Career paths often take a circuitous route, subject not only to personal goals and desires but also to the powerful intrusions of life-altering events.

Such was the case with Jacqueline Sandro, Director of the Cumberland County College-sponsored Clay College in Millville and winner of this year’s Cultural & Heritage Commission Encore Award.

Sandro, director of the High Street studio that teaches young and old the art of creating ceramic art, can take credit for its success and for heading a program of bringing in well-known artists to showcase their work as well as providing an outlet for members of the community to develop their talents. She seems secure and in her element as she roams the studio in blue jeans and well-worn handyman’s apron splattered with the remnants of the latest clay project. But she wasn’t always so confident.

“I always loved drawing and painting and was first introduced to three-dimensional forms in high school,” she says. But when it came time to decide on a course of study in college, she took her father’s advice and went the “practical” route, choosing graphic design as a major.

It turned out to be a bad decision, mainly because “I wasn’t very good at it,” she says with a grin. She went to the Tyler School of Art in Elkins Park, Pa., and realized, when comparing her work with that of the other graphic arts students, that hers fell short. “The other students’ work was so detailed, so perfect,” she recalls. “Mine was much less so.”

Hard as it was to swallow, that realization led to her ultimate career decision that she might not have had the motivation to make had it not been for her father’s death when she was only 19. “He was only 56. That made me realize how short life is…and that I should do what I love to do. It was a crucial decision.”

By then she had figured out what she loved to do, and it centered on the clay studios she was always exploring. “Clay is a diverse medium, in which
In late April, the banks of the Maurice River will once again be filled with the sounds and sights of area youth expressing themselves through art. The Teen Arts Festival, held primarily along Riverfront Park in Millville, is a wonderful event in the lives of those who participate. The Cultural & Heritage Commission and the Board of Chosen Freeholders view this event and those like it as very important tools in teaching children of all ages the importance of innovation and creativity.

Artistic expression empowers children and fosters their sense of self through exploration. By discovering the creative power within themselves, they learn to view the world as a place filled with possibilities, one where they can shape and express their own vision. Through art we can deepen children’s understanding of the real world around them and forge within them the desire to make this world a better place for everyone.

Teen Arts is a great event for everyone involved. By holding the event in Millville’s successful arts district, participants can interact with artists and other professionals in a venue that specializes in artistic expression. Through the numerous workshops presented during the day, kids and young adults gain knowledge and experience in such varied topics as ceramics, oil painting, photography, improvisational acting, dance and music. In all cases, these experiences will open these young artists’ eyes to the sheer variety of artistic expression available to them.

Experiences such as the Teen Arts Festival form the fabric of our children’s lives. I am so pleased that Cumberland County can provide such positive experiences to our youth, and it is my hope that we can expand our offerings in the years to come.

Douglas Rainear
Cumberland County Freeholder Liaison

RRCA schedules Mother’s Day juried show

Just in time for Mother’s Day observances, The Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts in Millville is conducting a competition for an open juried show titled “Reflections on Motherhood,” to be held May 17 through June 9.

Any medium, two-or three-dimensional, is acceptable. Artists are required to submit with their entry a short, personal reflection on how their piece relates to motherhood.

The opening reception will be on Friday, May 18, from 6 to 9 p.m. For more information on submitting entries, call the center at (856) 327-4500 or consult the web site, www.riverfrontcenter.org.
Clay College Director pursues her own artistic muse

(Continued from page 1)

you can do a lot of different things,” she explains. “I felt it was one through which I could fulfill my artistic goals.”

She abruptly left Tyler after one year, enrolled at Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) and in 1988 earned a B.A. in art with a concentration in ceramics. That was followed by a one-year residency at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and finally (and ironically) back to Tyler for a Master’s in Fine Arts degree, in 1993.

Today her personal art work (in addition to all her duties as director of Clay College) consists mainly of sculpture depicting the human form but primarily limited to torsos with many variations. “I’m a people person,” she says. “I’m interested in relationships. My work is biographical and autobiographical. I tell a story using symbols, images and textures.” In her “Artist’s Statement,” she writes, “The torso, both male and female, serves as a visual journal for my experiences, both biological and emotional.”

For example, “Male with Bottle Head” is based on a friend whose sensitivity is represented by a piece of glass cutting into the sculpture where the heart would be, and whose hobby of collecting bottles is symbolized by a miniature bottle that sits atop the head. Her work is abstract, with meanings the viewer has to piece together from the artist’s clues.

In another, titled “Shrine,” she recalls a trip to Italy by creating a figure that suggests the arches prominent in Italian architecture and also contains a photograph, on the back, of her grandmother and two great aunts, a kind of tribute to her Italian/Catholic heritage. One of her pieces, “Perfect Woman,” is on permanent display at the Noyes Art Museum in Oceanville. She will be one of the featured artists at Gallery 50 in Bridgeton in May and will have her work displayed at the Ritz Theater in Collingswood in November.

The Berlin, N.J., native now lives in Newfield with her husband, James Greenwell, and daughter Daisy, a 12-year-old middle school student “who is also an artist—and writer,” says her doting mother. James also is a sculptor and technician for the Art Department at Rowan University.

Clay College, at 108 High Street in Millville’s Arts District, offers several programs, credit and non-credit, for adults and children. The brick-lined gallery in the entrance features a different artist each month. There is also a “retail room” showcasing the completed work of students and other contributing artists, but it will soon be converted into a student resource room, says Sandro, that will also be used for “Artist’s Spotlight” shows. Two students in the Cumberland County College ceramic certificate program, Joseph Guarrera and Joleyn Swirniuk, are working on plans for the shows, including scheduling the artists and marketing the events.

Once a Woolworth’s store, the building is 150 feet long and is equipped with 17 pottery wheels and three kilns, where the creations in clay are fired at 1900 degrees. This turns them a familiar peach color often seen in clay pots. The next step in the artistic process is to apply a glaze and then fire a second time, now to a temperature of 2200 degrees. The far wall of the work area is lined with ceramic work in varying stages of completion.

The facility employs three non-credit instructors, Kassandra Herta, Terry Plasket and Phyllis Seidner. Two adjunct credit instructors, Kristi Blank and David Gambar, are also on staff for Cumberland County College’s ceramics students, a program leading to an academic certificate.

Adult non-credit offerings include introductory and intermediate pottery, in addition to non-instructional time the student can set for him or herself. A “Summer Kids” program will begin in June and will offer an introduction to pottery and jewelry making and mosaics, using “polymer” clay to make beads and other small projects. Children from 7 to 12 years old are eligible. Session 1 begins June 18 and Session 2 on Aug. 6.

Hours at Clay College are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday from 1 to 6 p.m. For more information, call 856-765-0988 or e-mail jsandro@ccnj.edu.
About 500 Cumberland County teenagers will showcase their artistic talents at the annual Teen Arts Festival on April 20 in downtown Millville, at the Glasstown Plaza and Riverwalk Park.

All schools in the county—public, private and home schools—have been invited to participate in the annual festival centered on displaying emerging talent in the visual and performing arts, dance, creative writing, and music. All entries will be critiqued by established professionals in their fields.

In addition, several workshops are scheduled, open to all students, even those not performing or exhibiting at the festival. The workshops will cover several disciplines and will be conducted by working professionals, adding a special dimension and benefit for participants looking for feedback.

Some of the workshops include:

“Drum Circles,” conducted by Jody Janetta and Anthony Vega; “Gallery and Art Critiques” with well-known local artist Mo Pagano; “Beginning to Intermediate Watercolor” with artist Libby Rothfarb; “Oil Painting,” open to students of all levels, conducted by artist Liz Niklus; “Caricature Drawing,” for those looking to poke fun at themselves and others, with Glasstown Arts District pioneer artist Dennis Tawes; “Digital Photography” with commercial photographer Bill Horin; “Jazz/Hip Hop Workshop” with Vineland Regional Dance’s Artistic Director Kim Chapman; and “Introduction to Ceramics” at Clay College with Jacqueline Sandro.

Workshops focused on writing include “Creative Writing Feedback,” at which students, asked to bring two copies of their work, will interact with Cumberland Regional English teacher Bob Evans; “Fictional Writing in Today’s World,” in which students will create a fictional piece with Rowan University Professor Ron Block; and “Poetry,” for students who will work with poet Elinor Mattern on their free verse poems.

Students must pre-register for all exhibits and workshops. Registration forms are available at www.ccculturalheritage.org.

Festival coordinators are Carolyn Krull, Director of the Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts, Millville, and Michael Cagno, Director of the Noyes Art Museum in Oceanville. Cagno pointed out that the Cumberland County event is “the only free teen arts festival in New Jersey.”

The Festival kicks off at 8 a.m. and concludes at 2 p.m. Tents will be open for the general public to sit and observe the students’ performances.

Some participants will be selected to present their work at the state-wide Teen Arts Festival, a two-day event to take place this year on the campus of The College of New Jersey in Ewing on May 21 and 22.

In Brief...

The Vineland Public Library’s “favorite books” display in April will feature selections in observance of Autism Awareness Month. The Doris Tripp Room on the first floor will show the original art work of Jeanne Rechsteiner and Margaret Ricci.

A Ukrainian Embroidery Class is scheduled for the Down Jersey Folklife Center at Wheaton Arts. It’s a five-week class beginning April 23, with all skill levels welcome.
Bridgeton’s Gallery 50, part of Bridgeton’s downtown since 1972, is flourishing as a haven for local artists. They utilize its restored interior as an attractive venue to display their work, and it’s also a benefit for members of the community, who can enjoy the shows and even get involved in some hands-on artistic projects.

The Gallery has recently expanded its offerings to the public. In addition to featuring works of a different artist each month, the gallery recently added monthly workshops in which artists teach their craft to professionals and non-professionals alike. Completion of a workshop earns participants three state teaching credits, an additional incentive for educators.

Sharon Kiefer, president of the Gallery 50 board, explains that the facility underwent a significant renovation in 2000, closing in December and re-opening in April 2001. In addition to redesigning the interior, members “wrote new by-laws, revised the mission statement and established a new board,” she says. The result was a more artist-friendly operation that continues to thrive.

The work of Diane Spellman-Grimes, Art Department Chair at Immaculata University, is currently on display under the theme “Flowing Forms: Figurative & Nature” until March 30 with the artist’s reception on April 6 from 6 to 9 p.m. She will also present a workshop on March 29 from 6 to 9 p.m. on “Draw & Sculpting with Dance,” showing the relationship between dance and art. Participants will paint and sculpt, using a live model. In her art, Grimes combines classical and modern dance by using jazz and contemporary music for inspiration.

The April show, from April 4 to 27, will feature Karen Valente’s Early American paintings and the wood-fired pottery of John Marselis. The dual theme is “Colonial and Gallery 50’s Anniversary,” celebrating its seventh year following the renovation in 2000.

Valente’s area of study and influence is the Colonial American period. Her paintings are original adaptations of the style of 18th and 19th century limners. She uses hand made reproduction oil paints similar to the pigments used then. Her specialty is doing commissioned portraits from modern day photographs, making them look like vintage colonial paintings.

The May show will spotlight three artists: Anthony R. Thompson’s maritime paintings, Jacqueline Sandro’s pottery and Gail Ritter’s jewelry. The show title is “Of Land and Sea,” with the opening reception on May 4 from 6 to 9 p.m. In addition, Thompson will conduct a workshop on May 17 from 6 to 9 p.m. on “The World of Maritime Art” that includes a lecture and hands-on painting.

The June agenda will feature the paintings and sculptures of the Salem County Art League from May 30 to June 29 and the July theme will focus on the winners of “Petite Moments: An International Juried Miniature Art Competition.”

Preview some of Gallery 50’s distinctive art on page 8 of this newsletter.
Performing arts thrive in Cumberland County

Bay-Atlantic Symphony sets ‘Exotic’ theme for spring concert featuring piano soloist

The spring concert of the Bay-Atlantic Symphony is titled “Exotics” and will take you, say the Symphony directors, through the “deliciously accented Iberian rhythms in Falla’s ‘Nights in the Gardens of Spain’ and on a pastoral exploration of the sounds of the Transylvanian forests in Enescu’s colorful ‘Romanian Rhapsody No. 2.’”

The concert will take place on May 12 at 8 p.m. at the Cumberland County College Performing Arts Center, Vineland; and on May 13 at 4 p.m. at the Richard Stockton College Performing Arts Center, Pomona.

Pianist Adam Neiman, the featured soloist, has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the St. Louis Symphony, the Jupiter Symphony in New York and the San Juan Symphony. He won the 1996 Young Concert Artists International Auditions when he was just 17. In 1999, he was awarded both an Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Michaels Award of Young Concert Artists. That same year he was featured on a week of broadcasts as “Young Artist-in-Residence” on National Public Radio’s “Performance Today.”

The concert will end with Rimsky-Korsakov’s Arabian fairy tale “Symphony No. 2 of Atar.” Symphony organizers promise that “Latin, gypsy, middle-eastern stories, colors, sounds and perfumes will fill the air.”

Tickets at the Vineland concert are $30 for adults, $26 for seniors, $15 for students and $8 for children. Call 856-692-8499. In Pomona, tickets are $35 for adults, $30 for seniors, $25 for students and $17 for children; call 609-652-9000.

The Bay-Atlantic Symphony also will perform at the Cape May Music Festival, on May 31 with a concert titled “Water Music/Bach Stroke!”; on June 7 with “Maritime Mozart” and on June 14 with “Highlander Magic.”

For more information, see the Symphony’s web site at www.bayatlanticsymphony.org.

Pianist Adam Neiman

‘Puss in Boots,’ ‘Beauty’ at Cumberland Players

A Children’s Theatre production and a Disney-inspired musical will highlight the spring season of the Cumberland Players, whose “little” theater is at Sherman Avenue and the Boulevard in Vineland.

“Puss in Boots,” intended primarily for children but also enjoyable by adults, concerns young Christopher, deprived of his rightful inheritance, who is left nothing but a pet cat. However, “Puss” proves to be a valuable property.

Performances are set for April 20 and 27 at 7 p.m. and April 21, 28 and 29 at 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Tickets are $6.

“Beauty and the Beast,” based on the well-known Disney production, will be presented July 13, 14, 20 and 21 at 8 p.m.; July 22 at 2 p.m.; July 26, 27 and 28 at 8 p.m.

The plot revolves around a young French woman, Belle, and her father Maurice, who becomes trapped by the “Beast.” Familiar songs are “Be Our Guest” and “Beauty and the Beast.”

Tickets for “Beauty” are $13. For tickets, call (856) 692-5626.

Off Broad to present ‘Barefoot in the Park’

The spring production of the Off Broad Street Players, “Barefoot in the Park,” is a re-creation of the 1963 Tony-nominated comedy by Neil Simon about a young couple and their quirky neighbors in their small apartment village in New York’s Greenwich Village. The play was also the basis for a film of the same name starring Jane Fonda and Robert Redford.

Performances are scheduled for May 4 and 5 at 8 p.m.; May 6 at 3 p.m.; May 10 at 7:30 p.m.; May 11 and 12 at 8 p.m., and May 13 at 3 p.m.

The plot concerns a newly-married young couple living in a high rent apartment, six flights of stairs up with no furniture, a bad paint job, leaky skylights and not even enough room for a double bed. It’s a comedic view of the trials and tribulations of being young and newly married.

The Players perform at the Bridgeton High School auditorium. Its musicals are distinguished by a live, full professional orchestra.

For tickets, call (856) 451-5437. Ticket prices for “Barefoot in the Park” are $12 for adults and $10 for seniors and students.
Bay Days celebrates art, nature; adds fishing tournament

Get ready for the 15th annual Delaware Bay Days Festival, the annual event hosted by Bayshore Discovery Project in the New Jersey that celebrates the rich maritime history and natural resources of New Jersey’s bayshore region. The annual free event will take place in the fishing villages of Bivalve and Port Norris, and at East Point Lighthouse.

For the first time, the Festival will take place on the second rather than the first weekend in June—Saturday, June 9, and Sunday, June 10. The Festival features two days of family fun, including children’s crafts, games and entertainment; multi-ethnic performances; fresh seafood and many other food vendors; artisans and crafters; photo contest exhibit; poetry readings; guided river tours; deck tours onboard the historic schooner AJ Meerwald, New Jersey’s official Tall Ship; guided wetlands walks; blue crab races; oyster shucking contest; lighted boat parade; fireworks; and fun for the whole family.

New this year, Bay Days will coincide and partner with Cumberland County’s Delaware Bay Fishing Tournament. The 21st Annual Fishing Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, June 9 (weather date: Sunday). Boats check in between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. at either Port Norris Marina or the Fortescue Captain’s Association. Boats must return to their starting point by 4 p.m., and weigh-in takes place from 2 p.m. until completion.

Participants can go fishing in the morning and stop by the Festival in the afternoon. Registration fee is $100 per boat before May 1 and $125 thereafter. Limit is 150 boats. For tournament information, call 856-453-2177 or 856-455-0328.

Bay Days starts on Saturday with an old-fashioned street parade in Port Norris at 11 a.m. and ends with fireworks on the river at sundown. Festival hours on Sunday are Noon to 5 p.m. Parking is free in designated areas on Main Street (Route 553) in Port Norris and free air-conditioned shuttles carry visitors to the festival sites.

Call 856-785-2060 for more information. Visitors who have special needs and require special parking arrangements and/or wheelchair accessible seating, call 856-785-2060, extension 112, two weeks prior to the event.

Funding is made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency with the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission.

The Bayshore Discovery Project is a non-profit 501(c)(3) education organization. Its mission is to motivate people to preserve the history and the culture of New Jersey’s Bayshore Region.
More Gallery 50 art work

“Copper Sea” by Anthony Thompson

“Sunflowers” by Diane Spellman-Grimes

Photos courtesy of Gallery 50

Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission
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