

# Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

## Retirement?

Well, like most goals in life - the advertisements haven't met up to my expectations. By the time I could drink "legally" I found that it was expensive to drink legally.

Buying a car was a bigger responsibility and legally binding contract than getting married. I've been happily married 34 years, but where's that first car I purchased? Buying a home was a joke - I don't own a home, a bank owns my home. I'm just paying them rent to live there for the rest of my life. And, now that I've reached what was once thought to be retirement age - why am I still working like mad to get by? Where's my rocking chair?

Well, the truth is I reached the age where I can start to get my money back from the government. My first check will arrive about the time you're reading this. And, even then I'll never see a check as it will go straight to my bank. It's not a very big check after being self employed for so long, but I'm taking it early at age 62. I have been advised by folks who know money better than I do to take it as soon as I can - as you never know.

Know what? Well, I don't know how long I will live, how long the government will still give me my money back, or how long it will be before they say I'll have to live until I'm 70 to get my money back.

I'm not complaining except for the fact that it is still taxable income - imagine that! I guess it's a big joke from Uncle Sam - betting we won't live long enough to make it to SS. No one likes taxes - especially folks who are rich, and almost everyone thinks they could do better for their future - better than our Uncle. But my Uncle probably did better with that money over the years than I would have. I'm happy to get anything back.

So there's not a rocking chair for me nor is there a gold watch - I'll still be working away each month trying to get this publication out on time. If there is a bright side, I might get to travel more around the Carolinas - as I once did - trying to chip away at our not so massive profits, so I have to pay less taxes on my Social Security "income". There always seems to be a catch to these goals society created for us.

## Corn Dog Days of Summer

It may not have been as hot yet as it should be, but it's hot enough to really slow people down. Some people say it's just too hot to go anywhere, but I'd rather go some place that's probably cooler than my house and a good art museum or art gallery might just be the spot to hang out - it's cheaper than going to a movie or a trip to the mall.

But, I guess it's too hot for a lot of media folks to work. It seems some people just could bring themselves to send an e-mail about their latest exhibit or to bother finding an image to send with what press release they did send. That's where the "Corn Dog" comes in - as in Corn Dog Days of Summer.

## Got Your Plan for the 2014 ArtFields Yet?

Believe it or not, now is probably the time to start getting ready to enter the 2014 ArtFields competition. Artists should realize by now that just grabbing a work off the shelf won't win you \$50,000 in cash or even get you in the show. So, it's time to get creative in a big way.

The artists who made the cut in 2013 have a leg up on everyone else and those artists who didn't make the cut, but went

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to Lake City, SC, and saw the event - they also know something you don't. If you didn't do either, but want to take a chance at winning big bucks - you might want to make a trip to Lake City to look around.

I would also suggest looking at last year's entries on the ArtFields website ([www.artfieldssc.org](http://www.artfieldssc.org)) and reading the rules of the competition very carefully - it cost one artist \$25,000 last year by not reading the rules or hoping no one else did.

A lot of artists who entered last year probably won't in 2014 based on what the judges selected to be in the competition and what was selected as the winners, but their place will be taken by other artists who didn't hear about ArtFields until after it was over or couldn't figure out where Lake City was. And, I imagine there will be a bigger push to get artists from outside the Carolinas and Charleston to enter in 2014 so I expect that competition will be even stiffer in 2014. But creative minds will always have a shot by coming up with something different and something unusual.

A top prize of \$50,000 isn't a life changing event for most people, but it sure beats entering a bunch of smaller competitions or traveling from one gallery to the next hoping for a space on a wall - somewhere - anywhere.

## Lightning Strikes Again!

It seems that this is going to be a good year for Jim Arendt of Conway, SC, the first top prize (\$50,000) winner of the 2013 ArtFields competition. It's just been announced that he has also been named the winner of the FY2014 Artist Fellowship for Visual Arts. This will put \$5,000 more in his pocket - if our Governor isn't successful in cutting the budget of the SC Arts Commission this year with her annual "Tea-Bagging" veto.

I'm in no way saying that Arendt doesn't deserve a Fellowship - 100's of artists in SC like him do, but it seems to me like the Arts Commission is doing a little band-wagon jumping.

Arendt would have had to file for this

award long before ArtFields took place, but I've seen the Arts Commission hitch themselves to rising stars before, some didn't even stay in the state long enough before the next Fellowship was to be awarded.

Arendt is a talented artist, and he is worthy of such an award - I'm just saying it seems the Arts Commission has a template in which their Fellowship winners have to fit. They haven't done a lot of thinking out of that box in all the years they have been awarding this honor - so much so that some people were given it several times.

And then there are the artists who didn't get given the award until after they were dead in fear of what they would say if they ever got it while they were alive.

I just don't like these "official" stamp of approval awards. They do more to make many artists feel like a failure by not getting one then they do making a few feel special. Think about how many artists put years of creativity into South Carolina to see these Fellowships go to a select group of clones - who look the same on paper.

I'm happy when deserving artists receive the recognition, but I don't think it's a good program - as it rewards so few.

## 26 Years and Counting

This July 2013 issue marks 26 years of Linda and I producing an arts publication and things have changed. I now have a phone that fits in my pocket that is more powerful than our first computer. People now read our paper on the Internet and download it to their personal phones and tablets.

Over these 26 years we've seen a lot come and go - artists, galleries, and even a few art museums. Change seems to be the word in the arts - hardly nothing stays the same. I wish it did - it would make it a lot easier to do what we do, but then again, it would probably be boring.

Every once in a while I have to go through some old issues looking for some detail from history to make a point and

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*Morning Has Broken*

Oil on canvas

12 x 12 inches

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