

## **New art publication debuts in Martinsburg**

*by Maggie Wolff Peterson*

Right now, about half the funding it takes to publish “The Main Artery” comes out of David Heatwole’s pocket. Advertising in the 32-page tabloid brings in enough for him to pay his writers. But the editors, designers, photographers and illustrators are, so far, working for the love of the product.

As Heatwole imagines it, the six-times-yearly arts publication is intended to “unite communities behind an artistic vision.” Heatwole wants to “elevate the artist in society,” as well as use art to do good.

He describes an imaginary project: across an empty field, a piece of visual art is magnified and executed in “acres and acres of canned food,” that later could be donated to a local food bank. A documentary film of the project could be made, then shown as a fundraiser.

A project like this would involve artists, landholders, bankers and local legislators. “Each project is like a corporate business venture,” Heatwole said.

Heatwole is interested in community art, even on a small scale. A recent newspaper piece involved an elderly woman and her yard art. “Every season, she has something crazy out there, just amazing yard art,” Heatwole said.

Heatwole began the newspaper less than a year ago, as an outgrowth of a newsletter he was producing for the arts community. The newsletter was undertaken as the result of a previous publication, the *Loudoun Arts Journal*, that dissolved during disputes between Heatwole and two partners.

“There was a split between the two main editors, so after the second issue, we just folded,” he said.

But true to his mission, Heatwole kept on. The newsletter was produced for two years and sent to patrons of the arts. Today each press run of 5,000 copies of *The Main Artery* is distributed free at businesses and visitor centers in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, a reflection of its subtitle: *The Journal for Creativity and Fine Art for the Quad-State Region*.

The newspaper is printed at the *Martinsburg Journal*, which initially inserted 23,000 copies in the daily newspaper. That arrangement lasted for one issue, and nearly collapsed beforehand.

“It became a conflict of interest for the *Journal* three days before they were to distribute it, because we had advertising,” Heatwole said.

In the December-January issue, advertising for art by David Heatwole shares space with ads for a Martinsburg attorney, a counseling service, the Old Opera House theater in Charles Town, a handful of specialty shops and a residential water treatment company.

Additionally, Heatwole advertises a global telephone calling card company he represents, as well as the ERA realty company with which he is an agent.

Editorial content includes stories on art in public schools, state funding for the arts, the Ice House gallery in Berkeley Springs, scarecrows as community art in Waynesboro, a Civil War general's art, photography in Hagerstown, and music on the West Virginia Panhandle. To find writers, Heatwole held a contest.

At a Daily Grind coffeeshop in Martinsburg, Heatwole mounted some of his art, then invited would-be newspaper contributors to write about it. "I had cash prizes, and there was the possibility of them being published," he said.

The contest produced six of the 12 writers now with the newspaper. "That was the start of everything," Heatwole said.

The paper's See and Do section is a calendar listing including book and writers' groups, open mic nights, lectures and children's activities, as well as the typical gallery shows, music events, theater and film schedules.

"Synergism" is the term Heatwole uses to describe his vision of the arts. More than merely representing artists, he wants to lead a movement that places creative thinkers at the forefront of society.

"I want society to recognize that creativity is what we have," he said.

In addition to fully funding production of the paper, Heatwole's immediate goals are to improve the paper and cover stock, perhaps even going glossy. He'd also like to the paper to come out monthly.

"I'd come out more than that if I had the staff for it," he said.

Heatwole's long-term goal is to expand the paper. He imagines bureaus nationwide. "We could be the arts paper for the nation," he said. "That would be an amazing feat."

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