MemberWorks
The Newsletter Connecting Members and Friends to the Nation's Oldest Arts Council

Towngate Theatre
50 Seasons
1969-2019
A Message from the President

This summer, Oglebay Institute will celebrate its 89th year of delivering its mission to the residents of the Ohio Valley. Since those early days, the programs have evolved and our reach has grown significantly, although our mission remains the same.

It gives me great pride to work with so many committed, innovative and professional individuals who make up our Oglebay Institute team. Recently, many of these programs have received statewide, regional and national attention. Our Rural Arts Collaborative program was featured at the Arts in Our Communities Conference hosted by the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History. The 65th Annual Antiques Show & Sale received accolades in national publications such as “Antiques and The Arts Weekly.” We received a grant through the National Endowment for the Arts to expand our adaptive dance programming. We brought Schrader Center programs to new audiences in Belmont County and helped hundreds of people gain a deeper understanding of how the arts can help heal the mind, heart and body through the “Art of Healing” exhibition at the Stifel Fine Arts Center.

In the midst of all of these things, and more, staff members have been actively preparing for summer camps and a full schedule of entertaining, inspiring and educational programs in the months ahead.

We thank you for your support that ensures our legacy of excellence, innovation and development.

Hope to see you soon at Oglebay Institute!

Best Regards,

Danielle Cross McCracken
Oglebay Institute President

OI Welcomes New Board Members

Please join us in welcoming four new members to the Oglebay Institute Board of Trustees.

Michael D. Costanzo is a member of the Costanzo & Associates, PLLC firm in Wheeling. He is experienced in individual, partnership and corporate taxation areas and is involved with the firm’s audit and tax practice. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the West Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants and a former president of the Northern Chapter of the WV Society of Certified Public Accountants of which he is also a member. He is currently on the board of the Pike Baseball and Softball Association in Wheeling. Mike lives in Wheeling with his wife Jen and their three children.

Kim Florence is the regional president & general manager of Wheeling Island Hotel Casino Racetrack. She joined the Wheeling Island team in June 2003 and has held multiple positions throughout her tenure, including senior director of marketing. Kim is responsible for the oversight of all casino operations and activities. She holds a bachelor’s degree from Ohio University. She enjoys spending time outside of work with her family and golfing.

Wendy M. Scatterday is a registered architect and Wheeling native, who returned to her hometown in 1998 after graduating from the University of Tennessee – College of Architecture and Design. Wendy owns her own firm, Scatterday Architecture. She is a creative thinker and a problem solver who believes all things are best accomplished with a team approach. She is a loyal friend and family member, an avid volunteer, community organizer, board member and public servant. She began a four-year term serving on Wheeling City Council representing Ward Four in July 2016.

Jeremy R. West has served as vice president, private client services group of WesBanco since 2006. He is a graduate of West Liberty University. Jeremy serves as an organizing member/past vice president of the OVConnect organization, a member of the West Liberty University Foundation Board of Directors as well as the West Liberty University School of Business Advisory Board.
Kafana Presents at Mountaineer Autism Conference

Oglebay Institute dance instructor Kim Kafana and Haley Rauschenberg, outreach consultant at Augusta Levy Learning Center, gave a presentation at the Mountaineer Autism Project’s 2019 Autism Conference in Parkersburg, WV.

The statewide conference brought together service providers, stakeholders and families to gain knowledge and support to improve the lives of children with autism at home, at school and in the community.

Kafana and Rauschenberg provided insight into finding appropriate leisure activities for individuals with autism that can be done independently or with peers. They discussed benefits of incorporating a variety of art specialties into ABA (applied behavior analysis) services and how the arts can be an important aspect of every individual’s daily life.

They highlighted an ongoing partnership between OI and Augusta Levy that has helped students learn new skills.

Since 2012 Kafana has been delivering dance and movement classes for Augusta Levy clients, with content tailored to the abilities of participants. The program provides creative outlets for expression, mechanisms for managing sensory stimuli in a positive way, improves communication and social skills and promotes physical development to increase large and small gross motor skills.

The Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley’s Community Impact Fund provided funding for the 2018-19 collaboration.

Scholarships Make Summer Day Camp Experiences Accessible to All

From June through August, Oglebay Institute will welcome summer day campers from toddlers to teenagers. They’ll encounter nature in a new way, create art inspired by their favorite movies and tell stories through music, dance and theater. For many students, these experiences are made possible through OI’s Summer Camp Scholarship Program.

Thanks to generous gifts from the James B. Chambers Memorial Foundation, the Women’s Giving Circle, the Robinson S. Parlin Trust and individual gifts, dozens of campers will learn, make friends and have fun at OI summer camps, regardless of their family’s ability to pay.

If you want to see more students discover and deepen their interest in the arts and nature, please consider a gift to OI’s Coulling Endowment.

Named for the late Stanley H. Coulling, former executive director of Oglebay Institute, this endowment funds numerous scholarships each summer. Your kind donation can build this fund for the benefit of future campers.

Community support makes day camps like those held at the Stifel Fine Arts Center accessible for dozens of local children each summer.

OI Staff Attend “Arts in Our Communities” Conference in Charleston

Oglebay Institute president Danielle McCracken, OI curator of exhibitions Michael McKowen and development director Micah Underwood participated in the 2019 Arts in Our Communities conference at The Culture Center in Charleston, W.Va. in February.

Presented by the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History, the conference featured presentations and workshops with national arts leaders, along with panel discussions by artists and arts organizations from across West Virginia on topics such as arts education, creative placemaking, festival planning, arts and tourism and the healing power of the arts. Grant writing workshops with national and regional funders, roundtable discussions and networking opportunities were also part of the conference.

McCracken served as a keynote speaker at the conference. She discussed ways that arts organizations can extend reach and increase impact of arts-based experiences through creative partnerships with funders, schools and community organizations.

McKowen was part of the panel discussion on arts education, highlighting OI’s work with the Rural Arts CollaborativeSM, an initiative that delivers hands-on, project-based arts learning programs to schools.

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At Oglebay Institute’s Towngate Theatre, the collective experience of the past 50 years has been built by a community deeply invested in sharing, as playwright Thornton Wilder said, “what it is to be a human being.”

Like the stories on its stage, Towngate’s people bring their varied perspectives and resources together to create a vibrant piece of the local arts landscape.

Scott Everson (left) president & CEO of Towngate 50th Season sponsor Unified Bank with OI director of performing arts Tim Thompson and cast members from this season of plays. Front to back are Briele Dobson (Miracle on 34th Street), Aimee Kefauver (Our Town) and Taylor Andrews (The Diary of Anne Frank).
Towngate Means Family

Actor Arlene Merryman discovered Towngate in 1972, three years after its founding. In the 47 years since, she has appeared in 46 mainstage productions, fulfilling her love of performing and instilling in her children an appreciation of theater, a gift they’ve passed on to their own children.

Like Merryman, actor Justin Swoyer enjoys sharing Towngate with his sons, both of whom have joined him onstage over the years.

“Sometimes it might take a while to have a comfort or chemistry in working with an actor, but with my sons it comes immediately,” said Swoyer. His son Isaac added, “It’s easier to work with him because we can understand each other’s thoughts.”

The family feeling at Towngate goes beyond households. For many people, it is a place of love and support through good times and bad.

Pete Fernbaugh experienced that care first-hand when he lost his father while in rehearsal for a play. As he dealt with funeral plans and an onslaught of emotions throughout opening weekend, his director and fellow actors wrapped him in kindness.

“When I think back on that time . . . I remember how loving and supportive [director] Tim [Thompson] and Towngate were to me,” said Fernbaugh. “It’s what makes community theater so special. It’s about the community and when one member of the community is suffering, the rest of the community . . . rallies around them in support.”

The Art of Change

As in the rest of life, the community at Towngate is ever shifting, especially in Saturday classes, summer camps and the Parcel Players summer youth company. These programs engage students from elementary school through college. Alumni carry what they learn into their adult lives.

“The . . . work I do in my professional career owes a lot to the skills I learned at Towngate.”

Community investments of time, talent and treasure keep the lights on, the doors open and the art alive, making all of these memories possible. Unified Bank recognized the value of such an investment when they sponsored the theater’s mainstage season.

“Unified Bank proudly supports Towngate because this remarkable theater is a cornerstone for the performing arts in the Ohio Valley and gives so much back to the community,” said bank president & CEO Scott Everson. “Supporting such a wonderful entity fulfills our vision of creating better lives and futures for the people and communities that we proudly serve.”

Continued on page 10.
Educational Outreach
Stifel Fine Arts Center &
Schrader Center

Above, director of art education Brad Johnson leads Elm Grove Elementary 4th grade students in an art project in the style of pop-artist Keith Haring. Pictured with Johnson are Emma Hyde and Michael Hunter.

Below, students learn about line, color and texture by studying artwork hanging in the Stifel Fine Arts Center’s Hart Galleries.

Thanks to the support of the EQT Foundation, The Benedum Foundation, Community Foundation of the Upper Ohio Valley and the Phil Maxwell Endowment, Oglebay Institute has recently been able to expand its outreach and field trip programs in Ohio and West Virginia - providing outstanding learning opportunities for area students in grades K-12.

On April 9, Bridgeport Middle School 5th grade students participated in an EQT-funded field trip to the Schrader Environmental Education Center. Above, Dylan Charlton, AJ Bishop and Rowin Wheeler observe birds from the Schrader Center’s Woodland Walkway.

Left, Bridgeport Middle School 5th grade students Stayzia Ray, Daelyn Husarik and Ariel Palmer complete an ecosystem survey.

Dancing Wheels Adaptive Dance & Movement Workshop
School of Dance

Instructed by the Dancing Wheels Company of Cleveland, Ohio, this annual workshop hosted by Oglebay Institute’s School of Dance provides those with physical, sensory or developmental disabilities an opportunity to participate in the art of dance through a unique approach to movement, education and therapy.

This inclusive workshop also invites non-disabled peers to join this freeing, educational and joyous experience.

Pictured above, front row, left to right are Dancing Wheels instructor Meredith Aleigha-Wells, Sarah Czapp, Kelsi Weaver and Dancing Wheels founding artistic director Mary Verdi-Fletcher. Standing are Abbey Miller, Madeline Crawford, School of Dance instructor Kim Kafana, School of Dance director Cheryl Pompeo and Dancing Wheels instructor and company member Sara Lawrence-Sucato.
The Art of Healing
Stifel Fine Arts Center

The powerful and informative The Art of Healing exhibition at the Stifel Fine Arts Center explored the therapeutic power of the creative process to address the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of cancer patients and their loved ones.

Pictured above are members of Wheeling’s Independent Artist Group, whose portraits of the late Lacie Wallace were featured in the exhibit. Left to right are: Georgette Drake, Alvin Chiu, Clare McDonald, Janet Hart, Georganne Bishop, Gary Davenport, Gina Judy, Alan Fitzpatrick, Cecy Rose, Sandra Hadsell, Margaret Groch and William Hogan.

Maple Sugaring Day
Camp Russel, Oglebay

Sponsored by the Hess Family Foundation, the Schrader Center presented the annual Maple Sugaring Day March 16 at Oglebay’s Camp Russel.

Guided tours along the trails of Oglebay consisted of stations, which demonstrated Native American, early pioneer and modern methods of gathering and producing maple syrup. Guests were also treated to a hot pancake breakfast.

Pictured above, left to right, are Jim Rogers, Abby Rogers, Amy Rogers, Kera Rogers, Mary Suhler, Steve Suhler, and Schrader Center naturalist emeritus Greg Park.

Jack and the Beanstalk
Towngate Theatre

A multi-generational cast of talented local actors performed Jack and the Beanstalk two weekends in February. Directed by Dave Henderson, the show included humor, adventure and valuable moral lessons.

Front row, left to right, are May Devine, Abiga Smith, Patricia Jeffers (cow), Elaina Pusz, Alex Fabrizio and Jana Lu Schodzinski. Back row (standing): Owen Dobrzynski, Taylor Andrews, Elizabeth Jeffers, Justin Swoyer (giant), Maria McKelvey, Shane Young, Mike Blanton and Isaac Swoyer.

The Gun Show (Can we talk about this?)
Towngate Theatre

A one-man play excavating the playwright’s own complicated relationship to gun culture.

Pictured above is Quantum Theatre founder and artistic director Karla Boos, actor Andrew William Smith and playwright EM Lewis.
Held in conjunction with The Art of Healing exhibition was a series of learning and community-building events, which explored using art in the healing process and provided resources for those affected by cancer.

On March 7, photographer Angelo Merendino discussed his photo-documentary, “The Battle We Didn’t Choose - My Wife’s Fight with Breast Cancer.” He was joined by a panel of medical professionals who gave special insight into patient care. Pictured above, left to right, are medical oncologist Dr. Nabiel Alkhouri, radiation oncologist Dr. Ann Morris, Angelo Merendino, nurse navigator Carla Ross, social worker Jessica Ford and medical oncologist Dr. Mohammed Almubarak.

The more than 80 guests included couples, friends and Oglebay Institute members. Above, Adam & Julianne Heinemann. Below, Renee & Ryan Storm.

In celebration of St. Patrick’s Day, the Stifel Fine Arts Center held its Art & Ale Irish Beer Tasting March 15. An annual favorite for many, the events featured six Irish ales, Irish-inspired fare and the music of Celtic folk band Gallowglass.

Above, left to right, are Doug Hennen, Bob Rine, Sharon Bleitas-Hennen and Bruce Johnson.

The Irish comedy/melodrama The Shaughraun by Dion Boucicault delighted more than 450 patrons during its run in March. Part of Towngate Theatre’s 50th season, the production was directed by P.D. Gregg and sponsored by Unified Bank.

Above, left to right, are cast members. Karissa Martin and Brendan Sheehan. Back row: Eric T. Dutton and Emily Hores and Bethany Fernbaugh and Pete Fernbaugh.
Thanks to a grant from National Endowment for the Arts, OI was able to bring The Dancing Wheels Company to the Ohio Valley for two performances April 2 at John Marshall High School. The company performed *Daring to Be Dumbo*, a contemporary twist on the classic story of overcoming bullying, for more than 350 area elementary school students. A public concert – *Dancing On a Dream* – took place later that evening.

Pictured above with dancers are McNinch Primary School first graders. Front row, left to right: Avanalist Jackson, Olivia Melchiori, Tanya Ewell, Meredith Aleigha Wells, Edward Blake and Riley O’Neil. Back row: Kaitlyn Fabian, Sara Lawrence-Sucato and Matthew Robinson.

Begun in 2018, OI's DanceAbility Program is tailored for individuals with differing abilities and focuses on creating an open environment in which all can participate.

Pictured above with dancers are McNinch Primary School first graders. Front row, left to right: Susan Weekly, Katie Robinson, Sarah Czapp, Kelsi Weaver and Emelia Heusel. Back row, left to right: Natalie Boord, School of Dance instructor Kim Kafana, Amber Bowser and School of Dance director Cheryl Pompeo.

Oglebay Institute’s 65th annual Antiques Show and Sale took place April 5-7 at Wilson Lodge in Oglebay Park.

Sponsored by Joe R. Pyle Complete Auction & Realty Service and Hughes Design & Gift Gallery, the show is the largest and longest-running in West Virginia, welcoming more than 50 dealers from 10 states. The event, organized by the Committee of The Museums of Oglebay Institute, also serves as the Museums’ largest fundraiser.

Above, left to right, are participating dealers Joan Anderson, Larry Carton, Mical Carton and Dick Anderson.
For Jan Runyan, Oglebay Institute membership began with Mountain Nature Camp (MNC).

“When I first joined OI, I lived too far away to participate in any other activities besides MNC,” Jan said. “Still I felt it was important to support OI’s commitment to providing excellent programming available to ordinary people who love nature.”

An elementary school teacher for more than 35 years, Jan incorporated what she learned at MNC into her classroom. Each summer, after the students were gone and the classroom was put away, she would retreat to the 18-acre lakeside camp in Terra Alta, W.Va., to be renewed and refreshed.

Jan first encountered MNC in the summer of 1974. She had always enjoyed being outdoors and noticing amazing things in nature, but there were few places a young teacher could afford to go to learn more. A friend introduced her to the camp she now calls a “home in nature.”

“As we drove to Terra Alta and I had my first, in-person taste of West Virginia, I knew I had found something very special,” Jan remembered. She was introduced to a world she had previously only encountered in magazines. She fell in love with the Mountain State and began friendships that have lasted many years.

This summer marks her 26th MNC experience. When asked if it is as magical now as it was that first day in 1974, she replied, “It does still feel magical, but for a different reason. The first time I had the feeling of becoming part of a beautiful photograph . . . something 2-dimensional becoming 3-dimensional with me in it. Now the magical feeling happens every time I turn onto the camp lane. It is a deep feeling of coming home.”

In June, she will look to see whose cars are already there, who is sitting in front of the lodge or inside. They will greet each other as if they have been apart a week rather than months or a year. They will warmly welcome newcomers.

That first night, like every night, they will sit around a campfire, singing songs they have sung for decades. They will share observations, thoughts and laughter, looking back and looking forward to the week ahead.

On why she remains a member of OI, Jan said, “The more I have learned about early OI naturalists and leaders, the more I want to help those kinds of opportunities to be available to everyone today.”
New Research Library to Open at Mansion Museum

Oglebay Institute’s Mansion Museum is expanding its library into a formal research center thanks to a donation from longtime Oglebay Institute Antiques Show & Sale manager Peter Chillingworth.

Chillingworth, of Scenery Hill, Pennsylvania, has made the pursuit of antiques the focus of his life and spent decades amassing an impressive collection of books dedicated to the decorative arts. The books will now be housed in a library at the Mansion Museum and serve as a resource for researchers.

“It’s everything in the decorative arts that you can think of,” director Christin Byrum said. “It’s glass, it’s silver, it’s furniture, textiles.”

The collection will hold special appeal to artists in the community. Anyone who restores antiques will no doubt find insight into their craft. Decorators, woodworkers, interior designers…there’s even a volume for people who collect lamps and one for people interested in mirrors. The books cover craft and design as well as history and art appreciation.

There’s no firm date yet for the opening of the library, as the room will need to be prepared for its installation. Once it’s up and running, researchers will be allowed to study the collection by appointment.

Byrum described Chillingworth as “an expert’s expert.” He began his antique collection when he was just a small boy. His parents had an antique shop and he opened his first shop in the early 1960s. Over the decades, he’s gained a wealth of knowledge and the respect of the antiquing community.

“We aspire to Peter’s level,” Byrum said. “And this collection is certainly helping us get there.”

OI Museums Create Three Exhibits for Wheeling 250 Celebration

The Museums of Oglebay Institute will present three exhibits in conjunction with Wheeling 250, a yearlong community celebration commemorating Wheeling’s 250th anniversary.

They will be open to the public May 30-September 2.

Listening Through the Lens: The Musical Portraits of George J. Kossuth
(Sauder Gallery, Mansion Museum)

George J. Kossuth’s portrait immortalized internationally renowned musicians, singers, composers and conductors who visited Wheeling in the early-mid 1900s. His contributions to the cultural movement in Wheeling left a legacy that is still felt today.

50 for 250: Icons of Wheeling Glass
(Glass Museum)

From basic tableware to the Sweeney Punch Bowl, glass has been a staple in the industrial life of Wheeling since the city’s earliest days. Fifty outstanding examples have been chosen from the world’s largest, most comprehensive collection of Wheeling-made glass in celebration of this enduring element of our local heritage.

25 Works By Wheeling Artists: From the Collection of The Museums of Oglebay Institute
(Sauder Gallery, Mansion Museum)

Wheeling has a rich artistic heritage. This exhibit explores the role of the artists in elevating community culture and influencing generations of students and underscores the enduring value and insights of their work.

A "progressive opening" takes place from 4:30pm-7pm Thursday, May 30 with light bites at the Mansion Museum, desserts and punch at the Glass Museum.
These programs are presented with financial assistance from the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History, and the National Endowment for the Arts, with approval from the West Virginia Commission on the Arts.