



Black Belt Treasures
CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

2014

ANNUAL REPORT



Black Belt Treasures Cultural Art Center's Mission is to foster, develop, and promote economic development initiatives aimed at creating jobs and increasing the income of local residents through the marketing of arts, crafts, literature, food products, and other items unique to Alabama's Black Belt and to cultivate and provide arts education in the region..

Ten Year REFLECTION

Wow! Can you believe that it's been nearly ten years since Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center (BBTCAC) opened? It seems like yesterday that we listened to Lt. Governor Kay Ivey and Senator Hank Sanders give remarks and watched Kathryn Windham cut the ribbon to open Black Belt Treasures on September 30, 2005.

The past ten years have seen BBTCAC become a tourist attraction, a teaching and learning center for the arts, a business selling arts and crafts from the Black Belt, and an advocate for preserving our rich culture and history. This year on October 1st we will celebrate the ten-year anniversary with a big party but for now, allow me to reminisce a little about the incredible team that helped start BBTCAC.

The first meeting about BBTCAC was held in Camden in the early summer of 2004 with myself, Nisa Miranda (University of Alabama Center for Economic Development) and Norman Burton (Ala-Tom RC&D) agreeing to partner to get BBTCAC going. Ms. Linda Vice was hired in the fall to search the Black Belt for artists and craft persons that would work with us, and what an incredible job Linda did. In December 2004, Delia Brand was hired as Director of Black Belt Treasures and charged with getting us in operation by the fall of 2005. I always say that Delia "birthed" BBTCAC. With her organizational skills and the team assembled, we went to work. That team included Judy Martin, Sulynn Creswell, Jim and Martha Herod, Molly Gamble and an entire class of MBA students from the University of Alabama. We opened to the public on October 1, 2005 to a huge crowd of patrons and working with just 75 artists. Today we have over 450.

To say that we had smooth sailing the past ten years would not be accurate. While we have grown and matured, we have also had to fight to stay open. Our funding was completely eliminated one year, but we survived that year thanks to Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission and the money saved in our Guild account. Time and space prohibit more reflections, however; it is safe to say it's been an adventure.

So, in closing, let me invite you to join us on October 1, 2015 for a gala event that will remember and honor those who have helped BBTCAC be a resounding success for the past ten years.



John Clyde Riggs
Executive Director, Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission
BBTCAC Board of Directors



Making A DIFFERENCE

It's really hard to believe it's been ten years! How well I remember the early days of Black Belt Treasures, far before the doors ever opened. When John Clyde Riggs called to tell me about his new idea and offer me the Director's position, I'll admit to being excited but way out of my comfort zone. I'd always worked in private enterprise, and never been involved with start-up for such a different business concept. As Sulynn and I traveled many a county road to find potential artists, I recall wondering if this was really going to work out! Could we find enough artists to fill that big showroom, and would they even agree to work with us? Some of the artists were skeptical too, but thankfully they were willing to give us a try. It was hard work, but with the help of ATRC, many great partners, and the trust of the artists, we opened a wonderful new business.



I'm proud today to see how Black Belt Treasures has continued to grow and develop. Even though I moved into a different role with Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission, I'll always feel like Black Belt Treasures was my "baby".

Delia Brand
BBTCCAC Director 2004-2007



THE BLACK BELT REGION

- BBTCCAC works with the traditional Black Belt counties of Bullock, Choctaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, and Wilcox, along with Bibb, Butler, Clarke, Conecuh, Monroe, Montgomery, and Washington.
- Total population of Black Belt region: 539,492 *
- Average Black Belt Region Unemployment: 8.36% *
- Highest: Wilcox 13.5%, Clarke 10.4%, Lowndes 10.3%*
- Average Black Belt Region Population Below Poverty: 27.5% *
- Highest: Wilcox 39.2%, Sumter 38.0%, Dallas 35.5% *



BBTCCAC

- Gallery Opened October 1, 2005
- Number of BBTCCAC Artists in 2005: 75
- Number of BBTCCAC Artists in 2015: over 450
- Over \$1.1 million in sales of art has resulted in over \$760,000 being returned directly to artists since 2005.
- Annually, over 2,000 youth in grades K-12 are directly impacted by arts education classes, workshops, hands-on activities at events, and school programs through BBTCCAC.
- Approximately 14,000 people visit BBTCCAC annually
- Visitors from all 50 states and 27 foreign countries have visited BBTCCAC since 2005

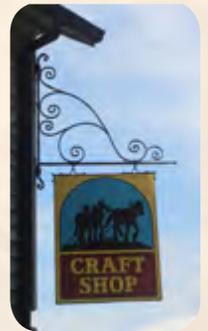
* www.quickfacts.census.gov (04/2015)



The Journey CONTINUES

Last year's newsletter theme was "Are We There Yet?" This was a most appropriate theme as many miles were spent on the road and in the air during 2013-2014. Each mile was beneficial in shaping the future of Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center (BBTCAC). Allow me to share some highlights from the journey.

First, on the itinerary was a trip to Berea, Kentucky to participate in the 2nd Cross-Regional Convening: *Wealth Creation in Rural Communities – Building Sustainable Livelihoods*. The convening provided greater understanding of the WealthWorks process, learning through interactive sessions and NETWORKING. Berea is a fine example of a tourism industry being built around arts and fine crafts. Gleaned from this trip were ideas for growing the arts economy in small towns across Alabama's Black Belt, inspiring ideas for our artists, and a desire to see the arts impact on quality of life in our rural area increase.



In early October 2013, BBTCAC was represented on an abbreviated New England Quilt Tour through Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire. BBTCAC had been approached earlier in the year by North America Tour Organization, Ltd. about marketing a quilt tour through parts of Alabama's Black Belt. Before we could say yes, a representative needed to go on one of NATO's trips to confirm that the "package" was all NATO publicized. What was learned from this trip? A quilt tour involves a variety of experiences with quilting as the central theme, and tourists will travel long distances to experience rural America's history and culture. Most importantly, this trip confirmed that Alabama's Black Belt has sites and experiences just as appealing as any found in New England – if not more!



Later in October 2013, BBTCAC received a scholarship to attend a one-day conference, *Rooting Wealth That Sticks*, sponsored by Aspen Institute and the Delta Regional Authority in Little Rock, Arkansas. This conference focused on ways non-profits and community development organizations are partnering with corporations, community foundations, and government agencies to accomplish goals in rural communities. A side visit was made to *South on Main*, a local restaurant and performance venue, to discuss the process involved in ArtPlace America grant funding. Why was this valuable? BBTCAC has previously applied for this funding and is hopeful to obtain an ArtPlace grant to positively impact Camden and other communities in the Black Belt through the arts.

"Arts promote true prosperity. The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They ennoble and inspire us—fostering creativity, goodness, and beauty. The arts help us express our values, build bridges between cultures, and bring us together regardless of ethnicity, religion, or age. When times are tough, art is salve for the ache."

~Americans for the Arts "10 Reasons to Support the Arts"

In April 2014, BBTCAC was invited to Atlanta to participate in a *Rural/Small Town Creative Placemaking: Challenges and Opportunities* roundtable discussion with other arts organizations from across the country led by Liz Crane, *Deputy Director of ArtPlace America*. Crane made a very enlightening statement during the discussion - "make places creatively instead of making creative places". The take away from this discussion? If Black Belt Treasures or other arts organizations within the Black Belt are to obtain ArtPlace funding, the ENTIRE community must be involved in "making [our] places creatively". While an arts organization can be the leader of the creativity, there MUST be community, state, and national partners involved for a placemaking project to be worthy of funding and ultimately, successful.



The first week of June 2014, an eight member team from Alabama's Black Belt began an eight day Learning Journey to Western North Carolina. Partial funding for the trip came through grants from the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and the Community Foundation of South Alabama. This journey was designed to explore the successful models of the HandMade in America region and determine how to attract learners, expand

entrepreneurship, foster business skills in artists, increase appreciation and recognition of regional and heritage arts, and to examine effective models and practices of use of space for advancing artistic development and economic growth, creative placemaking in small, rural communities, and inform future design and utilization of the BBTCAC campus and Black Belt communities. Yes - we did a LOT! The team selection was based on leadership, work experience, and commitment to the arts in the Black Belt. Chosen were: Kristin Law and myself (BBTCAC) from Wilcox County; Martha Lockett (Arts Revive) and Jo Taylor (Black Belt Community Foundation) from Dallas County; Michael Sims (artist) from Lowndes County; Susan Brown (Alabama Southern Community College) from Monroe County; Candace Johnson representing Southwest Alabama Tourism; and Judy Martin (Judson College and BBTCAC) from Perry County. HandMade in America staff guided the group



through diverse small towns where the core of community life and the economy is regional art. Melissa Levy of Yellow Wood Associates served as facilitator in her capacity as a consultant to BBTCAC for the WealthWorks planning process. The trip was the stimulus for numerous ideas and potential applications in the Black Belt region. Upon return, the team prepared a 48 page report including recommended action plans. What an inspirational experience!!!



In September, 2014, Kristin Law and I (BBTCAC), and Jo Taylor (Black Belt Community Foundation) attended *Crosscurrents: Arts and Agriculture Powering Rural Economies*, in Greensboro, North Carolina with a host of other participants from across North America. What was the common denominator? Everyone present was interested in growing the arts and economy in small, rural places. (Sound familiar?) This conference



was different from most with limited presentations but numerous interactive sessions involving the sharing of innovative ideas! BBTCAC representatives served as co-facilitators of a session entitled *Rural Ingenuity + Creativity* in which participants discussed rural and agricultural assets and building on those assets to create viable economic opportunities. Around

the table were representatives from state, regional and community arts organizations, staff members from the United States Department of Agriculture, the National Endowment of the Arts, ArtPlace America, and several foundations. Learning through networking, dialogue, interactive sessions, and visits to local entrepreneurial sites was packed into a phenomenal two day conference! A highlight came from a unique dining experience. Reservations were made in several locations throughout Greensboro for teams of 8 to 12 participants. BBTCAC representatives signed-up to learn about an Artist Residency program at *Elsewhere*, a living history museum in the center of downtown. Following a delicious dinner, participants were given a tour of the museum where artists reside for short periods of time and create unbelievable works of art by transforming "stuff" the rest of us may have long since discarded. While the experience is hard to describe, *Elsewhere* was a perfect example of "making a place creatively."



One year after the *New England Quilt Tour*, I served as a tour guide for NATO, Ltd.'s inaugural *Gone with the Quilt* tour. Tour participants included international visitors from Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Venezuela, Australia, and New Zealand. The tour began in Atlanta and concluded in Houston thirteen days later. Highlights included quilting workshops, shopping in local quilt shops, guided tours of Atlanta and New Orleans' French Quarter, a riverboat cruise, the Atchafalaya Wilderness, and several museums. Additionally, a visit with the Gee's Bend Quilters, a ferry ride across the Alabama River, lunch at GainesRidge Dinner Club, and of course, a visit to BBTCAC (which included a hands-on printmaking on fabric workshop) and the Shoe Shop Museum in Camden. Two nights were spent in Selma, Alabama with guided tours through



the historic district and dinner at the Tally Ho. After departing the Black Belt, several days were spent in rural Louisiana before finishing the trip at the Houston International Quilt Festival. The trip reinforced that Alabama's Black Belt is rich with history and culture to be shared with and appreciated by travelers from throughout the world. The challenge is to share our story broadly enough to inspire even more visitors.



Next year's Gone with the Quilt tour will be October 15 – November 1, 2015. BBTCAC is pleased to partner with NATO, Ltd. and for the opportunity to share Alabama's Black Belt with tour participants, while we work to identify other tour operators to help share the rich cultural heritage of Alabama's Black Belt.

For now, the road trips are over. These invaluable experiences would not have been possible without the support of the BBTCAC Board and the very capable BBTCAC staff who ably continued day to day operations while other staff members were away learning. Most importantly, these opportunities were possible because of the support of funding partners – The Daniel Foundation of Alabama, The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, the Community Foundation of South Alabama, and the Aspen Institute. While individuals involved in these journeys have been enriched personally and professionally, the true benefactor of these experiences is Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center and the Black Belt region as a whole. As BBTCAC moves toward the future, the many sites, experiences, and lessons learned will serve to influence planning and progress. This will be especially true as BBTCAC continues the development of the Black Belt Quilt Trail throughout the communities of the region.



In conclusion, the words of Robert Frost come to mind...

*"The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep."*

To me these lines serve as a reminder that BBTCAC has "miles to go before" its work is complete. There are action plans to implement, goals to achieve, learning experiences to offer, and many talented artists and craftsmen to assist in sharing their work and stories - all helping to build an improved economy and quality of life. The challenges ahead are at times daunting but the future is bright with opportunity.

Won't you join us as we press forward? Help us continue making a difference in the lives of the men, women, boys and girls who live in this beautiful place – Alabama's Black Belt. Join us in making "place creatively", while holding on to our cultural heritage, and inspiring economic and educational growth through the arts.



Moving forward,
Sulynn Creswell
Executive Director, BBTCAC



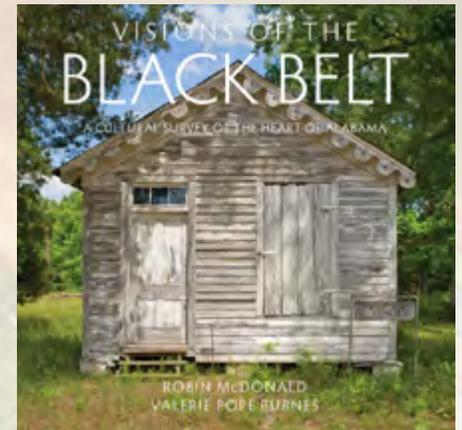
*To accomplish great things, we must not only act,
but also dream, not only plan, but also believe."*
~Anatole France

VISIONS OF THE BLACK BELT

We are extremely excited to announce the launch of the publication, "Visions of the Black Belt". Last year, BBTCAC was approached by another entity to submit artists to be included in a book about our region. BBTCAC Board Member, John Clyde Riggs exclaimed, "Why don't we publish our OWN book?" So under the auspices of the University of Alabama Press, (which is a master at such printing, locally and nationally); well-known photographer Robin McDonald (*select photographs are on the opposite page*); and historian Valerie Pope Burns with the University of West Alabama, we did just that! This book entails life in the Black Belt, focusing on: *Icons & Archetypes, Talk of the Towns, Houses & Homes, The Living & The Dead, Words & Music, Arts & Crafts, Farming & Food, Progress & Promise and People & Places.*

The book is planned for release in September, and we begin offering pre-sales in May. We anticipate inaugural sales, book signings and much exposure from this long awaited book. Make your Christmas shopping lists early!

And while this book will INCREASE our exposure, I commend the efforts of the University of Alabama Marketing Interns that created our new website and are currently helping us build online sales. Extra classes for all ages have been added, and visitors to Black Belt Treasures in Camden is impressive: We now have had visitors to the gallery from all 50 states and 27 foreign countries! It is truly amazing what has been accomplished in ten short years!



"A highlight of my life was having the honor of watching a performance by Kate Campbell, with context narration by Dr. Wayne Flynt, at Black Belt Treasures in Camden, AL on Monday night [November 3, 2014]. I was blessed to have Dr. Flynt as a professor at Auburn, and I am grateful to him for introducing me to the music of Kate Campbell. Big shout-out to the Alabama Humanities Foundation for their financial support of the event, and to Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center for making it happen!"



~Valerie Pope Burns



Contact Black Belt Treasures to reserve your copy of "Visions of the Black Belt" for \$39.95 (plus sales tax, shipping & handling).

Garland Cook Smith
President, BBTCAC Board of Directors

**Black Belt
Art House
POTTERY
STATION**

crowd-fund-ing ('kroud-fendiNG):
the practice of funding a project
or venture by raising many small
amounts of money from a large
number of people, typically via the
Internet.

Black Belt Art House – Pottery Station

was our first venture in online fundraising via crowdfunding. To everyone who supported our campaign through donations along with those who cheered us on, prayed for success, and donated what they could, we thank you! We cannot wait to share our new Black Belt Art House Pottery Station with you all!



Black Belt Art House (the large warehouse behind BBTCAC Gallery), will be a multi-functional space where youth and adults will come together to learn and share heritage arts skills, grow creative businesses, and inspire future cultural traditions. It will house studio space, creative incubator business space, event space, a stage for local theater and music,

exhibition gallery space, a ceramics studio, and more. Product development and jobs creation will be a strong part of Black Belt Art House.



Our first step is the Pottery Station - which through our generous supporters is currently being built to include a dedicated ceramics classroom complete with 6-8 pottery wheels, a new electric kiln, a glazing area, storage



"Arts improve academic performance. Students with an education rich in the arts have higher GPAs and standardized test scores, and lower drop-out rates—benefits reaped by students regardless of socio-economic status. Students with 4 years of arts or music in high school average 100 points higher on the verbal and math portions of their SATs than students with just one-half year of arts or music."

~Americans for the Arts "10 Reasons to Support the Arts"



and studio space for students, and more. By involving community investors, this space becomes much more than a pottery studio, it becomes a shared space where youth and adults can come together to learn and have fun while restoring hope and strengthening the economic foundation in Alabama's rural Black Belt through the arts.

Our dreams do not end here. Once the first phase of Black Belt Art House – Pottery Station is complete and classes are underway, we will begin the second phase. As our Pottery Station grows through the addition of a large gas kiln, glaze mixing area, open studio spaces, and additional equipment, so will our outreach and programming. This will help the adult who has no access to equipment or tools, the youth who has little to no art classes in the schools, and the tourist who wishes to learn while on vacation. All of these will not only bring access to the learner, but will create a cycle of economic impact in one of the most impoverished areas of the United States. The opportunities are endless as well as the potential in our community.



Please feel free to contact us if you are interested in registering for a pottery class, would like to tour the facility, or would just like to discuss this project.



Black Belt Art House – Pottery Station is a creative educational space used to keep the rich culture and history alive which the Black Belt region was founded upon.

Kristin C. Law
Art Programs & Marketing Director, BBTCAC

**November - December
2013**

After School Art Classes at BBTCAC;
Adult *Art Escape* Classes in Acrylic Painting, Quilt Making,
Stained Glass, Printmaking, and Pottery;
BBTCAC at Birmingham Junior League *Market Noel*;
BBTCAC Tourism Stakeholders Meeting;
BBTCAC *Holiday Open House & Christmas in Camden*.
After School Art Classes Continue at BBTCAC;
Adult *Art Escape* Classes in Acrylic & Oil Painting, Basket
Weaving, Sewing, Rug Making, Quilt Making, Fused Glass
Jewelry, Stained Glass, Printmaking, and Pottery;
AmeriCorps VISTA MLK Day event: Military Families;
BB Quilt Trail Meetings Held Across Black Belt Region;
Art of Business Workshop at ASCC;
BBTCAC Guild *Art Raising Whimdoozie* Event;
Exhibition of BBTCAC Artists at Montgomery's
Stonehenge Gallery;
Selected to participate in Croatan Institute
National Crowdfunding Training Seminar
Book Signing "*This Bright Light of Ours*" by Maria Gittin;
AmeriCorps VISTA *Mayors Appreciation Day* event;
Seasoned Players Performance of "*My Name is Julia*"
in the Black Belt Art House;
Artist Demonstration & Student Program at
Historic *Gaineswood Heritage Days*;
Literary Program with Author Ted Dunagan in Area
Public and Private Schools and BBTCAC;
Hog Wild For Arts Festival;
Partner with Wilcox ArtWorks for Pottery Program in
Wilcox County area 3rd Grade Classrooms;
Pottery Demonstration at *Camden School of Arts &
Technology Annual Arts Appreciation Week*;
Hosted Wilcox ArtWorks' Juried Art Exhibition;
Pottery Workshop with Alabama Southern;
Community College Art Students;
University of Alabama Honors College Tour & Program;
Learning Journey to Hand Made in America (Asheville);
BBTCAC Exhibit at & Host Youth Art Activities at *Rick
& Bubba Outdoor Expo*;
The Wide World of Art Summer Art Camp Grades 4-8.

**January - June
2014**



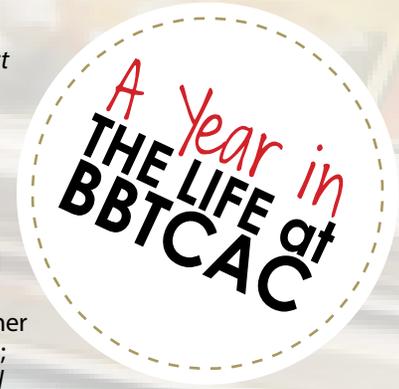
"The Arts are transformative, they transform individuals, they
transform communities and they can transform the Black Belt."

Randy Shoults, *BBTCAC Board Member and Arts Advocate*

**July - December
2014**



Fun & Funky Folk Art
Summer Art Camp
Grades 1-3;
BBTCAC & Ala
Folklife Assoc.
Common
Threads Quilting
Program, Tour, and
Workshop;
Mini-Masters Summer
Art Camp Ages 3-5;
Black Belt Quilt Trail
Development Continues;
Bill Bates Arts Leadership Workshop;
BBTCAC Artists Sam Williams & Linda Munoz selected
to create artwork to be used for *Alabama*
Innovation & Entrepreneurship Annual Awards;
Southwest Porcelain Painters Society Workshop;
AmeriCorps VISTA Meeting and Tour of Gee's Bend;
After School Art Classes Begin at BBTCAC;
Kickoff of *Black Belt Art House: Pottery Station*;
Indiegogo Crowdfunding Campaign;
Cross Currents: Art & Agriculture Powering Rural
Economies Workshop in Greensboro, NC;
President's Circle Event with Cookbook Author Stacey Little;
Partner with *Wilcox ArtWorks' Quilt Walk*;
BBTCAC Patchwork Festival;
Present at *Ala. Innovators & Entrepreneurship Conf.*;
Arts Education Activities at *Orrville Antique Tractor*
Show & Craft Festival;
Pottery Arts Education Program in Marengo County
Elementary School;
Host Luncheon for Cast & Crew of "*The Burning*";
NATO "Gone with the Quilt Tour & Workshop at BBTCAC";
"*People and Places in Story & Song*" Dr. Wayne Flynt
and Kate Campbell;
University of Alabama Marketing SALE Team Project;
Arts Outreach Coordinator present arts advocacy
programs to Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Monroe and
Washington County Civic and Community Groups;
Launch of BBTCAC New Web Site;
Exhibition of BBTCAC Artwork at the *Georgine Clarke*
Alabama Artists Gallery (ASCA) in Montgomery;
BBTCAC Holiday Open House;
BBTCAC Artist Rebecca Koontz present program to *Three*
Arts Club in Perry County
Coffee with the Author & Book Signing - Nimrod
Frazer "*Send the Alabamians*";
BBTCAC Annual Christmas in Camden.





Arts Advocacy
AT BBTAC



Working with Black Belt Treasures as Outreach Coordinator since July of 2014 has been both an exciting and rewarding experience. I've been fortunate enough to meet many of our existing southern Black Belt artists, as well as forge relationships with new artisans in the five counties that I serve. I've spoken to political figures, cultural arts centers, school administrators, artisans guilds, business owners and civic organizations on our behalf, and the feedback has been wonderful.

In February of 2015, we partnered with the Grove Hill Cultural Arts Center to host a Black History Month cultural event. Guests enjoyed artwork from area artists, choral music, and an inspirational message from Deborah Rankins Tunstall, Director of the Kathryn Tucker Windham Museum and Assistant Director of Library Services at Alabama Southern Community College.

I'm very optimistic about the future of Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center, and I am so thankful for the opportunity to work for an organization that does so much to educate and enhance the cultural arts experience in southwest Alabama.



Crystal Wilson
BBTAC Outreach Coordinator
Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Monroe, and Washington Counties

**This position was made possible through a grant from the Community Foundation of South Alabama.*



"Arts strengthen the economy. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector is a \$699 billion industry, which represents 4.3 percent of the nation's GDP—a larger share of the economy than transportation and agriculture. The nonprofit arts industry alone generates \$135 billion in economic activity annually (spending by organizations and their audiences) that supports 4.1 million jobs and generates \$22.3 billion in government revenue."

~Americans for the Arts "10 Reasons to Support the Arts"

Black Belt QUILT TRAIL

Over the last year we have had meetings throughout the Black Belt region about the upcoming Black Belt Quilt Trail (BBQT). These meetings offered information about the trail and how communities, organizations, and businesses, along with tourism and the local economy, will benefit from being a part of this trail. In addition to the meetings, we have been communicating with other quilt trails to learn from their experiences. The BBQT will ultimately involve nineteen counties across Alabama's Black Belt. We currently have six counties that are progressing quickly with identifying sites and gathering stories to share as part of the trail. We will begin the trail with these counties and expand to the remaining thirteen counties as they too progress.

A committee was established recently to help institute guidelines for a registration process and the construction of individual quilt block designs. This committee will also approve all submitted quilt block designs and assist with the continued progress of the trail. With the adoption of the new guidelines, we have opened Black Belt Quilt Trail participation to anyone interested in telling their story by creating and placing a quilt block/mural for display, including individuals, organizations, non-profits, and businesses.

With this committee and the new guidelines in place, we are ready to proceed with accepting registrations for participation in the BBQT. Meetings are being held around the region to share with communities the guidelines and registration process. To assist those who need assistance with designing and creating their blocks, we will be setting up workshops where groups can work together and learn from each other. We are excited to be commencing the registration process and look forward to watching the trail take shape. For more information on the guidelines and registration process, please contact me or Kristin Law at BBTCAC.



Jennifer Smith
AmeriCorps VISTA
Educational Programs Manager, BBTCAC

"Arts drive tourism. Arts travelers are ideal tourists, staying longer and spending more to seek out authentic cultural experiences. The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that the percentage of international travelers including museum visits on their trip has grown steadily since 2003 (18 to 28 percent). The share attending concerts and theater performances has grown from 14 to 18 percent since 2003."

~Americans for the Arts "10 Reasons to Support the Arts"



BBTCAC ALL STARS



"Arts spark creativity and innovation. The Conference Board reports that creativity is among the top 5 applied skills sought by business leaders—with 72 percent saying creativity is of high importance when hiring. The biggest creativity indicator? A college arts degree. Their Ready to Innovate report concludes, "The arts—music, creative writing, drawing, dance—provide skills sought by employers of the 3rd millennium." Nobel laureates in the sciences are 17 times more likely to be actively engaged in the arts than average scientists."

~Americans for the Arts "10 Reasons to Support the Arts"

Top Artists by Number of Items Sold

Pat McGilberry	Wilcox
Earnest Halbrook	Wilcox
Sam Williams	Monroe
Sam Cheek	Macon
Simply Making It/L. Spencer	Dallas
Tinnie & Minnie Pettway	Wilcox
Bud Rogers	Clarke
Allen Ham	Dallas
Andrew McCall	Lowndes
Burton Fuller	Sumter
Betty Anderson	Wilcox
Lily Beck Originals	Dallas
Rebecca Koontz	Hale
Trey Culpepper	Dallas
Gloria Buck	Marengo

Top Artists by Sales

Sam Cheek	Macon
Sam Williams	Monroe
John Sheffey	Dallas
Andrew McCall	Lowndes
Pat McGilberry	Wilcox
Earnest Halbrook	Wilcox
Tinnie & Minnie Pettway	Wilcox
Deborah Carter	Perry
Allen Ham	Dallas
Lily Beck Originals	Dallas
Danny & Virginia Pettway	Montgomery
Betty Bain	Dallas
Donna Wesley	Conecuh
Freddie Epp	Dallas
Linda Munoz	Sumter

Top Fiction/Non-Fiction Book Sales

This Bright Light of Ours by Maria Gittins
 Alabama Road Trips with forward by Rick Bragg
 Historic Plantations of Alabama's Black Belt by Jennifer Hale
 Nothing Fancy about Kathryn & Charlie by Kerry Madden
 Lummie Jenkins: The Unarmed Sheriff by Delynn Jenkins Halloran



Top Cookbook Sales

The Southern Bite Cookbook by Stacey Little	Montgomery
The Legacy Garden Cookbook by Stacy Harris	Montgomery
Land of Cotton Cookbook	Dallas
Taste of Olde Selma Cookbook	Dallas
Fleur de Lis Cookbook	Wilcox



Top Food Sales

Gantt Candy	Dallas
Selma Good Company	Dallas
Southern Flavor	Dallas
Hancock's BBQ	Dallas
Southern Ambrosia Aparies	Dallas



A Look To The FUTURE



We hear a lot these days about the role of “anchor institutions” – those organizations, often non-profits, that are deeply rooted in place and unlikely to pick up and leave no matter what happens from a global perspective. On its 10th anniversary, the Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center (BBTCAC) has accomplished much, including, we would argue, becoming a kind of anchor institution for the cultural arts of this historic region. As BBTCAC looks to its next 10 years, there are many strengths to draw upon, particularly as a “connector” in the region. Over the past few years, we have seen BBTCAC bring together diverse stakeholders to talk about the future of the arts, arts education and arts tourism in the Black Belt. These varying stakeholders included artists, arts groups, educational institutions, and tourism groups. They brought them together in the region and even arranged a learning journey to Western North Carolina to learn from HandMade in America about their success with arts education, arts tourism and creative placemaking.



Such partnerships and connections are the key to moving the arts, arts education and arts tourism forward in the Alabama Black Belt. Going forward, BBTCAC can be a driving force behind moving these partnerships into true collaborations where a variety of different organizations and institutions are working together to build a more prosperous region through the arts. One way BBTCAC is moving the region forward is by connecting with potential

partners, such as the tour company that brought quilters from all over the world through the region as part of their tour of the Southeastern U.S. There are other potential partners who are interested in the intriguing combination of arts, history and nature that the Alabama Black Belt has to offer. In 2015 and beyond, BBTCAC can help develop more of these connections so the region can be truly responsive to market demand.



In addition to its role as a connector, BBTCAC is uniquely positioned to champion new ways to use the region’s assets to create opportunities for all. The Center’s location in an old car dealership is a wonderful example of putting assets to new and creative uses. With their successful Indiegogo campaign, BBTCAC will be transforming some of its unused space into studio and education space that will help fulfill a commitment to expanding both arts education and economic opportunities for artisans. One of the chief lessons learned from the experience in western North Carolina was the intelligent deployment of underutilized resources to create opportunities. This can be done in the Black Belt, as well.

The future is bright for BBTCAC and the cultural heritage of the Black Belt region. While BBTCAC and its many partners are working to build new connections to market demand that create wealth building opportunities for the region’s residents, they are also striving to create a sense of pride in their own communities and in the artistic assets and heritage that reside there. As an “anchor institution for the cultural arts,” no other organization is better positioned to showcase the creative spirit of the region while contributing to a stronger economy through the arts.



Melissa Levy, *Yellow Wood Associates*
 Deb Markley, *Center for Rural Entrepreneurship*

In an age where everything is a button click away, what is it that excites us? What do we hope to get, when we want to get away from it all? I know what I look for when I travel and I believe the Alabama Black Belt has it, Immersive Cultural Tourism, where I become part of the story.

With world changing history in our backyard how can anyone not want to visit the places that shaped the future and experience the spirit of the area? Our culture and history is expressed in many ways and art is one of the most embraced: songs, poems, woodwork, paintings, sculptures, pottery, textiles, the written word... the spoken word and all with a dialect exclusive to our region. Alabama's Black Belt offers many cultural adventures such as a visit to Gee's Bend, a community that has become famous for its quilts and with a style that has been passed down through at least six generations. Many Gee's Bend works of art, in the form of quilts, have toured renowned museums across the globe. With proper planning before your visit, you can see members of the community working on a quilt, then travel to Black Belt Treasures to take a quilt, or a square, back home with you.

Another adventure might include a trip to Selma to hear stories at the Tale Telling Festival and visit works of art from the Tin Man, Charlie Lucas. Charlie uses metal to create amazing works of art through his focus on his immediate surroundings and personal experiences; many of his works are on display in downtown Selma, some of which can be seen at the Carneal Building where the annual Tale Telling Festival is held. A short drive to Camden following your experiences will take you to Black Belt Treasures Cultural Art Center, where you may take a book home from one of the story tellers you just heard and a piece of art from Charlie.

One of the many attractive features of the area is the vast amount of open land allowing for many outdoor recreational opportunities. This same feature can also lead to challenges when addressing economic development and reaching markets for those artist that want to share their story and passion of the place they call home. One of the missions of Black Belt Treasures Cultural Art Center is to showcase that creative spirit and market the heritage arts and culture of Alabama's Black Belt to the world by sharing our story through works of art.

In the words of a beloved Alabamian, Kathryn Tucker Windham... "Everyone has a story to tell, what's your story? Go tell it to someone you love." Through Black Belt Treasures Cultural Art Center we can tell our story to the world. Alabama's Black Belt, where the stories (and creative spirit) are as rich as the land.



Candace Johnson Skelton
UA Center for Economic Development,
Tourism / Community Development Project Manager

Everyone Has
**A STORY
TO TELL**

A Little Help
**FROM OUR
FRIENDS**

A team of six students from the University of Alabama's Marketing Department's Sales Program worked hand-in-hand with BBTCAC staff from August to December on producing a new website for the organization. The team was tasked with not only redesigning the website, but producing strategic messaging for BBTCAC's social media outlets that would ultimately direct followers to the website to support Black Belt Region artists through e-commerce purchases.

In the process the team also revamped BBTCAC's corporate sponsorship program. Though they didn't have endless time to devote to it, they were able to get a great start on prospecting potential businesses that might have interest in developing and supporting the region. Feel free to look at this portion (as well as all other portions) of the website and send along information to any business owners across the state that you believe would find Black Belt Treasures to be an excellent fit for their philanthropic endeavors.



A new spring team is taking these efforts and expanding upon them. We are excited to see how their input and ideas will translate into greater support for BBTCAC's artists and hopefully encourage more out-of-town visitors to the region.



Emily Wood
Collaborative Learning Project Manager,
UA Sales Program



BBTCAC MEMBERSHIP GUILD

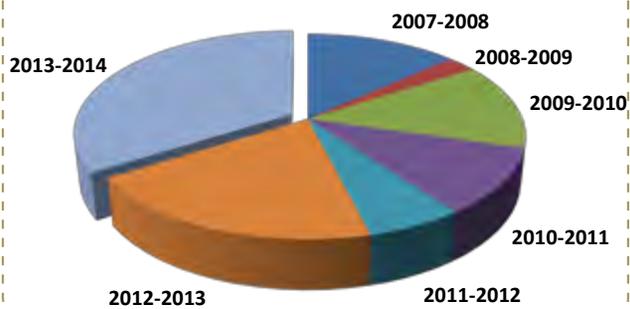
Two years after the organizing of Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center, a group of leaders from the Alabama Black Belt region met to determine the feasibility of establishing an organization of art patrons. Growth was increasing the demand for more staffing and funding to support a myriad of activities and the avid interest in our region's art. After thoughtful consideration and discussion, the group agreed to create a membership guild with multiple gift levels and to establish an active volunteer system. Gift policies were developed for the approval of the Black Belt Treasures Board. Invitations for a gala introducing the new guild were sent in early Spring and guests from regional communities joined in support of the newly established guild.

Since the milestone decision in 2007 to create the Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Membership Guild, the organization has become a dynamic part of Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center. The almost \$100,000 donated in the last eight years by guild members have funded numerous special projects, critical operating funds in tough times, and continues to finance unique arts opportunities in our region. Amazing volunteers working endless hours augment staff labor by preparing food, flowers, special event setup, and assisting art instructors.

The guild showcases Alabama Black Belt region's passion for the arts and for a higher quality of life; it also demonstrates their commitment to the unique cultural heritage of the region. Because of the magnanimous support of our members, the future is bright as together we continue preserving our cultural heritage, implementing arts education, and working together to ensure a bright future for generations that follow us.

Judy Martin
Outreach Coordinator

BBTCAC Guild Giving 2007 - 2014



2014 BBTCAC GUILD MEMBERS

SUSTAINER (\$10,000 & above)

Ala-Tom RC&D
Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission
UofA Center for Economic Development

PHILANTHROPIST (\$5,000 - 9,999)

BENEFACTOR (\$1,000 - 4,999)

Mrs. Anne Capps
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Collias
Ms. Lucy Hicks
Mrs. Merle Koontz
Mr. and Mrs. Terry McCartney
Mrs. Susan M. McGowin
Mr. and Mrs. C. Hill Munoz ARTIST
Mrs. Katherine D. Schutt
Mr. and Mrs. Lathrop W. Smith
Alabama State Council on the Arts
Clearwater Solutions, LLC
Community Neighbors Bank
UofA College of Arts and Sciences
Alabama Dept of Tourism

SPONSOR (\$500 - 999)

Mr. and Mrs. T. Michael Goodrich
Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton E. Gray
Ms. Olivia Martin

PATRON (\$250 - 499)

Mr. Menzo Driskell
Mr. Joe M. Finkel
Mr. and Mrs. Dudley C. Handy
Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Harrigan
Mr. and Mrs. John L. Martin
Mr. and Mrs. Emmett McConnell
Mr. and Mrs. Joe McGilberry ARTIST
Ms. Ginny Phillippi ARTIST
Mr. and Mrs. White Smith ARTIST
Mr. and Mrs. James D. Stewart

ASSOCIATE (\$100 - 249)

Mrs. Marilyn Ammons ARTIST
Mayor and Mrs. Max Baggett
Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy L. Bell
Dr. and Mrs. Sumpter D. Blackmon ARTIST
Mrs. Ginger Brook
Mr. and Mrs. Peyton Burford
Mr. and Mrs. John Creswell
Mr. and Mrs. Phil Creswell
Ms. Sandra Curl
Dr. and Mrs. P.C. Debardeleben ARTIST
Mrs. Rebecca Dobson Riggs
Mr. and Mrs. Alton Drinkard
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Dunbar

Mr. and Mrs. J. Tod Echler
Ms. Christi Electris
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Gaines
Mrs. Molly Gamble
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Givhan
Dr. and Mrs. Richard Holland
Mr. and Mrs. Leo Hollinger
Mr. Joshua Humphreys
Ms. Karen Jasper
Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Johnson
Mr. and Mrs. Billy Johnson
Ms. Marjorie Kelly
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lambert ARTIST
Mrs. Melissa Levy
Mr. H. J. Lewis
Mr. Edward Lyon
Ms. Deborah Markley
Mr. J. W. McFarland
Mr. and Mrs. Donald M. McLeod
Ms. Frances McVay
Mr. Leon McVay
Mrs. Sarah H. Moore
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Owens
Mr. David Parks
Ms. Shanna Ratner
Ms. Lisa C. Reich
Mr. and Mrs. Frank (Bud) Rogers ARTIST
Mr. David Roswell
Mr. and Mrs. Tommy F. Rumsey
Ms. Sheri Schumacher
Senator and Mrs. Jeff Sessions
Mr. Charles Shoults ARTIST
Mr. and Mrs. Leighton Skinner
Mr. and Mrs. William B. Virgin
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Williams ARTIST
ARTSREVIVE
Town-Country National Bank
Wilcox Academy Second Grade
Wilcox Academy Sixth Grade

FRIEND (\$25 - 99)

Mrs. Alice Lee Albritton
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Albritton
Ms. Dolly Albritton
Ms. Virginia Alldredge
Ms. Betty Anderson ARTIST
Mrs. Caroline Hollinger Anderson
Ms. Susan Anderson ARTIST
Ms. Juliette Beale
Ms. Nancy Bennett
Ms. Josephine Hall Blackwell
Mr. and Mrs. Jo Robbins Bonner
Mrs. Deborah Boykin
Mrs. Delia Brand ARTIST

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Bryant ARTIST
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bullock
Mr. Lloyd Busbee
Ms. Natalie Butts
Mr. and Mrs. Norris Carter ARTIST
Ms. Mary N. Croley ARTIST
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Culpepper
Mrs. Ginger Dailey ARTIST
Miss Jane Shelton Dale
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Daniel
Ms. P.S. Davis ARTIST
Ms. Lolita Dickinson ARTIST
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Dozier ARTIST
Mr. Ted M. Dunagan ARTIST
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Ms. Barbara Evans
Mrs. Judy Forehand
Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Gaddy
Mr. and Mrs. William Gibson
Mr. and Mrs. Earnest Halbrook ARTIST
Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell J. Hale
Mrs. Jan V. Hayden
Mrs. Amanda J. Hollinger
Mrs. Virginia B. Hollinger
Lt. Governor Kay Ivey
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Ms. Rebecca Malone
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Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Matthews
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Mrs. Linda Vice ARTIST
Mr. and Mrs. Byron Watson

Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan O. Watts
Mr. and Mrs. John P. Webb
Mrs. Louise Williams
Ms. Sharon Wills
Alabama Writer's Forum
Wilcox Academy First Grade
Wilcox Academy Fifth Grade
Wilcox Academy Seventh Grade
Wilcox Academy Pre-Kindergarten

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Mrs. Cynthia Gamble ARTIST
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Mrs. Crystal Wilson
Ms. Mary Lois Woodson
Mrs. Tina Woodson
Wilcox Academy Tenth Grade
Wilcox Academy Twelfth Grade
Wilcox Academy Third Grade
Wilcox Academy Fourth Grade
Wilcox Academy Kindergarten

FOUNDATIONS

Alabama Arts Education License
Tag Committee
Black Belt Community Foundation
Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
Community Foundation of South Alabama
The Daniel Foundation of Alabama



2014 BBTCAC GUILD MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. and Mrs. John Martin
in Memory of Mr. John Allen Colburn
 Mrs. Sandra Curl
in Memory of Mr. Mark Curl
 Mrs. Sulynn Creswell
in Memory of Mr. Bob Moore
 Mrs. Irene Latham
in Honor of the Gee's Bend Quilters
 Ms. Lucy Hicks
in Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Hicks
 Mr. and Mrs. Billy Johnson
in Honor of Miss Mary Forrest Bell
 Mrs. Lolita Dickinson
in Honor of Ms. Lola Furr
 Ms. Rebecca Malone
in Honor of Masters Alexander and Andrew Malone
 Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan O. Watts
in Honor of Mrs. Sulynn Creswell
 Mr. and Mrs. J. Tod Echler
in Honor of Miss Mary Forrest Bell
 Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Bell
in Honor of Miss Mary Forrest Bell

VOLUNTEERS

Mrs. Marilyn Ammons
 Ms. Betty Anderson
 Mr. Fred Armstead
 Miss Mary Forrest Bell
 Mrs. Juliette Harper Bullock
 Mr. Keith Champion
 Mr. Michael Cook
 Mr. Josh Creswell
 Miss Shetoria Dale
 Mrs. Joy Davis
 Mr. Jim Emerson
 Mr. Andrew Felts
 Mrs. Frankie Gaddy

Mrs. Sue Gaines
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 Mr. and Mrs. John Sheffey
 Mr. Clay Sheffield
 Mr. Randy Shoults
 Dr. Donald Stone
 Miss Laura Thompson
 Miss Barrett Travis
 Ms. Linda Vice
 Mrs. Amanda Walker
 Miss Melissa Walker
 Mr. Dossie Woodson

See website or insert for current Guild Membership Form.

We strive for accuracy in preparing this report. If your name has been omitted or incorrectly reported, please accept our sincere apology and notify BBTCAC at info@blackbelttreasures.com.

BBTCAC Volunteers - Without the time, talent, and support of our dedicated volunteers, BBTCAC would not be where we are today. While their skills and gifts are varied, their hearts and talents are equal...and to each of them we offer our heartfelt thanks!



**BBTCAC
BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**

BBTCAC is a cultural arts hub that supports a network of artists, provides educational opportunities and advances the understanding of how the cultural arts benefit both the community and economic development. The Center will soon be regarded as a leader in the state of Alabama and also the Southeast Region.

Sheri Schumacher, BBTCAC Board

Garland Cook Smith
Jefferson/Wilcox County
President



Fred Armstead
Marengo County
Vice-President



Rhondell Rhone
Clarke County
Secretary/Treasurer



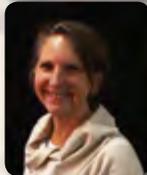
John Clyde Riggs
Wilcox County



Olivia Martin
Montgomery/Wilcox County



Sheri Schumacher
Lee County



Randy Shoults
Montgomery County



Nisa Miranda
Tuscaloosa County
Ex Officio



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Marketing Director
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Crystal Wilson
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Coordinator
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Kathy Law
Gallery Visual
Coordinator



Pat McGillberry
Gallery Associate



Madi Cook
Gallery Associate

**BBTCAC
STAFF**

Volunteers Needed @ BBTCAC

Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center is looking for a few new volunteers to assist in the following areas: **Gallery Associate** (greeting guests and assisting with daily gallery activities), **Arts Education Support** (assisting Arts Educators with classes), **Special Event Support** (assisting with activities leading up to and during all events), **Site Management & Landscaping** (minor building maintenance, painting, landscaping, building displays and classroom storage), **Creative Placemakers** (volunteers from each county to assist with trails, arts outreach, and projects), and **Computer/Website Associate** (computer technical work to website management and assistance). Volunteers are the backbone of most non-profit organizations, and are integral to the success of BBTCAC's programs and events. As Winston Churchill once said, "You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give."

Interested individuals are invited to complete a Volunteer Application, available at www.blackbelttreasures.com under "Get Involved", by email at info@blackbelttreasures.com, or in person at 209 Claiborne Street in Camden.

In Addition, the following items are always in need at BBTCAC:

Working Computers/Scanners/Digital Camera's

Art Supplies & Equipment (from traditional art supplies like brushes, easels, tools, canvases, frames, and more to "outside the box" supplies like broken jewelry, cut wood, old window frames, shelving units, cigar boxes, and more...

Join Us...

BBTCAC's book club, **Black Belt Book Bag**, meets the 3rd Thursday of each month from 12 p.m. - 2 p.m. and focuses on Black Belt and Southern authors. New members are encouraged to join us – just bring your lunch and expect a lively discussion!

Textile Circle meets every Thursday morning from 10am until noon, where fiber and textile artists bring a variety of projects to work on, share techniques, and learn while doing.

Visual Arts Circle meets most Friday mornings from 9:30am - 1pm, where artists work on a variety of drawings, paintings, and unique projects. While there is no official "teacher" or "lesson" - artists enjoy sharing ideas, techniques, and learning from each other.

***There is NO Charge for these BBTCAC sponsored Community Arts Groups**

Are you a current member of our **BBTCAC Membership Guild**? Would your business or corporation be interested in assisting BBTCAC by becoming a **Corporate Sponsor**? Please contact us at info@blackbelttreasures.com or visit www.blackbelttreasures.com for more information.



"Arts mean business. The Creative Industries are arts businesses that range from nonprofit museums, symphonies, and theaters to for-profit film, architecture, and design companies. A 2015 analysis of Dun & Bradstreet data counts 702,771 businesses in the U.S. involved in the creation or distribution of the arts that employ 2.9 million people—representing 3.9 percent of all businesses and 1.9 percent of all employees."

~Americans for the Arts "10 Reasons to Support the Arts"



Hog Wild For Art



April 25, 2015
9:30am - 2:30pm

*in cooperation with Wilcox
Area Chamber of Commerce
Annual BBQ Cook-Off*

**Art + Creative Kids
+ BBQ + Music**

SUMMER ART CAMPS

June 22-26, 2015

July 13-17

Grades 4-8

Grades K-3

Celebrating



**BLACK BELT TREASURES
CULTURAL ARTS CENTER**
2005-2015

**VISIONS OF THE
BLACK BELT**

Book Release

&

*Tenth Anniversary
Celebration*

OCTOBER 1, 2015

**Tickets Available
August 1, 2015**

Adult Art Escape Classes in Painting, Pottery, and more meet the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month. **After School Art Classes** (grades 1-6) meet weekly during the school year. A **Full Schedule of Art Classes, Workshops & Events** is available on our website at www.blackbelttreasures.com



Black Belt Treasures

CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

cultivating art

209 Claiborne Street | Camden, AL 36726

www.blackbelttreasures.com

www.facebook.com/BBTCAC

@BlackBeltArt

