FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 2, 2004

WHAT: The 15th annual Friends of the Fine Arts Center Gala and Auction “FAsCination Ball”

WHEN: Saturday, February 7, 2004 at 7:30PM

WHERE: Log Cabin, Holyoke, MA
        Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets

(UMass Fine Arts Center to Host 15th Annual Gala at Log Cabin in Holyoke)

The Friends of the Fine Arts Center host the 15th Annual Gala FAsCination Ball -- to benefit the center at 7:30pm on Saturday, February 7, 2004, at the Log Cabin in Holyoke. The Fine Arts Center will take over the entire banquet hall for the evening where revelers will be able to move from room to room for feasting, dancing, bidding, and entertainment. Proceeds from the Gala will benefit the Frederick C. Tillis Endowment for the Arts, the income from which provides annual funding for Fine Arts Center performances and/or exhibits.

Back by popular demand, the band Major Motion will be in the Grand Edna Williams Ballroom combining the soul of the Temptations and Marvin Gaye, the R&B of Earth, Wind and Fire and Stevie Wonder, and the funky dance sounds of the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s. They have performed at private functions for the Kennedy’s and Meryl Streep and have opened for the Temptations, Tower of Power, and Chaka Khan. Also back for an encore performance is “jazz diva” Sue Wiggin and her quintet Wiggin’ Out playing the best in jazz standards for dancing cheek-to-cheek or relaxing and listening. Musicians include Sue Wiggin, vocals; Brian Leceese, guitar; Geoff Vidal, sax; Nick Crisotti, bass and Bobby Caban, drums.

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Starting off the evening in the Southampton Room will be Criollo Clásico. Guitarist, composer and virtuoso Cuatro player, Jose Gonzalez, is one of the foremost exponents of Puerto Rican / Caribbean music in the United States today. Acclaimed for his original compositions featuring "the Cuatro" (Puerto Rico's national instrument), his four self-produced recordings have become bestsellers. The UMass a cappella choir, Vocal Suspects, will open for Major Motion with a smooth blend of jazz and contemporary standards sent up in style.

The lobbies between the two ballrooms will be busting with over 100 auction treasures of fine arts, original creations, getaways, catered parties, vacation homes, and more from local businesses.

Ticket price is $75 per person and includes all the entertainment listed above plus a stylish feast including a raw bar, sushi, lamb chop dijonaise, a Caribbean station with mango pork loin and mahi mahi and traditional carving stations featuring tenderloin with a shallot demi-glaze, salmon with Teriyaki glaze and turkey with sage and cranberry. Plus, the dessert table will include crème brulee, cheesecake, pecan pie, international cheeses and more.

Individual Sponsor tickets are available at $100 and include a ticket to the event, one drink ticket and program recognition. A corporate package is available for $250 and includes two tickets, two drink tickets and a program ad. 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.

Lead sponsor for the Gala is Northampton Cooperative Bank. Supporting sponsors include Applied Mortgage, Finck & Perras, Florence Savings Bank. Filene’s, PeoplesBank, Chicopee Savings Bank. Sustaining sponsors include Bank of Western Massachusetts, Connecticut Valley Oral Surgeons, Dr. and Mrs. William A. Darity, Hunt & Piech Dental Group, Realty World Sawicki, Upton Massamont Realtors, Valley Psychiatric Services Inc. And our in-kind sponsors The Log Cabin, The Daily Hampshire Gazette, WEIB 106.3 Smooth FM.

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