

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

Celebrating 25 Years

Well, we won't officially celebrate our 25th anniversary until July 2012, but 2012 marks our 25th year of publishing an arts newspaper. Of course I published my first "bootleg" paper, *The Glass Onion* in high school back 1968 with the help of a few friends. And throughout the years, I seem to be involved in publishing in one way or another. Linda and I owned and operated a black and white custom photo processing lab working with many media folks and advertising agencies, from the mid 70s - 90s. Most of the images we were printing would end up in publications. Before starting our first paper in SC - *Charleston Arts*, we spent a couple of years doing the *Congaree Chronical*, the newspaper for the SC Chapter of the Sierra Club.

How we produce the paper today and distribute it seems a million years from typing on mimeograph paper and handing out copies during lunch hour in high school. Shoot - so many changes have taken place in just the last year that my head is still spinning and we know more changes will be coming down the road - faster and more mind-boggling than we can imagine at this point.

We're not planning any big celebration to mark this anniversary unlike other publications that throw a party every time they release a new issue. Our publishing company is named Shoestring Publishing Company because we operate on a shoestring. After all, most, if not all of our advertising support comes from visual art entities which have never had a lot of funding for advertising. We charge what we think folks can afford and we can live on. That doesn't always work out, but we have survived - so far. We've taken our financial hits in the last decade, but

others have taken harder ones and some are with us no longer. The whole publishing industry has taken big hits and is constantly struggling and adjusting to this new electronic media world.

We know there are a lot of folks out there who still wish we were printing the paper so they could hold it in their hands when they read it, but all we can do is encourage them to come into the 21st century or bid them a fond farewell. Life is changing and during this last holiday season probably millions of new handheld tablets will have been purchased as gifts and *Carolina Arts* can be downloaded and read on all of them. The Kindle Fire alone at \$199 will allow you to read our paper in full color wherever you want - whenever you want.

Linda is a good example of these changing times. She has had a paperback book with her everyday that I have known her. We have bags and bags of books she has read all over our house, but today she reads books on an iPad and downloads books for free from local libraries. When she wants to look up something she read about in the story she can just go on the internet and look it up and then go right back to her book. She doesn't need book markers or to turn down corners of pages to keep track of where she stopped reading - that's all taken care of by the mini computer she holds in her hand. Most people once they try these new devices never look back, but there's no use of going on about this, because if you're reading this, you're already a convert. The others are still trying to find some news in their daily newspaper or in the magazines at their doctor's office.

We hope one day they will find that we are still alive and kicking - which will mean they will have taken the steps

towards coming into the 21st century.

Twenty-Five Years

Twenty-five years seems like a long time, but it also seems just like yesterday. Our son Andrew was born a few months after we started publishing *Charleston Arts*, so we've had him to measure the passing time. He got married this year on New Year's Eve. It just seems like yesterday that we kept him in a cardboard box with blankets while we worked on the paper and took in photo processing in a large closet space in a friend's hair salon in downtown Charleston, SC.

It's hard to imagine all the things that will go on in the next twenty-five years if we're lucky to keep doing this. Perhaps I'll be typing again with a baby in a box of blankets next to me - who knows.

Looking Back

Anniversaries are an occasion for celebration and looking back at the road that got you where you are. With this issue, we're beginning a column looking back at old issues of *Carolina Arts*, which started in January of 1997. It wouldn't exactly be fair to go back to 1987 and look back at issues of *Charleston Arts* or to 1995 to review issues of *South Carolina Arts*. I'm saving those memories for the Book.

On Page 30 of this issue you'll find our look back at our first issue of *Carolina Arts*. It was an interesting study looking back 15 years and seeing what has changed and what has remained the same. We were still in the 1990s, what I call the golden age of the arts in the Carolinas - a few years before the downward spiral which would bring the economy down to its knees in the 2000s. I'll leave it to the reader to come up with their own conclusions as to what went on during those years to bring us to where we are now, but it won't take a rocket scientist to figure it out.

The good news is - a lot of us who were there in 1997 are still here. We may

be struggling, we may look very different than we did in 1997, and we may be spending more time than we like on a thing called Facebook, but we're still here - for now. Amazingly, some people are jumping into the art biz as some close up shop or are pausing to reorganize. The arts still have a strong draw to them.

So look back with us and see where we were in 1997. If you were not here you may find it instructive, if you were, you might find it sad or get a laugh out of it. If you don't care, you may fall victim to the mistake of repeating the past.

One thing you won't see us offer is a look into the future. If we had that ability, we'd get rich in the stock market. All we can deal with is the past and the here and now. And our new deadline on the 24th.

Embrace Change

If there is anything I hate more than trying to figure out how computers and computer programs work - it's change.

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Joan Z. Horn
january & february

- jewelry • glass • art • furniture • sculpture • soleri wind bells • yard art
- pottery • jewelry boxes • kaleidoscopes • storypeople • prints • games
- toys for children • scarves • candles • 300 artists • 50,000 prints online • sticks

Smith Galleries
Gallery of Fine Craft, Art & Framing
smithgalleries.com
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1000 William Hilton Parkway
842-2280 • Hilton Head • 10-6 M-Sat.

Plansky Collection

Carl Plansky was fascinated with the human figure. His larger-than-life paintings of beautiful opera divas are juxtaposed with jumbo-sized self-portraits that both attract and repel the viewer. Plansky died in 2009 after making a significant contribution to the American art scene. His teaching at many American colleges and universities was instrumental in changing the direction of many young artists who were privileged to learn from him. Plansky's paintings and drawings embody the elements of the Abstract Expressionist movement whose roots were established in New York City during the mid-twentieth century.

Elder Gallery
1427 South Boulevard
Charlotte, NC 28203
704-370-6337
www.elderart.com



Self Portrait as Big Fat Man

oil on linen

96" x 72"