



the Family Arts Kaleidoscope



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The program is based on the belief in the transformative power of parents and children discovering new activities together.



A hip-hop workshop drew 22 children

Key to the survival and success of any organization is continual renewal. For the Spencertown Academy Arts Center this has meant ensuring that our programming appeals to each new generation of potential new members and supporters.

In 2020, a new program, the Family Arts Kaleidoscope, was launched, specifically aimed at younger families, both adults and children. The program was headed by then board members Jill Kalotay and Kelly Kynion. Seed money was provided by Hudson River Bank & Trust, Stewart's Shops and MetzWood Insurance.

Because of COVID, things got off to a rough start, recalls Kalotay: "Events were held on Zoom until spring, 2021, when health guidelines were loosened a bit. But we still struggled to make sure everyone had been vaccinated. We even gave test packs to parents to administer on the spot so kids would be able to join." But the program eventually ran out of steam, due mainly to the difficulty finding activities and presenters.

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Profile



AMY KAUFMAN: LIGHTS, CAMERA, VOLUNTEER!

The Spencertown Academy Art Center's newest board member brings a wealth of talent from a long career in film and television.

Amy Kaufman, the newest member of the Spencertown Academy Art Center's board of directors, goes by the email moniker "Rosebud." As a film and television producer, this pays homage to the iconic sled in Orson Welles's film, *Citizen Kane*, while also honoring her Great Aunt Rose, whom she was named after. In addition, Amy is an avid gardener with a particular passion for roses, which is what first led her to Madaline Sparks, board vice president and longtime Hidden Gardens Tour chair.



Kaufman:
Community, roses, the arts

Upon arriving in Spencertown 20 years ago, Kaufman immediately became interested in the Academy. "I loved the sense of community and commitment to the arts," she recalls, and so became active as a volunteer for the Garden Tour, Festival of Books, as a gallery docent and this year, as a host, with her husband, Robert Boyd, for a Revels dinner.

Amy began her career in the 1980s, working with the Maysles brothers, the pioneering documentarians, and eventually pivoted to producing indie films, including François Gerard's biography of pianist Glenn Gould, *Thirty-Two Short Films about Glenn Gould*, which won several Canadian Genie awards,

what's coming up

ROOTS & SHOOTS CONCERT
Big Lazy
Saturday, May 23, 8:00pm

GALLERY SHOW
11th Annual Members' Art Show
May 30-June 29

COMMUNITY EVENT
Seedling Swap
at the Spencertown Town Park
Saturday, June 6: 10:00am-2:00pm

SPOKEN WORD
Willa Cather: An American Voice
Sunday June 28, 3:00pm

ROOTS & SHOOTS CONCERT
Dusty Wright Four
Friday, July 3, 7:00pm

GALLERY SHOW
Small Wonders
July 11-August 9

ROOTS & SHOOTS CONCERT
Mary Gauthier at St. Peter's Church
Sunday, July 12, 7:30pm

**HIDDEN GARDENS TOUR
& Market on the Green**
Saturday July 18

spencertownacademy.org/events

including best picture, best director and best screenplay. She was also a producer of Todd Haynes's biopic about Bob Dylan, *I'm Not There*.

In 2007, Warner Brothers TV tapped Kaufman to produce the pilot for a new series, "Gossip Girl," because the show-runners were looking for "the feel of a New York indie film." The timing was fortuitous, coinciding with the so-called Golden Era of Television, exemplified by "The Sopranos" and "Sex and the City." This propelled Kaufman into the arena of working with premium streamers - Netflix, Showtime and Apple TV. Her executive producer credits include "Billions," "House of Cards" and "Invasion." Kaufman is currently at work on a new show for Apple TV, starring Dakota Fanning and Stellan Skarsgård.



FOR ALL AGES

The young families in the photo on page 1 of this letter are doing something very special. Yes, they are dancing (taking a hip-hop class, to be precise). But they are also part of a much larger group of people of all ages who regularly participate in or support the mission of the Spencertown Academy Arts Center: They are building community through the arts. All the arts: As this and prior issues' articles show, these include all the graphic arts, music, poetry, drama, even gardening, which certainly counts as an honorary art in the Spencertown community. As these stories show, it promises to be a very full and exciting summer. Enjoy!

It is with sadness that I note the recent passing of Bruce Felton. A professional freelance writer and former Academy board member, Bruce reintroduced our long dormant newsletter in 2014 and was editor for ten years before passing the reins to David Cudaback two years ago; he also wrote some of the key content when we redesigned the website. His bright, upbeat prose gave voice to the Academy's mission.

Nick Van Alstine

Poetry in the Park

NAVIGATING THE MOMENT, CONNECTING THROUGH WRITING

A town-Academy partnership helps teach kids the power of poetry.

"Poetry allows us to make sense of the senseless," says Even Christine Gardiner, "and gives us tools for transforming what is ugly into something beautiful."



This belief has animated one of the most successful collaborations between the Academy and the local community. When schools were closed during the COVID epidemic, Even, a poet and educator (she currently teaches at the Berkshire Waldorf School), created an online Poetry Laboratory to help young people navigate the moment, process their feelings and connect with each other through writing.

In 2022, Even met Debbie Oleynek, who for more than 30 years has been head of the Spencertown-Austerlitz Recreation Program (SARP). The two developed a plan to adapt the online project for the town's summer program. The program, which is funded by the Academy, serves kids ages 3-13 and offers a low-cost way to provide local families with childcare during the summer.

This will be the fifth year of the Academy-Poetry Laboratory-SARP partnership, and the same kids come year after year; it will run from June 29 through August 7.



Poet Gardiner: Processing feelings

Community Events

THE JOY OF HANDS DIRTY

The Spencertown Academy's first Seedling Swap & Sale will celebrate gardening and community.

Everyone who starts plants from seed ends up with extras. What to do with them? Swap them for other growers' extras that you don't have. "It's really about meeting your neighbors," says Academy member Vanessa Villanova, "learning something new and celebrating the simple joy of getting your hands in the dirt."

This is how Villanova describes the Spencertown Academy Art Center's first Seedling Swap & Sale, which will be held on Saturday, June 6, from 10:00am to 2:00pm, at the Spencertown Park Pavilion.

"Given the incredible enthusiasm we've seen through the



Academy's Hidden Gardens Tour," adds Villanova, the program's chair, "it felt like a natural next step to create a community event where gardeners of all levels can come together – swap plants, share knowledge and take plants home for the season ahead."

Proceeds from plant sales will benefit a local food charity. Cornell Cooperative Extension will also participate at the "Ask a Master Gardener" table.

Planning on swapping and/or attending? Please help us prepare by completing the Seedling Intake form on our website in advance.

spencertownacademy.org/event/seedling-swap-sale

the Academy

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MEMBERSHIP

Are you a current member of the Spencertown Academy?
Visit our website to sign up or to renew your membership today!
We thank you for your support.

PLEASE VISIT

spencertownacademy.org
for information on programs, membership, and volunteer opportunities or to subscribe to our e-blast list.



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Summer will offer an eclectic offering of exciting music, ranging from truckers' romps to patriotic Americana to Deep South folk.



On Saturday, May 23, at 8:00pm the 2026 Roots and Shoots summer concert series will open with Big Lazy, an instrumental trio The New Yorker has described as “evoking everything from truckers’ romps to the haunting film scores of Bernard Hermann.” The group is led by founder and guitarist Stephen Ulrich, whose elegant twang is reminiscent of Duane Eddy and whose style, notes another critic, is “simultaneously noir and pastoral, gothic and modern.” Joining Ulrich will be bassist Andrew Hall, an integral part of New York City’s trad jazz scene, and Chilean percussionist Edgardo (Yayo) Serka. General admission: Public: \$30. Members: \$25 biglazymusic.com/music-2



As part of the Town of Austerlitz’s celebration of the USA’s 250th Anniversary, the Spencertown Academy Arts Center will present a free concert by the Dusty Wright Four. The event will take place under a big tent located in the field a quarter mile south of the Village Green, next to 5178 South Street in Spencertown, NY (GPS may say Chatham), on

Friday, July 3 at 7:00pm. The band will play an array of Americana, traditional, folk, and country rock, along with patriotic tunes. Advance tickets will not be required.

Wright’s latest album, “Maximus Americanus” (PetRock, 2026) was released this year. His long-time trio includes lead guitarist Jonathan K. Bendis, bassist Kevin Mackall and drummer Pete DeMeo. dustywright.com

And on Sunday, July 12, Grammy-nominated folk singer-songwriter Mary Gauthier returns to Spencertown after a nearly two-year absence. The concert will take place at 7:30pm at St. Peter’s Presbyterian Church (5219 County Route 7 Spencertown, NY). Gauthier’s songs often deal with marginalization, informed by her experience of adoption, addiction and recovery, and growing up gay in the Deep South. General admission: \$30 Academy members, \$35 non-members. marygauthier.com



Opening for Gauthier will be Texas-born country-folk-leaning singer-songwriter Jaimee Harris. “Boomerang Town,” Harris’s sophomore album, “recalls the best of Mary Chapin Carpenter’s ‘90s work,” according to one reviewer. jaimeeharris.com/bio

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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Enter current board members Carol Essert and Phyllis Diamond, who re-established the FAK early in 2025. Says Essert: “We hoped that by providing children’s programs the younger members of the community would discover where the Art Center is and what it offers. We’re targeting all children from ages 2 to 13 (and their parents), providing creative and educational activities, all free.”

“We believe in the transformative power of parents and children discovering new activities together,” adds FAK co-chair Diamond.

Art can also be a lot of fun. One of the program’s most successful events to date was a hip-hop workshop in

February taught by Ali Pinelli, an Ichabod Crane fifth-grade teacher and dance instructor. The class drew 22 children, ages 8 to 12, along with many of their parents, who joined the dancing. (Among the songs they learned to dance to was “Golden,” which would later win this year’s Oscar for best song, from the film KPop Demon Hunters. Who says Spencertown isn’t hip?)

Another big hit was Friendly Banjo with Zack in March. Originally planned for six children, teacher Zack Munsell of East Chatham, who designs banjos made in the Berkshires at Magic Fluke, hosted eight kids by popular demand. Other events have included a clowning workshop and “Sing, Play and Dance with Miss Deb” (aka, Deb Cavanaugh).



Hidden Gardens

JULY 18

Come tour the artful private gardens and landscapes of Columbia County and shop for a variety of plants from local growers of perennials, shrubs and trees and related merchandise at the Market on the Green in Spencertown.



AN ARTFUL SUMMER

Two multidisciplinary shows; a private tour of the Clark Museum; and a special, hands-on painting workshop highlight this summer at Arts Center.

11th ANNUAL MEMBERS' SHOW

This popular event features work by more than 100 Academy members.

The 11th Annual Spencertown Academy Art Center's Members' Show will open on May 30th. The opening reception will take place on Sunday, May 31st, from 3:00 to 5:00pm.

"This exhibition is guaranteed to be fun," says curator Meryl Enerson, "for visitors as well as artists. There are many terrific returning artists, as well as entries by new members and members who simply haven't entered an art show at our gallery before."

This year's exhibit will showcase works in a wide variety of media, including paintings in acrylic, gouache, pastel, watercolor, and oil; drawings in graphite and pen & ink;

photography; and 3D media, including ceramics, jewelry, assemblage, and sculpture.

As in previous years, the Members' Show will also feature the popular "Audience Favorite" award. Visitors to the gallery will be able to vote on their favorite work on display in the exhibit. At the end of the show, a \$100 gift certificate from AWS Art Supplies in Great Barrington will be awarded to the artist with the most votes.

Gallery hours: Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 1:00 to 5:00 pm. The show closes on June 26.



CALL TO ARTISTS: SMALL WONDERS

Regional Fine Arts & Crafts show

Members of the Curatorial Committee will select artworks to represent the best of the region's small arts and crafts. Artists may each submit up to three (3) small artworks, not exceeding 12" in any direction in a wide range of 2D or 3D media. All subject matter, genres and styles are welcome. Submissions open from March 18 - May 13.

PRIVATE TOUR:

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE

Tuesday, May 26, 10:00am to 1:00pm, the Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA



Join us for our first field trip organized by the Spencertown Academy Art Center's Curatorial Committee and see the masterworks in the Clark's collection with docent and Academy Board Secretary David Highfill. Pieces from the permanent collection as well as a dozen rarely seen works on paper from the Institute's collection will be highlighted. Ticket prices include museum entry, tour and lunch. Carpooling from Spencertown and the Lenox area will be available.

Participation is limited to 20 attendees: \$50 Academy members, \$60 non-members. For tickets and more information,

spencertownacademy.org/event/highlights-of-the-sterling-and-francine-clark-art-institute



ART WORKSHOP:

ART HACKS WITH BETSY JACKS - GETTING YOUR DRAWING RIGHT

Sunday, June 14, 1:00 to 4:00pm, Spencertown Academy auditorium



In this hands-on workshop, Betsy Jacks, painter and a former director of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, demonstrates how to bypass the frustrating parts of making representational art, using simple methods she has developed for complete beginners, making the process easy and fun. All necessary tools and materials will be provided.

Registration required: \$20 Academy members, \$25 non-members. For more information: spencertownacademy.org/event/art-workshop-art-hacks-with-betsy-jacks