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APRIL IS ALL ABOUT ART

An
Interview with
**ANDRE
RIEU**

We've Profiled
More Than **25**
Local Artists

Arts in Schools
at Risk?

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From the Publisher's Pen



Malcolm Ballinger

This month we are focusing on the arts in Pensacola. There is a thriving arts community in Escambia County, so many talented people in the visual and performing arts live here. As treasurer of the Pensacola Opera, I understand first-hand the challenges of "keeping the books balanced." Whatever your passion in the arts, please take every opportunity to support that organization, be it financially or with volunteer help. A thriving arts community is one of the most important ingredients in the growth and progress of Pensacola in the coming years. I hope you will all help. Ballinger Publishing will.

One way Glen and I will be helping is by attending the Andre Rieu concert at the Civic Center presented by WSRE on April 21st. I can't remember looking forward so much to a concert in a long time. It promises to be a glittering night — if you haven't got your tickets yet, you will miss out on a great night of music.

In Coastal Tidbits, there is an update on "John Lennon's" Rolls Royce, which gives me the opportunity to tell my John Lennon story. Glen and I were at Heathrow Airport in London in the early 70's to meet some friends flying in from Canada. Waiting at the exit from customs, I recognized John Lennon with Yoko waiting patiently for someone to clear customs. (It turned out to be Yoko's daughter). I was so surprised; I don't remember what I said, probably something pretty dumb, but John nodded to me and cracked a slight smile. Well, that's my brush with greatness.

I have missed the Rolls as I drive to and from the office each day, good to hear it will be back in place soon, restored with a new coat of paint. It has become a Pensacola landmark. Many thanks to Jim Reeves for his devotion to that old Rolls and for undertaking the restoration. May "John Lennon's" Rolls Royce be on Bayfront Parkway for many, many years to come.



Malcolm

Hi Shannon:

I picked up a few copies of the Dec/Jan issue of *Pensacola Magazine* on Tuesday and saw the "Duty" story layout for the first time. Only one word can describe how I felt when I saw it: AWESOME! The wife says the same thing.

It gave me a chill to see how realistically the photo enhanced the main idea of the story, that of the soldier looking at the woman with the reflected light of the woman's gaze back on him. It was exactly as I envisioned it to be when I wrote it.

Thank you and a big ATTA GIRL to you and your crew for your outstanding artistic talents.

I hope you had a Merry Christmas and will have a prosperous New Year.

Nelson O. Ottenhausen
Local Author

**Editor's Note: Nelson, I'm glad you loved Jen Ralston's photo of the soldier. Readers, you can read more of Nelson's work in Pensacola Magazine Weddings 2006. We reprinted his poem "Love" in it.*



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MALCOLM AND GLENYS BALLINGER

PUBLISHER

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EDITOR/GRAPHIC DESIGN

SHANNON LORD

ART DIRECTOR

RITA LAYMON

GRAPHICS

MAITE GEORGE

ASSISTANT EDITOR

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ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

EMILY COWAN • ANDY BALLINGER
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MARKETING COORDINATOR

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OLIVIA BALLINGER

INTERNS

LINDSAY McMULLEN • RENEE CHRISTIE
MATTHEW BENDELL

CONTRIBUTORS

TARIS SAVELL • GLENYS BALLINGER
DONNA FRECKMANN • JOHN MORRIS
DANIEL J. GLENDENING
KAY K. MITCHELL • SHERRY SAPP
ANDY METZGER

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EDITORIAL OFFICES

41 NORTH JEFFERSON STREET
SUITE 11

PENSACOLA, FL 32501

850/433-1166 • Fax 850/435-9174

shannon@ballingerpublishing.com

For subscriptions, back issues or circulation:

850-433-1166 ext. 25 or email
info@ballingerpublishing.com

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With all the hype surrounding Dan Brown's, *The Da Vinci Code* — the lawsuits, the movie release, the entertainment show buzz and so forth — it may be time to try something new. If you are looking for an art history novel, then Ross King is the author to check out. King, born and raised in Canada, moved to Oxford, England, in the early 1990s and has lived there ever since. He has an extensive knowledge of history, particularly art history, and is deft in the craft of combining the two. He earned a Ph.D. in English literature and holds a research position with the University of London. In 2002, his first two books were published in the United States: *Domino* and *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*. Most recently *The Judgment of Paris* was released and has been steadily climbing the bestseller lists in The United States and abroad.

Domino details the life of George Cautley as he lived in London in the 1770s. Dealing with "High Society London," he meets Lady Beaclair at a society ball and later paints her portrait. Meanwhile she tells him the 50-year-old story of Tristano, an opera singer in Handel's opera company. Cautley also meets the great painter of that time, Sir Endymion Starker, and his mistress, Eleanora, who also has a story to tell. With the lifelines of all the main characters woven together, this book is excellently written with a great sense of history

and a good sense of humor as well.

Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling tells a story that many have heard: the painting of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. The project was commissioned by Pope Julius II in 1508 and took over four years to complete. Although he



had unveiled his masterpiece, the sculpture of David, at the young age of 29, Michelangelo had no significant experience as a painter. In this masterfully written book, the life of Michelangelo is detailed throughout the course of his work on the Sistine Chapel, including his drawings and sketches that go with the final masterpiece. This book also

deals with the personal obstacles that Michelangelo dealt with as he worked on the ceiling: his health, domestic life, and finances all suffered throughout this period of his life. King's knowledge of history and art really shine through in this book with great detail and connection between all aspects of the story. Best of all, it's a great read.

One of King's newest novels, just released in January, is titled *The Judgment of Paris*. It deals with Impressionism and art in Europe in the 1800s. While the Civil War was taking place in America, a revolutionary art movement was taking place in France. The story focuses on the time period between two influential art movements in the mid 1800s and provides a look in to the lives of two artists of that time with opposing tastes, Ernest Meissonier and Edouard Manet. Again, with King's bank of knowledge on the topics highlighted, *The Judgment of Paris* provides insight into the artist's minds and the cultural changes taking place in Europe at that time.

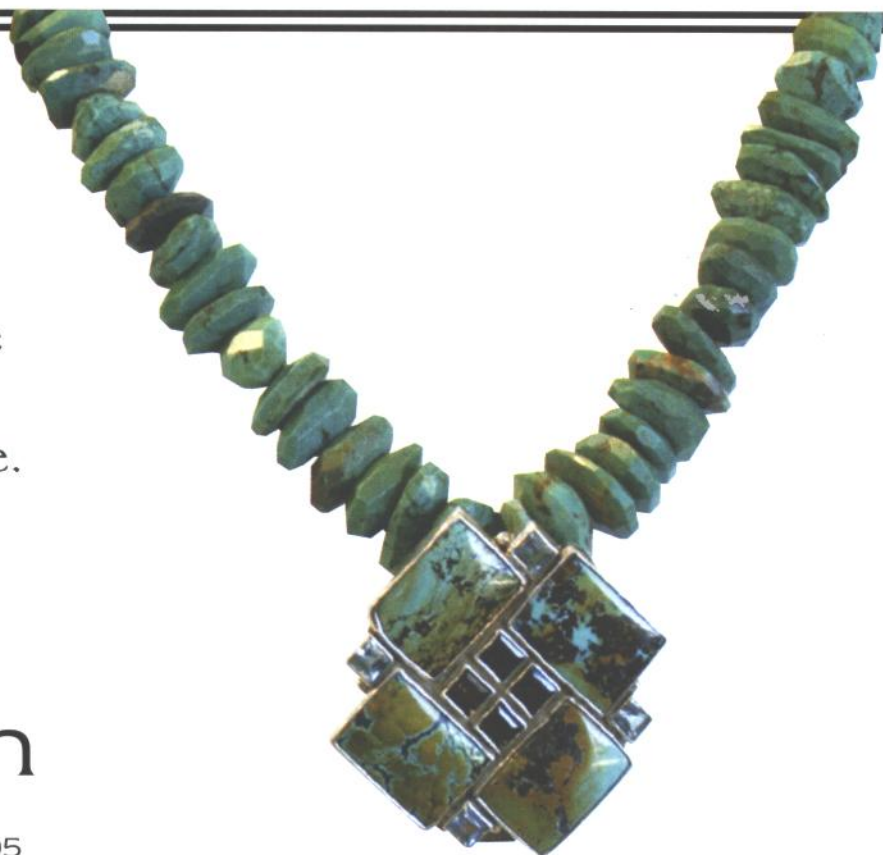
Now is the perfect time to make those spring and summer reading selections. With the weather warming up, head out to your local bookstore or library, choose a book and delve in. For you art lovers, we at *Pensacola Magazine* know Ross King will satisfy your reading appetite. **PM**

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The Arts Council of Northwest Florida

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By Matt Bendell

Pensacola, with a significantly large assortment of artistic and cultural events, offers something enriching for everyone. Whether it's a stunning performance by the Northwest Florida Ballet, an aria at the Pensacola Opera, a concert with the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra or another artistic venue, Pensacola and Northwest Florida has a variety of culture to experience.

For over 35 years, the Arts Council of Northwest Florida has served the arts community in the region, providing services for the various art groups by raising funds and advocating services. It is the mission of the Arts Council of Northwest Florida to create a premiere arts community in the Pensacola Bay Area.

According to Paul Berg, executive director of the Arts Council, the council has two main objectives. "Our first objective is to service and advocate for the arts for the community," Berg said. "Secondly, we raise funds to redistribute to area arts organizations in the community." Berg said that the Arts Council does not serve only Pensacola proper, but all of Escambia County. Established in 1969, the Arts Council originally served all of the Florida Panhandle. "Over time it just got to be too large of a region to cover for just one entity that had three employees," said Berg. "To better serve the region, other arts councils and other arts

alliances popped up along the Panhandle to serve their specific area."

"The Art Council of Northwest Florida has just two fulltime people," said Berg. "Heather Holloway, who is the business director, and myself. Beyond that we have a board of directors as well."

Berg said that the Arts Council serves three primary constituencies in the community. First, there are the local arts organizations, such as the Pensacola Museum of Art, Pensacola Little Theatre, Children's Chorus and the Fiesta Barbershop Chorus. The Arts Council also serves individual artists, and it has over 180 member artists that benefit through a variety of activities that it provides. Lastly, the council serves the general community, making sure that it can create and assist the arts community in awareness and making sure that everyone knows what a vibrant art community exists here in Pensacola.

The Arts Council of Northwest Florida has an amazing influence on the people and culture in the area. "I think the biggest thing that Pensacola and Escambia County need to become aware of is how much the arts and culture affect the quality of life for them," said Berg. "Arts and culture opportunities play a very significant role in that aspect. It's important, when trying to attract new businesses into the area. It affects

the local economy. One of the main things that businesses look for when they relocate is the quality of life for their future employees, is it somewhere that their employees will enjoy living in and so forth."

The Arts Council has been through some changes over the past months, the biggest of which is adding Berg to their staff. Before coming to Pensacola, Berg was the managing director for the Illinois Shakespeare Festival. After that he went on to become the executive director of a children's theater in Detroit. "I've been involved in the arts since I was in grade school," said Berg. "Whether it was on stage, with music or as an artist, my interests have not changed."

The Arts Council has a number of events that they sponsor throughout the year. "We do Gallery Night several times a year with a goal to display artists and to get people in to see different types and styles of various artists' work," said Berg. "This past year, we began a state of the arts luncheon: Secretary of the State Glenda Hood came in and spoke. It was a huge success." The Arts Council is sponsoring an art fair coming up at the end of April. "The purpose of that is to highlight local artists," said Berg. "One of our board members, Allan Benton, is the chair of that event, and it's in its third year now and is continuing to improve and get larger each year." **PM**

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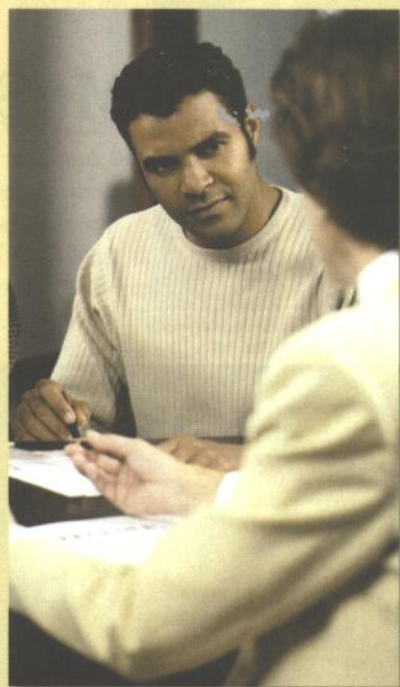


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Photos shot on location at Ferdinand Plaza

Photo by Shannon Lord

The Shakers

By Matt Bendell

The artists in our community shake things up: Ramona Hicks' The Laramie Project made us think about prejudice; Matt Fossa's work on A Gershwin Valentine put a smile on our faces; Amy Frost's performance in Firebird awed us, and Morris Eaddy's paintings always have us taking another glance.

Pensacola Magazine met with these to better understand how and why they choose to shake up the local cultural scene with their talents.

	Pensacola Symphony Orchestra oboist Matt Fossa	Pensacola Little Theatre actor/director Ramona Hicks	Quayside Art Gallery painter Morris Eaddy	Northwest Florida Ballet dancer Amy Frost
PM: When did you first become interested in the Arts?	I'd say that I've been interested in the arts since I started playing in my middle school's band program. I became a "really serious" musician during my sophomore year in high school.	I think I've always been interested in the arts. I have written poetry, and music has always been around me. With my vivid imagination, it was a short step to theatre.	I guess since I was a kid, I used to paint and draw as a child, but I never had any formal lessons.	I became interested in the arts at a very young age and I started dancing at age five.
PM: What motivated you to pursue your profession?	The fact that I love playing the oboe more than anything else in the world. I'd thought about becoming an aerospace engineer, but I just didn't like the math courses that I had to take.	I cannot imagine living without Theatre. It gives meaning to my life.	Well, I just love color. I thought if I could ever get to the point that I could paint and give it to someone I cared about and they would want to have it, then I would have arrived.	The need to define myself as an artist/dancer motivated me to pursue my profession. I just had to dance.
PM: Who is your main influence?	Izotov for me is an especially important person. Aside from him, hearing the fantastic musicianship of my fellow Symphony colleagues keeps me motivated to continue practicing.	My mother. She gave me the love of art and the support and confidence I needed to pursue it.	I'd say Vermeer, and really Joyce Bennick and Nina Fritz	Some of my influences are music, choreography, other artists, movement, the audience when I'm on stage, and students when I'm teaching.
PM: What are your future goals?	To continue to improve my oboe playing, perhaps enough to play in one of the major city symphonies. Also to compose more music and get it performed.	I want to be involved with plays that are relevant and teach tolerance. I also enjoy promoting new playwrights and their work. I'm not above doing shows just for fun, either.	I want to become a fantastic artist; I want to continue developing until the day I die.	My future goals are to continue living & sharing dance as well as broaden my artistic experiences in dance and other arts.
PM: Would you change anything if you could?	Everything that happened, good or bad, brought me to this place where I'm playing beautiful music, working with terrific people, and living in a pleasant atmosphere.	I just wish I could do more to use theatre as a method of touching people.	I would have started earlier, much earlier.	If I could change anything, I would like to see more support for the arts.
PM: Where do you see yourself in 10 years?	Hopefully, ten years from now I'll be sitting in the principal oboe chair in a larger orchestra. If that doesn't happen, okay. Pensacola's a great place with an expanding arts community.	If I'm very lucky, I'll still be hip deep in the theatre scene of 2016!	I see myself continuing all that I am now involved in: painting, hopefully getting accepted into a few more galleries and giving gifts of paintings.	In ten years I imagine I'll probably be in a dance studio somewhere. PM