

Creative Expectations

Licking County offers an array of arts and entertainment for all ages.

By Jill Sell

Aaron Buchholz creates a bowl at The Works studio.

Courtesy of The Works



Glass artist Paul Stankard, known internationally for his stunning paperweights, was an artist-in-residence last year at The Works: Ohio Center for History, Art and Technology in Newark. Stankard, who has dyslexia, spoke to a group of children with the same learning disorder.

"Surrounded by his art, Paul Stankard talked about how it felt to be the only one in the room who did not see what everyone else was seeing or reading. He told students they could be anything they wanted," says The Works managing director Marcia Downes. "Those 30 students left with hope and excitement and a new love of art."

Something extraordinary is happening in the cultural arts community in Licking County, 25 miles east of Columbus. Visionaries are not just content to hang occasional art shows, present seasonal concerts on the green or sponsor limited community theater. Instead, civic and arts leaders are reaching out to the entire community to make the arts a part of everyone's lives and hearts. The tremendous effort greatly benefits not only those who live in the region, but the many visitors from across Ohio.

"We have a very rich offering of arts and culture here, more than you would suspect of a county our size," says Connie Hawk, director of the Licking County Foundation. "The foundation is a public charitable organization with an asset value of more than \$45 million. We match funds from compassionate donors who want to improve lives in our community."

The county is no Johnny-come-lately to the arts. This year, Licking County Arts, a nonprofit organization of artists and those who appreciate the arts, celebrates its 50th anniversary, and many other cultural institutions in the county also have established histories. Combine those prestigious elders with the hip and happening arts in Licking County and it creates a don't-miss destination for art lovers.

Works of Art

"I always say our six acres and 11 buildings encompass a little bit of historical society, a little bit museum of art and a little science center all rolled together," says Downes of The Works, which is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. "The Art Works Gallery is under the direction of Lyn Logan Grimes. She offers a wide

The Newark Symphony Orchestra plays at Bluegrass, Barbeque & Boom!

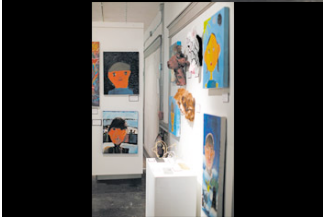
Laura Appleman





An exhibit at the Granville Studio of Visual Arts.

Courtesy of The Granville Studio of Visual Arts



Kathy Anderson displays her artwork at the Licking County Art Gallery.

Courtesy of The Licking County Arts Council



diversity of new art forms not shown in our community before. We bring in local, regional, national and international artists that stay in our artist-in-residency house. The Works also has a world-class glass-blowing studio that offers demonstrations daily, classes and workshops and provides affordable glass in The Works gift shop. Most communities our size do not have that type of facility or a facility such as The Works.”

The Glass Works Studio features artisans who turn white-hot molten glass into one-of-a kind vases and bowls. Other glass-making techniques result in jewelry, stained glass and silver art clay. In addition to art offerings, visitors learn fun facts about Ohio history as well as marvel at new technology that affects our lives.

The Works, 55 S. First St., Newark 43058, 740/349-9277. attheworks.org.

No one talks about the arts in Licking County very long before mentioning tireless arts advocate Kathy Anderson. The landscape artist who works in oil, acrylics and watercolors is a board member of Licking County Arts, coordinator for the 2010 Downtown Newark Artwalk on July 24, and event coordinator for the Cultural Alliance of Licking County (CALC). The Licking County Arts Gallery, under Anderson’s artistic eye, is the home of the Licking County Arts Office, as well as a showroom and art shop.

Licking County Arts collaborates with branches of nearby colleges as well as the Dawes Arboretum to create outstanding art exhibits and programs. Also, when the Ronald McDonald House in Columbus requested artwork, Licking County artists donated 60 pieces.

Licking County Art Gallery, 38 S. Third St., Newark 43055, 740/349-8031. lickingcountyarts.org

Annie Cacciato and Kerry Dixon are the co-founders of the Granville Studio of Visual Arts (GSVA). The artists opened their studio about a year ago and enjoy “seeing all the adults and children just blossom when they come in,” according to Cacciato, who invites visitors to the summer exhibit, June 20–24. Paul Hamilton, who, according to Cacciato, is one of Ohio’s best-known artists and a resident of Granville, is an integral part of the children’s programs.

GSVA, 537 Jones Rd., Granville 43023, 740/587-2371. gsvaonline.org

Performing Arts

Ask executive director Steve Krempasky about his favorite memory of the Midland Theatre and he apologetically says he’s only been there since January 18. His tenure and this sizzling summer season are just getting underway.

Examine a glass paperweight 100 different times and you won’t see the

“But it’s not about me,” says Krempasky. “This

exact same thing. Turn it and colors and shapes change and evolve. Light transforms the paperweight into a prism, a rainbow, a kaleidoscope. Inside, bits of beautiful suspended glass float in eternity.

theater has a great history that needs to be told. As part of that history, there is a certain pride and stewardship in everything we do. As a center for performing arts, we dabble in many things.

And our line-up is eclectic. We want to touch everyone's lives. The Midland is well-respected throughout the state."

It's not all about twanging guitars and classical movies on stage, however. According to Krempasky, the Midland, opened in 1928, strives to be an integral part of the community and to reach audiences on many different levels. The center collaborates with local art galleries and offers extensive outreach programs.

Midland Theatre, 36 N. Park Place, Newark 43055, 740/345-5483, midlandtheatre.org.

Weathervane Playhouse, Licking County's professional summer theater, can trace its heritage to 1969 in Heath. Since that time, its members have performed in a tent, barn, open-air pavilion and a building destroyed by fire. Today, the theater consists of a complex that delights audiences, young and old.

Weathervane Playhouse, 100 Price Rd., Newark 43058, 740/366-4616, weathervaneplayhouse.org.

Musical Masterpieces

We hate to talk about the end of the summer when it has only just begun, but it's never too early to put a save-the-date note on the calendar for something special. The wildly popular Bluegrass, Barbecue & Boom! concert, featuring the Newark-Granville Symphony Orchestra, is Sept. 5 at Dawes Arboretum. The annual Labor Day weekend event includes light classical music and patriotic favorites, followed by a fireworks, according to Cindy Wilkins, the orchestra's general manager. The orchestra will perform music from "West Side Story," as well as Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" and symphonic bluegrass featuring The Andy Carlson Band. Gates open at 3 p.m. and tickets for the special event are \$10 for adults and free for kids 10 and younger.

For tickets, call 740/323-2355, or, for more information, call 740/975-4633 or visit ngsymphony.com.

Must-See Summer Events

The following are some highlights of the summer season in Licking County.

The Granville Art Affair and Wine Festival is Licking County's largest arts festival. More than 100 artists are showcased, plus live entertainment and a hands-on arts area draw crowds. The festival is 10 a.m.–6:30 p.m. Sat., June 12, and 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Sun., June 13, on the Great Lawn of the Bryn Du Mansion, 537 Jones Rd., Granville 43023. The Granville Rotary Club's Wine Festival offers international wine tasting, and food samplings from fine restaurants on Saturday. Admission to the arts festival is free, but tickets are required for wine tasting. A polo match takes place Sunday. 614/579-5743, granvilleartaffair.com

The Central Ohio Bluegrass Association presents the best of the best at the Hartford Fairgrounds, Thur., July 8–11. Also, Evan Lanier and the Bluegrass Express will get your toes tapping at the 152nd Hartford Independent Fair, Monday, Aug. 9, at The Tara Amphitheatre, 14028 Fairgrounds Rd., Croton 43013, 740/893-4881. hartfordfair.com

The Newark Jazz and Rib Festival celebrates its 13th year in downtown Newark on Saturday, July 10. Count on more than 5,000 people with barbecue sauce on their shirts. 740/670-7782, lccvb.com

The first Newark Music and Wings Festival, Aug. 13–14, in downtown Newark promises cool cars and more messy but good festival food. Entertainment includes Sonny Geraci and The Outsiders as well as Gary Lewis and the Playboys. 740/670-7782, lccvb.com

The Dawes Annual Art Show at the Dawes Arboretum, 7770 Jacksontown Rd. S.E. Newark 43056, is a joint effort of the Arboretum and Licking County Arts. The show, Aug. 14–29, spotlights watercolor, photography, sculpture, oil paintings, textiles and more. 800/443-2937, dawesarb.org

For more information about the arts in Licking County, call the Greater Licking County Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800/589-8224 or visit lccvb.com.

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