a strong artist community supports our region's arts organizations, community revitalization, and economic development.

There are 249 artists for every 100,000 of population in Pittsburgh. (The national average is 149). In the past two years, Pittsburgh ranks #6 nationally in artist employment growth. GPAC's 2013 Annual Survey revealed more positives. Seventy-eight percent of Pittsburgh area artists are optimistic about their futures and 80%+ of arts organizations rate artistic talent here as high. But, there are downsides. Seventy-five percent reported trouble making a living through their art and problems securing health insurance, housing, and studio/rehearsal space are common.

GPAC is addressing these challenges. We established the [Pittsburgh Artist Advisory Committee \(PAAC\)](#) to review artists' needs and implement initiatives. In Fall 2013, PAAC held HE-HO: The Artists' Health and Housing Fair, where artists connected with healthcare providers, mortgage lenders, and housing experts. Attendees, at a rate of 100%, said they'd recommend fellow artists attend future HE-HO fairs.

GPAC's [Artist Opportunity Grant program](#)

(AOG), through support from the Heinz Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation, awarded 45 grants to artists in 2013 to develop a wide



Anqwenique L. Wingfield, Vocalist and Teaching Artist from Pittsburgh. Photo by Mark Simpson Photography

array of skills and mentoring opportunities. All of AOG recipients agreed their grant "significantly impacted their artistic growth." GPAC has established new outreach channels to increase applications from artists of color, in keeping with GPAC commitments to diversity and equity.

On the donations front, GPAC will ensure that artists who are members of GPAC, along with arts organizations, can receive donations via the 2014 Arts Day of Giving. During the last Arts

Day of Giving, in 2011, nearly \$2 million was raised in a 24-hour period.

Our [Art on the Walls program](#), at the offices of GPAC, is an ongoing exhibition opportunity for local and regional visual artists, business clients, and, soon, the Pittsburgh Mayor. The program aims to transform work environments with art and encourages visitors to become art buyers. The [current exhibit](#) at GPAC, curated by d. s. kinsel, features art works which encourage viewers to experience varied reflections of contemporary black existence.

GPAC offers a wide range of workshops on topics of interest to artists, such as media relations, website development, taxes, financial wellness, and expanded programs for artists from [Business Volunteers for the Arts](#) and [Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts](#).

Finally, GPAC communications' team supports an extensive network of information and promotion resources--an [Artist Opportunity listserv](#), [isArt blog](#), the [Pittsburgh Artist Registry](#) (an artist database), and a [Resource Directory](#) with information about business and legal issues and more.

Contact Christiane Leach, GPAC's Artist Coordinator, at cleach@pittsburghartscouncil.org to learn more about GPAC's programs and services for individual artists.

ARTS & CULTURE CAUCUS TO TRAVEL TO LEHIGH VALLEY

Understanding what a rich cultural heritage Pennsylvania is blessed with, the Pennsylvania Legislative Arts & Culture Caucus will be traveling to the Lehigh Valley April 21-22, 2014 to meet with arts organizations, business leaders, and local foundations to discuss the importance of arts and culture to the area. Hosted by Caucus Co-Chair Sen. Patrick Browne, (Lehigh County), the trip will include a visit to world re-

nown [Martin Guitars](#) and a special concert from [El Sistema Lehigh Valley](#), a program of the [Allentown Symphony Association](#) for underserved and special needs youth. Plans also include policy discussions on the economic impact of the arts in the Lehigh Valley, public-private partnerships and ways to leverage funding for arts and culture, and the business of the arts featuring a panel of representatives from arts-related in-

dustries in the Lehigh Valley.

The Arts & Culture Caucus is planning more trips like this across the Commonwealth. Their goal is to understand the problems facing the arts and culture sector and to bring light to the cultural assets throughout Pennsylvania. Contact [Jenny Hershauer](#) for more information about this or future trips.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

April 6-8, 2014	PA Museums Annual Conference Pittsburgh rusty.baker@pamuseums.org	April 29, 2014	PA Arts & Culture Legislative Visits Day State Capitol Building Harrisburg jlh@citizensfortheartsinpa.org
April 21-22, 2014	PA Legislative Arts & Culture Caucus Field Trip Lehigh Valley ekern@pasen.gov or jlh@citizensfortheartsinpa.org	May 5-7, 2014	PA Tourism Summit Harrisburg abby@patravelandtourism.org