

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 2nd, 2011

- WHAT:** The 22nd Annual Friends of the Fine Arts Center Benefit Event
Wow! The Things You'll See, Hear, Taste and Love!
- WHEN:** Saturday, February 5th, 7 - 11:30 PM
- WHERE:** Hotel Northampton, Northampton, MA
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or
go online to www.fineartscenter.com/tickets
- IMAGES:** To download images relating to this press release please go online to
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(WOW! THE THINGS YOU'LL SEE, HEAR, TASTE & LOVE AT THE 22ND ANNUAL FRIENDS OF THE FINE ARTS CENTER GALA)

It's time for the 22nd Annual Friends of the Fine Arts Center's Benefit Gala and Auction at the Hotel Northampton, Saturday, February 5th, 7 PM to 11:30 PM. There will be a lot of things to see, hear, taste and love at this year's benefit that will raise needed funds to keep the arts accessible to all -- particularly to area schools and underserved communities. And if tickets are purchased before Monday, January 10th, ticket holders will be entered into a contest to win luxury accommodations at the hotel the night of the event and press seats to three events of choice throughout the remainder of the Fine Arts Center's spring season. Volunteers A. Rima Dael and Sarah Tanner return as co-chairs for this year's Gala after a record breaking Gala last year.

The Gala will be held throughout the entire hotel with entertainment options in four rooms. There is no reserved seating so that patrons can mingle and move easily throughout the venue. Going into its fourth Gala with last year's success beating all records, the online auction returns this year so that everyone, not just Gala attendees, has the opportunity to bid on the many wonderful items offered through the auction. The online auction goes live January 20th and ends at 6 PM, Sunday, February 6th, just in time for the Super Bowl kick-off. To access the

online auction go to www.umassfineartscenter.com/auction. The Gala & Auction will benefit arts in education programs providing artist access through workshops and master classes to area schools and communities.

The evening gets started in the ballroom with **Skin Tight**, a dance band based in New York City. The band members of Skin Tight have have played with Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Blood, Sweat and Tears, Tower of Power, Mary J. Blige, Bruce Springsteen, and Gladys Knight, to name a few. In the Coolidge Café, UMass' own **Stephen Page** provides some classy piano playing while you catch your breath and relax a bit. Page performs New World Contemporary Jazz Improvisation and Blues. He has studied with a variety of jazz teachers and masters including Billy Taylor, Yusef Lateef, Andy LaVerne and Kenny Werner. His playing is truly delicious.

Wiggins Tavern wouldn't be complete without a sultry, bluesy jazz band and the Valley's own **Leah Randazzo Quintet** fits that bill. Leah's powerful voice, high-energy stage performance, and stellar ensemble musicians provide the perfect complement to the evening. The quintet mixes solid grooves in an almost Earth Wind and Fire vein with a jazzy sensibility; great for dancing or just sitting back and admiring their skill. And back by popular demand, karaoke returns in the Hampshire Room. **Cloud Nine** returns with the lights, music and everything you need to be a star.

The auction is busting with over 100 treasures of fine arts, original creations, getaways, catered parties, vacation homes, and more all donated from local businesses and artists. Highlights include Art from Scott Prior, Nanny Vonnegut, Mallory Lake, and Eric Carle; travel opportunities domestic and abroad; dinners, catered parties, and sports tickets!

Hotel Northampton owner Mansour Ghalibaf has once again inspired his chefs to create an exciting array of menus for the evening with each room offering up a different kind of fare. Cash bars will be available throughout the hotel. For parking and directions to the hotel, visit www.hotelnorthampton.com. The Hotel Northampton is also offering a special rate on overnight stays. Call 413-584-3100 or 800-54-RELAX and ask for the Gala's special package.

Ticket price for the Gala event is \$100 per person and includes a \$25 tax-deductible contribution. Individual sponsor tickets are available at \$150 and corporate sponsorships are available starting at \$500. For more information, please call the Friends of the Fine Arts Center at 413.545.3671. For tickets to the event, call the box office at 413.545.2511 or 1.800.999.UMAS. For more details about the event go online to www.fineartscenter.com/gala.

Lead sponsors for the Gala are Northampton Cooperative Bank and the Hotel Northampton. In-kind sponsors include the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, WEIB 106.3FM and Tiger Press. Additional sponsor support comes from the Davis Financial Group, Fallon Community

Health Plan, Finck & Perras Insurance, Florence Savings Bank, Motoko Inoue, PeoplesBank, Prudential Sawicki Real Estate, and Sarah and Mark Tanner.

Press release text and press-quality images are also available on our website at www.fineartscenter.com/press.

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