

# first friday scranton

## A Letter from Our Board

For over 10 years, art lovers and artists have gathered downtown on the first Friday of each month, as Scranton plays host to an evening of gallery tours, exhibit openings, live music, and performance art. Since its beginnings as a monthly art walk, First Friday's goal has been to highlight the artistic and cultural talents of the Greater Scranton area. Through the cooperation of businesses and volunteers, thousands of people enjoy the local artwork with an evening of gallery tours, exhibit openings, live music, and much more! This past year can be categorized as no less than wildly successful. In 2011 more than 50 participating venues showcased powerful representations of artistic integrity, clearly identifying First Friday Scranton as an economic and cultural sensation. Building on these achievements as we move into 2012 is no easy task, but one that we will approach with as much fervor and energy as we did this past year. To our Sponsors, participating venues, artists, musicians, and the community thanks for a great year and here's to many more!

## How to Get Involved

As an artist or musician, participate.

As a venue in our footprint, host an event.

As a business or individual make a donation to support our organization.

As a member of the region come out on the First Friday of the month and enjoy all our area has to offer.

## Contact

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# The Story of First Friday Scranton

by Judith Youshock

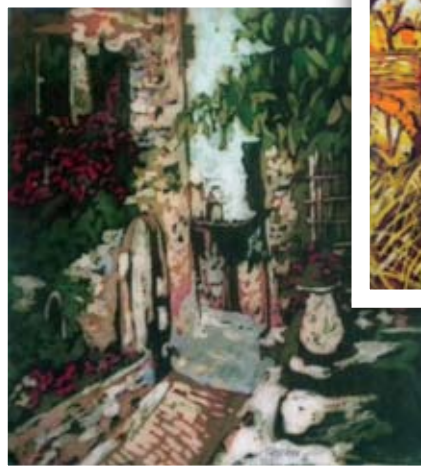
In the early 1990's I was president of Artists for Art Gallery and heard about the First Friday event in Binghamton, NY. We decided to give it a try in Scranton. After a few fun, but less than stellar attempts, it finally took off around 2001. In the beginning each venue paid \$20 for an easel, paints, brushes, a bucket and a red spotlight. The idea was to celebrate the history of Scranton's Red Light District!

Each venue lit a red light and set up their easels to create a collaborative painting during the evening. We called it "Make Art Night." It caught on pretty well.

Then in 2002 I opened ART (an art gallery) on the corner of Adams and Lackawanna Avenues. I noticed the Colts Trolley Buses were running and I thought that it would be great way to get around First Friday. It was free for the first two months and then I was able to get sponsors from banks and TV stations.

First Friday's popularity was beginning to really pick up and more people were on the streets each time. We started offering maps and my daughter, Judith Youshock would ride the Trolley, hand out maps and carry a sign into each venue letting people know the trolley was waiting.

After a few months I realized that it was time to step up our effort. I called in several people who had been First Friday supporters and we started to formalize our event. There was a strong representation and the consensus was that we needed to create a board, find a director and take us to the next level. Joan Thomas suggested Lisa Sauder and the rest is history!





## 2011: Year in Review

Scranton's culture is strongly tied to its unique artistic aspects and products. It also has a heritage deeply united with the coal and railroad industry which points to the fact that while culture is certainly a vital component it is fleeting and fragile at times and involves a complex array of communication.

From the newspaper, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or word of mouth, the first step in putting First Friday Scranton into action is informing the audience of the varied upcoming events. Many of our participants' memories are tied to interacting with our Information table found on Courthouse Square. Michael Straub points to the many opportunities he had to speak to visitors here.

"Everyone was in good spirits and happy to take a map or ask a question. One couple passed the table with a curious eye. I asked if they needed any info and the woman asked what was going on. I explained to her what First Friday Scranton was all about. She said 'Ahhh, I thought it was something like that.' She told me she recently moved back to the area from NYC and it was the first time she felt like she was back in NYC from moving to this area again. She truly meant it as a compliment that the area had an event of such a feel as what happens all the time in NY. When they heard there was music, they took a map to see where they could go to hear it."

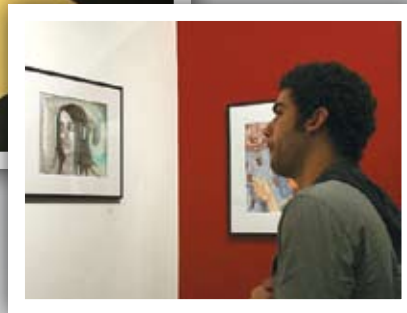
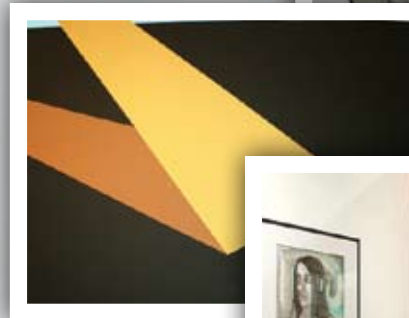
This marriage of music and art is also something we witnessed during the past year. Throughout 2011 multiple venues featured musical accompaniment alongside the visual art pieces. From jazz to folk music and classic rock to rap, the downtown Scranton area echoed indoors and outdoors with the connection between art and music. As a diverse community, Scranton welcomed this communion and saw many people taking in the visual and aural treats First Friday offered. "Some people come to enjoy the art and some people come to hear music, but inevitably they are exposed to appreciate both of the

art forms," advised First Friday Advisory member, Doug Smith.

Art's exposure and its appreciation in the downtown area offered an exciting contrast to a familiar scene. Often times a shock to the system is needed.

First Friday Scranton energized young artists and their supporters by highlighting the Connell Building. Spaces were filled with the creations of local artists, including the mixed media efforts of Johnson College students. Youth was also served in the summer

during Marley's Mission flash mob. Judith Youshock, a First Friday board member, mentioned the wonder of seeing the crowds afterwards standing in amazement and joy saying "Can you believe this is Scranton!"





## An Introduction to Our New Executive Director

First Friday Scranton would like to announce the recent induction of Jeff Boris as First Friday Executive Director. Beginning in November 2011 on an interim basis, Mr. Boris will replace Andrea Talarico and help facilitate the growth of First Friday in Scranton and promote its awareness. A native of Allentown, PA, Mr. Boris earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting from Marywood University in 2000 and a Master of Arts in Art Education from Marywood in 2005. Using his art background he hopes to bolster support in the artistic community for the monthly First Friday events while using his education background to enhance the structure and organization of the procedures by working in tandem with the First Friday Board, Advisory Council, venues, and sponsors.

### Executive Director

Jeff Boris

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BlackOut Design, Inc.

### Vice President

Reverend Peter D. D'Angio,  
St. Luke's Episcopal Church

### Treasurer

Jeff Ghergo, PNC Bank

### Secretary

Christina Hitchcock,  
The Greater Scranton  
Chamber of Commerce

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Bonita Ferguson, St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Alicia Grega, Electric City

Sharon Lynett

Bernie Maopolski, One Point

Bridgette K. McDonough

Tim McLain, Dx Dempsey

Paul Nardone, Outrageous

Thom Welby, WNEP-TV

Judith Youshock, Heart to Art

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