



## ***President's Newsletter*** ***March 2013***

Dear NSAL Friends,

The Call to Meeting Newsletter is in the mail and should be arriving any day now. Time is short, so please make your plans to come to Pittsburgh in May. In addition to our wonderful competition (I hear from National Competition Chair Norm Brown that the entries are very exciting) and the exhibition of the contestants' works at The Andy Warhol Museum, the Conference is going to be rich with opportunities to see Pittsburgh, to discuss important NSAL business, meet fellow NSAL members from around the country, and to learn important skills.

### **Workshops and discussion groups we are offering include:**

- 1) Creating your local chapter website with the template we provide. I encourage chapter presidents to send two or three members to these classes so you have several people who know how to do this important task. Attendees should come with a laptop.
- 2) Learn how to use DropBox and The Cloud. These are vital new tools that can transform communication between chapters.
- 3) Learn about grant writing and fundraising, two invaluable skills to find and raise money to fund chapter programs.
- 4) Chapter Presidents discussion group, open to all chapter members, is an opportunity to share your triumphs, air your concerns, and together find ways to make all our chapters stronger.

Don't miss out. Pittsburgh is going to be great!

### **Exhibit at The Andy Warhol Museum**

Thanks to the persistence, negotiating skills, and generosity of Pittsburgh Conference Chair **Carole Kamin** and her husband, Dan, the Andy Warhol Museum will be the venue of a two-week long exhibit of all our national printmaking contestants' submitted work. The exhibit will open on Friday May 17 with a reception for both the general public and NSAL members, and will continue through June 2.



Andy Warhol's Marilyn Diptych, 1962

In addition to the special exhibit (excellent for the artists' resumes), the Museum will use their advertising and social networking avenues to get the word out. The exhibition – and NSAL - will be mentioned in their press releases, published in their social media outlets, and in e-blasts to their email lists. Their email list reaches 40,000 people, Facebook posts reach 44,000, and Twitter posts reach 510,000. Yes, you read that right, more than 500 thousand people receive their Twitter posts. This is great for our contestants, and great publicity for NSAL.

### **Proposed Bylaw Amendments**

In response to the National Board's request last May to update our Bylaws so they reflect current standard non-profit organization business practices, the Bylaw Committee chaired by Nancy Morrow and Doni Lystra and assisted by Carl Altstetter and Denna Shiben have worked hard to review the current Bylaws and to make proposed amendments. As is required by our Bylaws, their proposals are enclosed with the Call to Meeting Newsletter.

Please look over their recommendations and make any comments you may have to the bylaw chairs (Nancy Morrow: [morrowtwo@gmail.com](mailto:morrowtwo@gmail.com); Doni Lystra: [dlystra@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dlystra@sbcglobal.net)). The proposed amendments will be voted on by the National Board at the meeting in Pittsburgh, and the Board's recommendation will be passed on to the General Session for a vote. I would appreciate it if we can iron out any concerns BEFORE Pittsburgh so the process at the meetings can move smoothly and efficiently. There is a lot of important business to cover in a short time, and I don't want to get bogged down on one issue. If you have any comments, please relay them to the Bylaw Committee by Wednesday, May 1. That will give them time to respond and prepare for our meetings two weeks later. Many, many thanks.

### **Press release from Bloomington Chapter:**

**Jacobs School students win in National Society of Arts and Letters competitions**

The Indiana University Bloomington website includes a press release listing all the winners of the Bloomington Chapter's 2013 NSAL voice, instrumental, and ballet competitions which were held at the University's Jacobs School of Music.

For the complete text of the announcement, including the list of all the winners, please go to:

[http://info.music.indiana.edu/web/page/normal/23884.html?utm\\_source=WhatCountsEmail&utm\\_medium=Newsletter:%20Upcoming%20Performances%20EXTERNAL&utm\\_campaign=Upcoming%20Performances%2003-01-2013%20External](http://info.music.indiana.edu/web/page/normal/23884.html?utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&utm_medium=Newsletter:%20Upcoming%20Performances%20EXTERNAL&utm_campaign=Upcoming%20Performances%2003-01-2013%20External)

## **Past Winners:**

The *South Florida Times* newspaper ran the following article about Gelan Lambert, a former winner from the Florida East Coast Chapter (formerly called the Boca Raton Chapter). The Chapter is working with a marketing firm that is very effective at getting the word out about the good works the Chapter is doing. I have highlighted references to NSAL and the Chapter leaders who are quoted.

### **FELA! STAR LAMBERT A NSAL GOLDEN ALUM**

Written by WINSLOW M. MASON JR. (Special to South Florida Times)  
Wednesday, 06 March 2013



Gelan Lambert, star of Fela!

Miami Native son Gelan Lambert has won numerous artistic awards, studied at the Julliard School in New York, received the National Presidential Scholar Award from former President Bill Clinton and is currently starring as J.K., the tap-dancing sensation in the hit Broadway musical, FELA!

With Broadway, most would say he's reached the peak of his success, right?

"Wrong," said Lambert, (pronounced Lam-Bear). "When you're really creating art, it's boundless. You let it speak to you. It is what it is. It's only later on, when you realize what category it'll fall into, that you can interpret it. Broadway is just one stop on my journey. I feel like I'm just getting started."

For Lambert, Miami also represents a return to his roots with the Miami Chapter of the **National Society of Arts and Letters**, the organization that helped catapult him to stardom.

Whether it's musical theatre, acting, drawing, dance or playing a musical instrument, NSAL, through local and national competitions, identifies artistic talent with promise. Shirley MacLaine and Jessye Norman are among its distinguished alumni.



Shirley MacLaine (then Shirley Beaty) won a scholarship in dance from the Washington, DC Chapter in 1950. The scholarship was renewed in 1951.

The organization supports promising artists by helping them get their careers off the ground, doing everything from helping artists find and secure housing, to helping with travel or providing funding for artists to produce their own works. It has several chapters across the country, including Boca Raton.

### **FIRST PLACE**

"I was a senior in high school at the New World School of the Arts in Miami, and I saw this article in the newspaper about a competition sponsored by NSAL," Lambert said. "I competed because I just wanted to see how I would perform with my peers. Next thing I knew, I had won first place and an award for \$10,000. Next thing I knew, it was off to Julliard.

"NSAL really boosted my self-esteem and made me think that I could become a successful artist. They support me. I believe that when you're a developing artist, you don't want to stifle a person's artistic choices. NSAL supported my artistic journey, which is a unique mission in the arts community."

### **UNIQUE MISSION**

NSAL's artistic supports have also helped other artistic notables, including Megan Hilty, star of the hit television show *Smash*, and rising Miami singer Chloe Dolandis. Both actresses are past winners in local competitions sponsored by the NSAL. Hilty won NSAL's musical theatre competition at its Pittsburgh chapter in 2004. Dolandis won a similar competition in Boca Raton last year.

Board members said they strive to keep NSAL focused on uncovering new talent, such as Lambert. The organization is unique because of its mission to host local and national talent competitions that identify the artists of tomorrow, said **Alyce Erickson**, a NSAL board member.



Gelan Lambert

“I happen to think the young people are our future,” Erickson said. “Because arts programs are being removed from the schools, we need to create new opportunities. I want to support anything that gives young people a chance to explore their artistic talent. If you don’t expose kids, they have no idea how to see the beauty of the world. Our local and national competitions help give young people a boost to stardom.”

### **IMPACT**

**Judy Asselta**, outgoing president of the Boca chapter, said she wants to help her chapter follow in the footsteps of other chapters around the country that are building alliances with high schools to help talent surface at the early stages of development.

“I’m excited about reaching more into the high schools to identify and support aspiring artists,” Asselta said. “We think collaborating with high schools will be a great addition to the work of our chapter.”

**Shari Upbin**, president of the Boca chapter, says one of her goals is to raise the profile of the organization so that NSAL can expand its reach. “Our mission is visibility for young artists,” Upbin said. “By offering venues for artists to pursue their trades in the various disciplines, we’re creating opportunities.”

NSAL is catching recent attention because of renewed interest on the impact of the arts in society, observers say. With the reach of television shows such as *Glee* and *Smash*, many organizations are now trying to quantify how the arts is making an impact.

Last year, for the first time in its 47-year history, the National Endowment for the Arts announced it will award grants to 15 research projects to investigate the value and impact of the arts in the United States.

“In order to create well-designed and responsive arts programs and policies, we need to have solid, research-based evidence about how art works,” said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman.

Lambert says the arts, simply put, work to inspire, and he’s looking forward to inspiring the world even beyond the Broadway stage.

“I’m not in a box,” he said. He said he hopes to use his art to perhaps write a book or a novel, continue public speaking, explore choreography and one day



create a stage play that not only incorporates all of his talents, but engages the community.

“I’m a contemporary dancer with tap shoes on,” he said. “But that’s only a portion of what I do.”

## Washington Post Article on the Importance of the Arts

On February 21, 2013, the Washington Post Magazine’s education issue featured a piece on the growing realization of the importance of the arts in schools. Written by Anne Midgette with staff contributions from Daniele Seiss, the leader reads: **“After years of crouching, arts ed is raising its hand again.”** The article cites examples of schools that have reintroduced arts education and outlines the benefits they are seeing. “Today, more and more policymakers think it is the arts, after all, that can motivate kids, engage them and help them develop 21st-century skills such as teamwork and innovative thinking — in sum, be the key to their salvation.”



Yo-Ya Ma says that if participating in meetings about cultural or educational policy “can help move things forward a notch, hey, that’s the right thing to do.” Photo by Bill O’Leary

The article also discusses the fact that arts groups such as symphony orchestras and museums are realizing the importance of arts education and are establishing education departments and partnering with schools to bring the arts to young people.

“An awful lot of arts organizations are putting an awful lot of muscle into education these days. Many are looking for ways to combat their own declining trends. Orchestras are a prime example: They’re having trouble filling seats, and they’re struggling with a stereotype that casts them as elitist and boring. Many blame the decline in arts education: If kids learned more about music, they’d grow up to buy tickets!

“Education, furthermore, helps arts organizations bring in new donors. ‘Money for education is coming from people who might not otherwise have an interest in giving,’” says Carol Bogash, vice president for education (a new post) at the

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, which earmarks \$2 million of its \$27 million annual operating budget for education.

“According to a survey by the League of American Orchestras, orchestras’ educational activities tripled between 1990 and 2010.”

For a full text of this fascinating and encouraging article, go to:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/liveblog/wp/2013/02/21/magazine-the-education-issue-after-years-of-crouching-arts-ed-is-raising-its-hand-again>

## NSAL Member News



Eileen Mitchard, Washington, DC Chapter Member and originator of the musical *Breast in Show* which has been produced twice.

**Eileen Mitchard**, a member of the Washington, DC Chapter, has conceived a musical about breast cancer called *Breast in Show*. In early March it had its second public airing at a Richmond, Virginia theater. Her goal, though the play, is to motivate and encourage people to work towards the eradication of breast cancer.

**Eileen** began her theatrical journey when she was accepted to the Ruth M. Knight Summer Theatre Workshop for two years. She earned a degree in Speech and Drama from The Catholic University of America where she studied with the legendary Father Gilbert Hartke. While in college

Eileen performed in several shows with the Chappaqua Summer Theatre. She also has a Masters degree from New York University.

For more than 30 years Eileen has been involved in theatre - as an actress, producer, teacher and director. She is a founding member of the Innerloopers a political satire musical theatre group. She is especially known for her work with large diverse groups of amateur performers of all ages in an annual Spring Show in the Metropolitan DC area.

Here is the article about the Eileen and her play published in the Richmond Times-Dispatch:

## Musical 'Breast in Show' was an opportunity to do something important

With humor, musical conveys real truths about the cancer experience

Posted: Sunday, March 3, 2013  
BY CELIA WREN | Special correspondent

You cannot accuse **Eileen Mitchard** of thinking small. She wants "Breast in Show," the comedy-infused musical she conceived and nurtured, to entertain audiences — but she also wants it to mobilize the entire nation behind the eradication of breast cancer.

"We have the ability to accomplish this goal, for our daughters and our granddaughters and our sisters and our mothers," says Mitchard, who collaborated on the musical with playwright Lisa Hayes and composer-lyricist Joan Cushing. "I hope this show will really get people believing that we can — and we must, and we will!"

Her goal might move a little closer to realization when "Breast in Show" opens at Virginia Repertory Theatre's Willow Lawn Stage on Thursday. The Richmond production — the musical's second public airing — continues through March 19, presented by Carol Piersol in partnership with Virginia Repertory Theatre. Billy Christopher Maupin directs the approximately 90-minute show, which features six Richmond actors and a three-piece band.

A longtime theater devotee based in the Washington area, Mitchard plunged into the creation of the musical in 2009, spurred by her friendships with people who had survived, and not survived, breast cancer. She was getting older — she is now 60 — and she felt that the project "was my opportunity to do something important," she says.

In concert with Hayes, an old friend, Mitchard proceeded to interview more than 200 patients, medical personnel and family members who had been affected by breast cancer. Drawing on the interviews, Hayes went on to write a script that followed multiple characters battling the disease.

**BREAST IN SHOW**

BOOK BY LISA HAYES, MUSIC AND LYRICS BY JOAN CUSHING, CONCEIVED BY EILEEN MITCHARD

ONLY 6 PERFORMANCES!  
**DON'T MISS IT!**

DIRECTED BY BILLY CHRISTOPHER MAUPIN  
MUSIC DIRECTION BY KIM FOX  
CHOREOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER HAMMOND

*Starring Andrew Hamm, Brittany D. Simmons, Chloe Williams, Jeanie Rule, Lauren Leinhaus-Cook, and Russell Rowland*

**THE FIRST ORIGINAL MUSICAL ABOUT SAVING THE TATS!**

Meet five dissimilar characters as they are diagnosed with breast cancer. At different stages in their lives, they have nothing in common except their illness and being in a state of total disbelief. But when they meet at the Chemo Café, they quickly become close, drawn together through sharing similar experiences with their illness. While at first one might think that a musical about breast cancer would be depressing or cynical and something no one would want to see, just the opposite is true of *Breast In Show*. Entertaining and informative, the show accentuates the very funny and serious aspects of the cancer journey with equal vigor, bringing to the stage an emotional and multi-dimensional production.

Performances March 7, 9, 10, 18, 19 at 8PM and March 13 at 2PM at Willow Lawn  
Tickets \$25 (\$20 - groups of 10 or more; \$10 students w/ valid ID)

Visit [www.va-rep.org/bis.html](http://www.va-rep.org/bis.html) or call 804.282.2620 for tickets today!

"The audience laughed, cheered, whooped it up, while wiping away tears."  
- Maryland Theatre Guide

PRODUCED BY CAROL PIERSOL  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VIRGINIA REPERTORY THEATRE

VIRGINIA rep VIRGINIA REP'S WILLOW LAWN STAGE  
AT THE SHOPS AT WILLOW LAWN



But instilling “Breast in Show” with humor was also a priority — not only to leaven the serious content, but also because levity is such a vital tool for people battling cancer. “That’s one of the things we heard over and over again” in the interviews, Mitchard says.

Key to the musical’s humor is the contribution of Cushing, a musical theater writer and cabaret performer who is known in Washington for her long-running political-satire revue, “Mrs. Foggybottom & Friends.” As it happens, shortly after Cushing signed on to co-create “Breast in Show,” her husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She temporarily halted work on the musical to care for him. Within four months, he was dead.

“As a writer, you process everything and look at everything from many angles,” Cushing says. When she resumed work on the show, events and emotions she and her husband had experienced during those four months found their way — often comically transmuted — into songs such as “The Chemo Café,” a tongue-

in-cheek ode to chemotherapy; or “The Deadliest Cell in Town,” starring a sultry cancer cell and backup singers.



A scene from the Virginia Repertory Theatre’s Willow Lawn Stage production of *Breast in Show*

When “Breast in Show” premiered, at a community center in Rockville, Md., in 2011, Cushing was astounded to realize how truly funny it was. The audience was visibly moved at times, but at other times “people were laughing and laughing,” she recalls.

She attributes the reaction to the fact that she and her collaborators captured some real truths about the cancer experience. “My husband’s life already mattered, but I feel like, in some way, I made his death matter,” she says.

After the Rockville debut, the musical found its way to Richmond thanks to Mitchard’s friend Susan Haubenstock, who introduced

Mitchard to Carol Piersol, then the artistic director of Firehouse Theatre Project. Piersol read the “Breast in Show” libretto and loved its humanity and tonal

balance. “It wasn’t all grim, and it wasn’t disrespectful and campy,” Piersol explains. “It was very sincere, even when it was funny.”

Piersol agreed to mount the musical at the Firehouse during the 2013 Acts of Faith Festival, and engaged Maupin to direct.

After Piersol’s departure from her Firehouse post in December in a controversy involving the company’s board of directors, “Breast in Show” found its current berth at Willow Lawn.

“Breast in Show” is still a part of the Acts of Faith festival, which is especially fitting since the show’s very existence has been a long act of faith on Mitchard’s part. She has faith that theater can inspire and energize people — in this case to get involved in the battle against breast cancer.

“If you set a goal, you can make it happen!” Mitchard says.

### **In Memorium**

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Adalin Wichman of the Kentucky Chapter. Her obituary below is a wonderful summary of a remarkable woman’s life. NSAL was blessed to have her as an active member and her loss is deeply felt.



Adalin Wichman, 87-year-old artist, photographed on Friday, Sept. 3, 2010, with her doves at her home in Lexington, Ky. This is a story about the annual dinner at Univ. of Kentucky Sanders-Brown Center on Aging.

Wichman will be one of the "Senior Stars" honored at the dinner; these are folks who are still busy and vibrant and brainy at ages when some others slow down. Photo by David Perry | Staff

## **Lexington artist Adalin Wichman, known for her work and wit, dies at 91**

Published: March 12, 2013

By Rich Copley — [rcopley@herald-leader.com](mailto:rcopley@herald-leader.com)

Lexington artist Adalin Wichman, whose achievements include designing the National Thoroughbred Racing Association's Eclipse Award and the Foucault pendulum clock at the Central Library, died Sunday at her home after a brief illness. She was 91.

Mrs. Wichman created works that are held in the collection of Queen Elizabeth II and the Kentucky Derby Museum, and she had held posts including advertising director for Keeneland from 1969 to 1989.



The Eclipse Award designed by Kentucky Chapter member Adalin Wichman.

"Adalin's incomparable talent was only surpassed by her inimitable personality," James E. Bassett III, former Keeneland president and chairman of the board and chairman emeritus, said in a statement. "She truly enhanced the public perception of Keeneland. She was a very, very special person."

Lori Meadows, executive director of the Kentucky Arts Council, put Mrs. Wichman in a category with deceased Kentucky artists and arts advocates including Lucille Caudill Little, Gloria Singletary and Marilyn Moosnick.





Adalin Wichman was known for her elegance.

"She's part of this group we've lost ... who helped build the arts in Kentucky, and Lexington, in particular," Meadows said. "She wasn't just an artist, but she was a benefactor and volunteered."

According to several accounts, the Paris native and University of Kentucky honors graduate's art career started by happenstance. She was dining with a friend at the Lafayette Hotel in Lexington in 1952 when the owner came over and complained that he had just lost his fashion illustrator and needed a new one.

"My friend said: 'Sorry, I'm moving to Texas — but Adalin can do it,'" Mrs. Wichman told the Herald-

Leader in 2002. "And that's how I started."

Mrs. Wichman's career was marked by that kind of can-do spirit.

In a Kentucky Arts Council video made in 2011, when she won the Milner Award, the top prize in the statewide Governor's Awards in the Arts, she stated her philosophy: "Always say yes and then try to work out the details later."

"She talked like, 'Oh, I don't think I can do it,' and then she would, and it was wonderful," said Gail Kennedy, retiring director of the Lucille Little Fine Arts Library at the University of Kentucky.

Jim Williams, Keeneland's public relations director for 1971 to 2009, worked closely with Mrs. Wichman.

"Adalin had a personal elegance that was reflected in her work for Keeneland and the sculpting of the Eclipse Award," he said. "That elegance will forever leave a mark on Keeneland and the Thoroughbred industry."

"She had a real hand in making sure the arts were incorporated into Keeneland," Meadows said.

Mrs. Wichman created two works for the 2000 Horse Mania public art display: Lexington Thunder, in which she transformed the horse statue into a buffalo with her signature patina for Buffalo Trace Distillery; and Impressionist, which had a rough ride while standing at Keeneland's entrance.



First, the horse was stolen in September. Mrs. Wichman, known for her wit, told the Herald-Leader: "It's sort of a compliment, isn't it? To have my horse be the first one stolen."

The horse was returned 24 hours later, but that October, it was struck by a car and had to be re-created.

"On the most desperate days at Keeneland, she came into the office with a smile on her face like it was the best day of her life," Williams said of Mrs. Wichman's reputation for taking adversity in stride.

Much of Mrs. Wichman's work was oriented toward Thoroughbred racing, but she worked on other subjects, particularly after leaving Keeneland. Among them were a two-sided bust of the late historian Thomas D. Clarke for the Lexington History Museum; a painting of the late philanthropist Lucille Caudill Little, displayed in the University of Kentucky's Little Fine Arts Library; and the Foucault pendulum clock that remains a centerpiece of the Lexington Public Library downtown.

Mrs. Wichman and Little "both had that spirit, that spark, that creativity, and a sense of really wanting to give back to the community," Kennedy said in the Governor's Awards video.

Mrs. Wichman was married to architect William Wichman, who died in 2000. She is survived by two daughters, Alison Wichman of Potomac, Md., and Adrian Wichman of Lexington, and a sister.

Contributions are suggested to the Adalin Wichman Fund, in care of the Lexington Public Library Foundation Inc., 140 East Main Street, Lexington, Ky. 40507-1318. The fund is set up to support art exhibition and education in Lexington.

See you in Pittsburgh!

Catriona

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catriona".

Catriona Tudor Erler  
NSAL National President