Welcome to the Cultural & Heritage Commission's new monthly newsletter. This is the first month the Commission is utilizing Constant Contact to distribute its newsletter. It was approximately five years ago that the Commission moved from a newspaper style printed quarterly newsletter to a monthly e-newsletter.

While the e-newsletter in .pdf format was a definite improvement over the quarterly printed version, it was not providing the connectivity the Commission truly desired.

Founded in 1995 as "Roving Software," Constant Contact provides e-marketing solutions for businesses and non-profits. Headquartered in Massachusetts and with a mission to "empower small businesses and non-profits to grow customer relationships and succeed," Constant Contact is today a publically traded business with over 250,000 customers internationally. For more information, visit www.constantcontact.com.

Commission Joins Social Media

After initially kicking and screaming the Commission finally recognized the writing on the wall and began this month to connect with its constituency through a variety of social media sites.

The Commission has maintained a website for years, www.ccculturalheritage.org, but until this month that was the only online venue to learn about all the work the Commission does on a daily basis to support cultural and heritage activities throughout the county.

"We recognized a need," said Suzanne Merighi, Chairwoman of the Commission. "We knew that we needed to lead by example and improve our connections with our audiences."

To that end, the Commission created its own Facebook page this month, and started a Twitter account (links are to the left).

"This is all new to me personally as well," said Matt Pisarski, Executive Director of the Commission. "It will probably be a little
slow going at first. I need to still figure out what deserves a ‘tweet’ versus, let's say, a mention in our monthly e-newsletter. I just don't know yet.”

Other social media venues being considered include Instagram and Pinterest. "We're learning as we go," said Ms. Merighi. "Whatever can help us reach audiences and support underserved communities will be considered. There are so many great events and activities going on in our county, any method to improve the promotion of all the good news in Cumberland County will be considered."

Grant Writing Workshop

The Commission is hosting a workshop entitled, "Grant Writing and Audience Demographics" on Thursday, August 21, 2014 at 6:00 pm in the Luciano Conference Center of Cumberland County College. The workshop will provide a step-by-step guide to the Commission's re-granting application, recently released. As well, Rachel Dukeman will present on the benchmark methods to collect audience information. How can you collect data accurately and easily?

And, more importantly, what more can you do with it besides providing it to your funders? Bring your laptop to this workshop and learn tips to collect demographic and psychographic data from your audience base. We will review ways to incentivize people to participate in surveys and how to analyze census samples to use as benchmarks for your organization. There will be no need to hire a large market research firm, because you will learn easy ways to gather data you need on budget, in-house.

Rachel Dukeman is a next generation cultural marketer and planner with substantial experience in new media. She is currently an independent consultant headquartered in Philadelphia.

To register online and for information on this and future workshops, please visit the Commission's online Calendar of Events by clicking the link at the top of this newsletter.