

# Garrett Arts

Garrett County Arts Council

Written by **Karen Reckner**  
Photography by **Lance C. Bell**

**THE STATUS OF THE ARTS** in western Maryland has never been better. The projects and efforts of the Garrett County Arts Council consistently enhance the quality of life and contribute to the culture of our region.

Formed in 1976, the mission of GCAC is to “aid, encourage, advance and coordinate activities dedicated to the promotion of cultural arts in Garrett County and to integrate such activities into the life of the community.”

Some of the projects the Council oversees include the annual Heritage Craft Fest during October’s Autumn Glory celebration, Garrett Galaxy to showcase local performing artists, annual Artist Studio Tours each July, and year-round workshops and demonstrations.

GCAC provides funding for arts enrichment activities in the public schools and supports local art related organizations through grant funding. The Garrett County Arts Council is a non-profit membership organization with membership levels beginning as low as \$12. Executive Director Karen Reckner stated that the arts should be an integral part of our community now and in the future. “Our membership structure allows anyone with an interest the chance to assist us in our mission of bringing a variety of opportunities to area artists and residents.”

Perhaps the largest project of the Garrett County Arts Council is the operation of The Gallery Shop. Located on Alder Street in downtown Oakland, The Gallery Shop is a retail outlet for regional artists. Since the year 2000, more than 250 artists from Garrett and the surrounding counties have displayed and sold their work. In addition to oil, watercolor, and acrylic paintings, the shop features numerous jewelers, potters, woodworkers, fiber artists, and more. Each participant’s work has been juried in to ensure a quality assortment of fine gifts and collectibles.

The Gallery Shop features a backroom gallery where one artist’s work will be exhibited and showcased for a period of four to six weeks. Generally this artist is honored with an opening reception where the public can meet the artist and learn more about their history and creative process.

Funding for GCAC is provided by Garrett County Government as well as the Maryland State Arts Council. The Gallery Shop is open Monday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm each day. For more information visit [www.garrettarts.com](http://www.garrettarts.com) or call 301-334-6580.

