



Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission

November 2011

Chronicle

Filmmaker creates video of East Point Artists' Day

A Philadelphia-based artist who says he has become “obsessed with documenting the cultural riches” of the area has worked his magic locally at the East Point Lighthouse Artists' Day, held in September and sponsored by the Cultural & Heritage Commission.

John Thornton, the artist and filmmaker, created a video, “2011 East Point Artists' Day,” now available on the Commission web site (cculturalheritage.org) that captures the creative spirit and fellowship shared by the artists who attended the event that day.

The lighthouse is in Heislerville at the mouth of the Maurice River that empties into the Delaware Bay. It dates back to 1849, and **David Ewan**, lighthouse keeper who is pictured in the video, explains that the Maurice River Historical Society was formed in 1971 to restore the building. It has since become a well-known and well-loved part of the Southern New Jersey rural scene. To artists, it has always been an irresistible magnet for their inspiration, as illustrated in the video.

Against the background of the Snake Brothers performing their country music, several artists are introduced, usually in front of easels as they paint or draw whatever the surroundings suggest.

For example, **Yvonne Smith's** inspiration was not the lighthouse but the water that provides its serene backdrop. **John**

Guidera, a Millville artist, tells the videographer that he enjoys the wetlands and the bay—“nothing like that is available anywhere else in New Jersey,” he comments.

Also interviewed is **Maryann Cannon**, a gallery owner from Millville who praises the Millville art community as a “nice supportive group.” One of those at East Point that day is **Dennis Tawes**, who in 2000 was the first pioneer artist to set up shop in the brand new Millville Arts District. He came from the Midwest where he specialized in creating caricatures. Now he's a full-time artist with a gallery in the “Village on High” in Millville.

Then there is **Bill Ternay**, originally

from Olivet but now from Bala Cynwyd. His main occupation is drawing courtroom scenes for the local NBC affiliate, but his first love is painting, which he says he learned from Barn Studio owner Pat Witt; and **Debbie Placko**, attending the event with her husband **Mike**, also an artist. She says painting is “a great way to relax.”

These are a few of the artists who form the narrative of the video. More of Thornton's videos can be viewed on
(Continued on next page)

About John Thornton, videographer

Thornton is a 59-year-old artist turned filmmaker who has lived in Ocean City since 2001. He earned a degree in mathematics at the University of North Carolina and then studied painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He worked as a professional artist for many years. He writes, “I switched my creative outlet and have loved making and editing my own films. I was pretty horrible at it for a long time but feel I



Thornton in a whimsical interpretation of himself as part of a classic art piece. He says, “Photoshop is the most fun you can have with a computer.”

have gotten reasonably good in the last couple years. I hope my many subscribers would agree!

“I make short movies about a variety of subjects but am particularly interested in profiling visual artists with a connection to the Philadelphia region. I have a profound respect and admiration

for people who devote their lives to creative pursuits.”

Thornton also teaches graphic design and interactive media at the Art Institute of Philadelphia.

There's something for everyone at 'Soul of the Season' in Millville Dec. 10

A great way to become immersed in the holiday season and spirit is to attend the Glasstown Arts District's 11th Annual Soul of the Season event on Saturday, December 10, from 6 till 9 p.m. It's a great evening for families, friends or sweethearts.

Tickets for the popular horse and carriage rides go on sale that evening at 5:30 p.m. at each of the "Horse Depots." One is at the corner of High and Sassafras Street (33 N. High for GPS) and the second is at the Village on High between Oak and Broad Streets (501 N. High for GPS). The tickets are timed for departure every 15 minutes and cost \$5 for adults and children 17 and under are free.

Spend your time before or after your carriage ride visiting Santa's Workshop at the Village on High. Photos with Santa will be available. Visit the 11 cottages filled with wonderful gift items for special people on your list. Also at the Village will be the **Off Broad Street Players** who will perform an original revue suitable for families and sing Victorian

Christmas carols.

Walk along High Street to visit the shops and galleries along the way. Don't forget to fill out your **Holiday**

any of the locations in the Arts District.

Don't miss the entertainment stage at the Glasstown Plaza across from the

High and Sassafras "Horse Depot."

The main entertainment will be vignettes of the Nutcracker Ballet by the **Vineland Regional Dance Company**. Other musical performances will be on tap at this location throughout the evening.

The Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts will greet you with artisan-made gifts at the annual "Artful Giving" displays through-



A youngster is shown making friends with one of the horses at last year's "Soul of the Season." Carriage rides are a popular attraction at the holiday event.

Dazzle free entry form in the 21 participating businesses. You'll be registered for free in-store prize drawings, and if your entry is selected from any of these shops, you'll be entered into the grand prize drawing for \$1,000 Shopping Spree (Downtown Dollars). Winners will be drawn on December 22.

A free trolley will be running all evening until 9:30 p.m. to take you to

out the building.

Enjoy the beautiful decorations and window displays of all the businesses and restaurants in the Arts District. You are bound to find jewelry, children's clothing, women's accessories and fashions and vintage items at many of the shops. Strolling carolers will remind you of a bygone era during this signature Glasstown Arts District evening.

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Artists' Day recorded in video

(Continued from previous page) youtube.com/RustyScupperton. While most showcase the careers of area artists, one addresses a topic in the news—"Voices of Occupy Philadelphia"—in which Thornton toured the area and recorded the comments of the demonstrators.

Of those who participated in the 11th annual East Point Artists' Day, he says, "I had a wonderful time meeting and filming the artists...these people are truly the salt of the earth, and their patient labors that day seemed to me like a kind of visual prayer."