



**Will Hyannis Get The Cultural District Designation It So Obviously Deserves?**

by Nicola Burnell and Melissa Hersh

If you've taken a walk along Hyannis' Main Street lately, passed the cafes and restaurants, bookstores, specialty shops and galleries, you will have felt the buzz of anticipation. This area is poised for what many local artists and residents have been working towards for years... state designation as a Cultural District.

"The Cultural District application is currently in process," explains Melissa Hersh, Barnstable's Arts and Culture Coordinator. "The application passed the Massachusetts Cultural Council's internal review, and we have a site visit scheduled for May 1."

The MCC Board will meet on May 22. Approval to change the current name from the HyArts District to the HyArts Cultural District will hopefully come through shortly after that date.



**Boats and Buoys at Hyannis Harbor**

According to Melissa, the proposed HyArts Cultural District is a concentration of cultural attractions including museums, performing arts space, studios and galleries, mixed among unique locally owned shops and restaurants along historic Hyannis Main Street and around Hyannis Harbor.



**Fruit & Flowers Baskets outside the Guyer Barn**

"The official cultural district designation will capitalize on existing cultural events and opportunities," she explains. "By all rights we already are a cultural district, but this 'official designation' is an opportunity for increased marketing opportunities and will bring more attention to the area regionally and nationally. We will be able to receive support from the MCC and its partners with this designation and eventually-funding."

The Town of Barnstable partners with many business and cultural organizations and is committed to strengthening and promoting arts and cultural activities, working with numerous arts organizations in its efforts to establish Hyannis as a regional destination for the arts.

The HyArts district is a compact, walkable area that is easily identifiable to visitors and residents and serves as a center of cultural,

artistic and economic activity.

The cultural districting of Hyannis is a lucrative proposition. "The district already attracts artists, cultural organizations and entrepreneurs of all kinds, enhancing property values and making Hyannis more attractive," Melissa enthuses.



**Walkway to Hyannis Harbor**

"Increased visitors to the area attracts more tourist dollars and tax revenue. It will create a new market of potential business in the district and new development in the area. Our current district creates a strong sense of place, but having a vibrant, colorful downtown will create a stronger community. Residents and visitors want to live, work and play here. They have a stronger sense of pride and they actively engage in the arts."

With a son who studied art at Sturgis East Charter Public School, prior to attending Massachusetts College of Art, I have to agree with Melissa's vision. The fact that Sturgis is literally across the street from artist Sarah Holl's Art Space, the Guyer Barn and the 50 Pearl Street Gallery speaks to the potential for collaboration between the Barnstable schools and businesses that already support the Arts.

My son took figure drawing classes at the Guyer Barn with Sarah Holl, along with several other teenagers. The quality of work she was able to bring out of her students was outstanding. A long-time cheerleader for the cultural districting of Main Street and Hyannis Harbor area, Sarah is thrilled to know that her dream may now become reality.

"I have always felt that Hyannis had all the elements to be a successful artist community," she says. "The harbor, the beautiful light, Main Street. I've been here for five years and always felt it would happen one day."



**Sarah Holl's Art Space**

As a working artist, Sarah looks forward to more foot traffic along Pearl Street. "This will increase visibility, bring in other artists and, of course, art collectors too."

She puts out her flag on the days that she is working in her home studio and is always happy to have people stop in to see what she is doing. "The reason I make art is for people to look at it - so I'm always happy to show it off!"

Sarah says she would like to start demonstrating, maybe one day a week, so artists can come and see what she is doing. "Come by, come visit, this is why we're here. I'm thrilled and excited for a very prosperous summer. This is what I've been hoping for all along."

We will update this page after May 22 to let you know if the application is approved. As Melissa concludes, "The district (and in general arts and culture) contributes to our local economy and quite simply, the arts improve the quality of all our lives."

**All Photographs courtesy of the Town of Barnstable**

## The Kennedy Legacy Trail

JKF and the Kennedy Family played a significant role in shaping the history of Hyannis. A walking trail within the HyArts District is a new trail set to debut this May. The cultural trail will be comprised of interpretive signs, telephone dial up information and QR codes embedded in the signs, located at significant sites.

The trail is located in the HyArts District, a walkable area downtown Main Street and harbor front, where visitors will experience a range of commercial and cultural activities.



**The Artist Shanties at Hyannis Harbor**

A variety of entertainers will perform all season long (musicians, magicians, jugglers, living statues, etc). Local artist and naturalist Mary Richmond will also offer fun art and craft activities for the entire family each Thursday afternoon (4-7PM) in July and August.

Local Science Educator, naturalist and artist Allyson Bizer Knox will provide hands on activities in art, nature and science Tuesday's in July. The shanties, which have over 40 artists participating this year, are open Weekends in May and June, seven days a week end of June through end of September.



The free summer trolley runs from Main Street to the Harbor Front every day from 11am to 9pm, all summer long!

## Sunset Celebrations at Aselton Park

The Cotuit Center for the Arts is partnering with the Town of Barnstable for fun filled evenings with kids art projects, live music, dancing, children's theater, African drumming, free admission to the Maritime Museum from 3:30PM-7:30PM on Friday, July 27 and Friday, August 3.

## Aselton Park Free Concert series

Held every Tuesday through July and August, from 6-7:30pm (sponsored by the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod and Citizen's Bank).

## Hyannis Harbor Arts Center at Guyer Barn

Located at 250 South Street, Hyannis, come to the Barn every 2nd Sunday for the Artist Salons (open mic night). Exhibits, workshops and performances are scheduled year round. The barn is open late on Thursday evenings for music.

## Meet Artists at Work

Sarah Holl's Art Space at 46 Pearl Street

Artist work studios at 50 Pearl Street

For more information about any of these events please visit [www.hyartsdistrict.com](http://www.hyartsdistrict.com)

Nicola Burnell is the Publisher and a contributing writer for this magazine. In addition to writing her own novel, she teaches novel writing classes through Nauset Community Education. As part of the Cape **Women** in the Community initiative, she also teaches a series of creativity development classes, including the Artist's Way, and has been a Reiki practitioner and Personal Empowerment workshop leader for over fifteen years.

Nicola is a member in Letters of the [National League of American Pen Women](#) and is Historian of the Cape Cod Branch.

Nicola is now offering a variety of FUN Events and Writing Retreats on Cape Cod. She will be offering Writing and Artist Retreats at [Casa della Quercia](#), an historic villa in Northern Tuscany, in the Spring of 2013.

For details about any of her Classes, Events or Workshops, email [Nicola@CapeWomenOnline.com](mailto:Nicola@CapeWomenOnline.com). You can also follow her blog "[Nic's Novel Project](#)" and on [Twitter](#).

Nicola lives in Harwich with her two sons and several pets.

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