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THE CREATIVE PULSE

VOL. 1 / 2026

Spotlight On

As we enter a new year, we are resolved to expand the reach of the Arts Community in Monson. We are only as strong as our supporters. We hope you will join us.

Every issue of The Creative Pulse shines a spotlight on a specific individual, group or event that we believe enriches our community. We encourage your suggestions.



The Craft Fair Was MONSTER!!

The successful 46th Annual Monson Arts Council Craft Fair on November 29 -30 featured 65 Vendors who reported that it was the “best craft fair year ever”! Doves of spirited customers flocked into downtown Monson to do their Holiday shopping in the four craft fair buildings: House of Art, Memorial Hall, Methodist Church, Unitarian Universalist Church. It was a bustling weekend for town businesses as well as Craft Fair artisans who offered a wide variety of unique hand-made crafts; many of whom sold most of their inventory by the end of Saturday and had to replenish their crafts for Sunday.



On Saturday afternoon, the talented Jordyn Doyle led the Monson Community Carol Sing that preceded Santa’s arrival and children of all ages enjoyed refreshments at the temporary Memorial Hall Fire Station. We wish to especially thank Jordyn and her family for their gracious sounds of Christmas.

The Monson Arts Council wishes to thank all the talented vendors for their participation, cooperation and attractive displays of their craftsmanship. We are deeply grateful for the record attendance that helped make this year’s event outstanding and reaffirmed its place as a beloved town tradition kicking off the holiday season. We would like to especially thank our hardworking committee members and volunteers who made it all possible.

MAC Offers Handy Membership Bags.

Be Sure to Sign Up Today! Quantities Limited

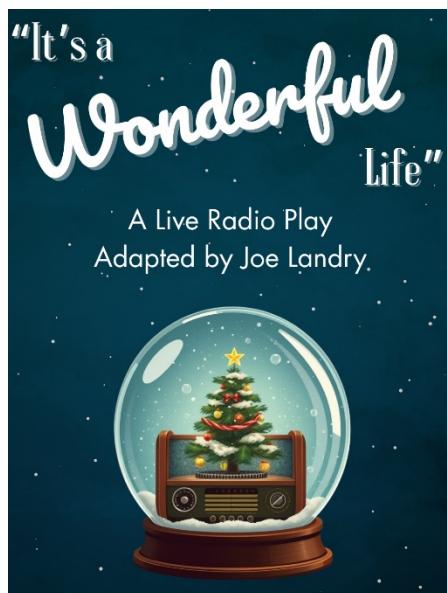


We, as members of MAC, actively collaborate with artists, performers, and cultural organizations. Whether it's through immersive theater productions, captivating musical performances, or curated exhibitions of fine art, we aim to inspire audiences and encourage meaningful engagement. We have a place for you!



We're offering, with a full year \$25.00 Family membership fee, a beautiful canvas shoulder bag with the MAC logo and Dragon on board! And since we're known to be artsy (!) it's available for colorization! All you have to do is click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to become a family member. Do not hesitate! MAC Dragon Bags are in limited supply and once they are gone, they're gone.

MAC Theater Group Spreads Holiday Cheer with "It's A Wonderful Life – the Radio Play"



The MAC Players returned to live theatrical production with "It's a Wonderful Life: The Live Radio Play". The production, staged Friday and Saturday evenings, treated audiences to a nostalgic yet inventive reimaging of the beloved holiday classic through the lens of radio's golden age. The live radio play format placed performers at microphones on stage, recreating the sound-driven radio storytelling that was once a mainstay of American entertainment. Actors voice multiple characters while

Sound Effect artists produce sound effects in real time, allowing audiences to watch not only the narrative unfold, but also the creative process behind the scenes.



(Photo by Cleo Esposito)

Arts Council Car Art Show was a Smashing Success

The Monson Museum of Art held a very special exhibition of automobile-related art at the House of Art on September 27th and 28th. "Car Art" featured a variety of paintings, prints, sculptures and even car parts as works of art. Our concept was based on the idea that we spend so much of our lives in our cars – and for many of us, they become more than just transportation. They carry our memories, our personalities, and sometimes even our quirks. The exhibition displayed the unusual, the spontaneous, and the imaginative. Many museum goers came to see this creative take on car culture on both days.



Featured artists included Fran Gianfriddo, John Collins, Jeff Blazejovsky, Kaia Ortiz, and others. The museum organizers were so impressed with one of the sculptures that they bought it to be part of the museum's permanent collection. That piece is called "Rotor Man" by artists Ryan Jankaitis and Shawn Moyer, and will soon be on regular display near "Pete's Dragon" in the front yard of the House of Art. The Monson Arts Council is very grateful for

the support of this show by our sponsors, Harvey Auto, LLC of Monson and Steer Rite Tire & Alignment of Palmer. Please take the time to let them know that you appreciate their support of the arts.



Fall Members Show Exceeds Expectations

The Monson Fall Members Show exceeded all expectations with over 40 artists exhibiting their works. It was held over the weekend of November 8 & 9. The crowds were steady and were treated to a wide variety of artwork that ranged from portraiture to sculpture to abstract to works on paper.



Christmas Display Award Winner

MAC volunteers visited all town participants in this year's Annual Holiday Decorating Contest. It was our task to choose the "Most Artistic Presentation". It was difficult with so many well-thought-out, quality holiday displays. However, we finally narrowed it down to 38 Circle Drive. As you can see, they went all out in their presentation.



MAC Sponsors Hole #2 at Monson Disc Golf Course

The Monson Arts Council, in the spirit of collaborating with the Town of Monson, reached out to Monson Parks and Recreation to fund one of the Holes at the popular Disc Golf course in town. On hole #2 we proudly display the MAC Dragon for all to see.



MAC presents Monson Savings Bank with Plaque of Their Founder



In honor of the 150th anniversary of Monson Savings Bank, the Monson Arts Council has created a plaque to accompany the portrait of the bank's first president. On Thursday, December 17th of this year artist David Dupuis presented the plaque to Monson Savings' present president, Dan Moriarty. The plaque replaces a sheet of paper that, to members of the Council, seemed inappropriate to identify the distinguished portrait. Mr. Dupuis had created the oil painting of Charles H. Merrick based on an old sepia-toned photograph. His talent for portraiture and colorization is

demonstrated in his 21st century transformation from a small 19th century image.

The plaque is inscribed:

*1st President
MONSON SAVINGS BANK
CHARLES H. MERRICK
Donated on behalf of the Monson Arts Council
by artist, David Dupuis,
in Celebration of the Bank's 150th Anniversary
and its continued support of the Arts Council.*

MAC Develops Traveling Displays to Several Local Banks



The Monson Arts Council has been hitting the road this fall. As part of our membership drive, we have been setting up displays in many of the Monson Savings Banks foyers. The response has been significant. We intend to continue the effort into 2026.

Upcoming Events

Watercolor Workshop with Cathy Guidetti - January 10 @ 12 - 4pm. Cost \$20.00 Sold Out

Cathy will teach participants to design and paint greeting cards with the aim of accomplishing 3 cards. All materials are provided. (You may bring your own if preferred). This watercolor class for all skill levels is to be held at the House of Art.

Watercolor Workshop with Joe Burger - March 28 @ 9am – 2 pm Cost \$20.00

This will be a one-day 6-hour watercolor workshop. This workshop is aimed at those with previous experience in watercolor. Register early! Don't get shut out. Registration will be posted on the Monson Arts Council website soon.

"Come Sketch with me" - \$120.00 per person for the 6 week course

a six-week class to be held once a week on a weeknight during April. All skill levels will be welcome. Classes will begin in April. Watch our website for more information and to register.

Mass Cultural Council Funding for local cultural projects. Individuals, and groups

Applications Open Now through Mid-October 2026

Are you a local artist, musician, storyteller or group looking to promote the arts in Monson. Your Local Cultural Councils (LCC), led by municipally appointed volunteers administers an annual grant program to, Individuals, and groups and organizations.

Spring Art Exhibit and Sale

Monson Arts Council 32nd Annual Juried Spring Art Exhibition & Sale

Over \$4500 in Prizes

\$1000 Best of Show

\$2400 in Prizes in 4 Categories

This year's show will be at The House of Art and 170F Main Street.

There is no deadline for entry yet. The Call for Entry will be going out in late January.

Weekends April 11 & 12, 18 & 19 and 25 & 26

The Monson Arts Council – Join Us

| MAC Board Members | | Art Shows Committee | Theater Committee | Craft Fair Committee |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| President | Alan Morin | Susan James | Amy Lake | Wendy Murakami |
| Vice President | Wendy Murakami | Jessica Lister | Freya Sprous | Cindy Colburn |
| Treasurer | Bob Wilson | Emma Fisher | Tony Esposito | Betsy Rutter |
| Secretary | Cindy Colburn | Paul Kerness | Sarah Thomas | Sarah Brown |
| Board Member | Sharon Coles | Alan Morin | Reed Coles | Chase Barnett |
| Board Member | Paul Kerness | Reed Coles | Sharon Coles | Larry Tuttle |
| Board Member | Reed Coles | Sharon Coles | Bob Wilson | Maddy Webber |
| Board Member | Maddy Webber | David Dupuis | | MaryAnn Fabrycki |
| Board Member | Shelley Greene | | | |

A Personal Remembrance of

Peter MacDowell Barnett

by Reed Coles

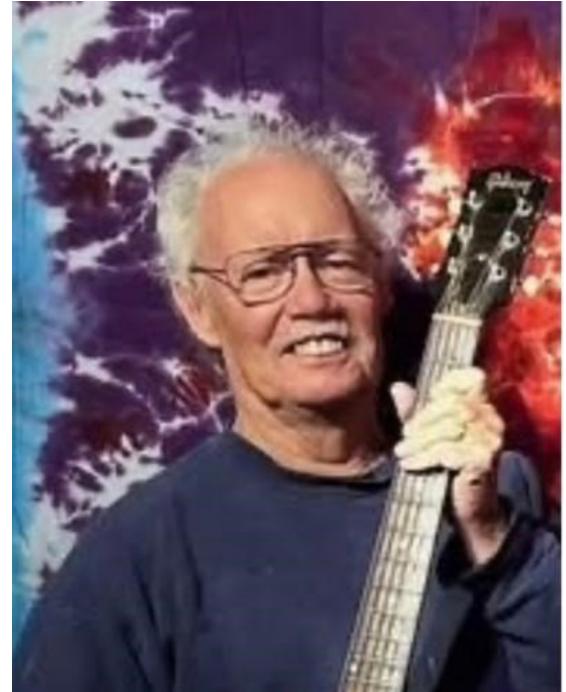
“He was a friend of mine”.

It would be hard to imagine a gentler, more caring, creative, artistic community minded gentleman.

Peter began his professional career after earning his Ph.D. in Art History from Harvard University. He was a professor at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, and Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, where he inspired his students with his passion for art and art history. Later in his career, he utilized his analytical skills as a systems analyst with MassMutual Life Insurance Company.

I’m not sure if I knew Peter prior to making a phone call one night looking for some potential members to volunteer or join the Monson Arts Council board but luckily for me Barnett was as close to the beginning of the alphabet as you could get. The first phone call I made was to Mr. Peter Barnett. I got him on the phone and asked if he’d care too “join the club” and he immediately said yes, and that he would be at the next meeting. Well, it wasn’t long before he sat in the Presidents seat and guided the MAC ship for about 10 years. I took on role as V.P under him and was so happy to do so, he didn’t leave me much to do. He just left me to my own creativity. So often when something needed to be done either artistically or energetically, Peter would jump right in, and have it done almost before I could imagine it.

We started an organization called Monson Rocks. Peter came up with an idea to solicit artists to paint 4 ‘x 4’ artwork of their “Impressions of Monson” these adorned a chain-link fence surrounding the new town offices, replacing the old facility destroyed by the 2011 tornado. He had participated in a similar project at the Indian Orchard Mills. Monson Rocks provided 4 x 4 sheets of aluminum and gave the Artists four colors of house paint that they could mix any way they wanted and apply to the aluminum. Their artwork accompanied a 4’ x 8’ aluminum sheet depicting our logo of “Monson Rocks” that Peter created. Those involved created 30 works of art including paintings and sculptures, which were then donated by the artists and supported by the recognized construction related companies. We held a gala unveiling inviting state and local officials, musicians, towns people and of course the artists and sponsors. Music was played throughout the town accompanied by Monson Rocks Cookies.



Our next venture was an unusual theatrical experiment. We acquired a script and produced *The Forest of Mystery*, a nighttime outdoor performance unfolding across twelve staged locations along a forest hiking trail.

Peter, being a lover of all art and the woods, he took on this project with his usual passion and ambition. Working with the scenes, prepping the trails, setting the stage(s) and so much of the underlying legwork that goes into putting on a presentation for the public. Another complete success. These presentations continued for about ten years, and Peter kept wth the program until its recent demise.

He and I played the two grandfathers in “Willie Wonka”, he George and me Joe, for Green Room Productions on the big stage at the Academy of Music in Northampton - more great bonding for us. This was also another organization that he headed up as president for a number in years.

Peter frequented the open mic scene especially in Easthampton at Luthiers (“Best Damn Open Mic in the Valley ”). We went together, a multitude of times, and experienced the raw musical talent of weekly performances by like-minded musicians. Peter played his Gibson guitar that he had from early childhood.

If all this isn’t enough passion, Peter was a prolific painter of all types of real-life scenes. He was a lover of landscapes, rocks and clouds, and portraits. So much it’s almost impossible to comprehend. In Peter’s last couple of years living in Monson, he would paint anyone’s dog or pet, or heaven only knows what else, for no fee. He made fine frames with beautiful complex designs of antique wood.

Whenever I needed a sign or had an idea to promote the arts council, he’d have it done before you could blink.

He was the most amazing gentleman. About a year and a half ago Peter moved out of Monson to Ohio to be with Chase his wife and her family. He was there exactly a year when he passed. What a great loss to the world of art. No, I’d say the world.

I attended Peter’s celebration of life in North Adams and was just totally taken by the beautiful remarks of love for him by his family and friends. Just a tremendous man embedded in the arts.

He’s Missed!