

# ACCOLADES

## For the Arts

Springfield Area Arts Council

Summer 2020

## Meet the Interns

By Shelby Hodel

One day a Facebook friend personally messaged me to tell me about an internship with the Springfield Area Arts Council. When I read the description of the internship, I knew that I wanted to apply. Within a couple days, I had my interview which led to my acceptance call the next day! I am very honored to be selected as one of the interns for this council.

Throughout my childhood, I loved doing art and anything creative. From coloring, to doodling, to any form of creation, was how I remember spending most of my days. During my time at Williamsville High School, I was always in one art class every semester. In high school, I have found what I like to consider my "happy medium" of art.

I really enjoyed working with photography and digital art. I have won awards from Scholastic Art (one silver key and four honorable mentions) and New Berlin Art Fair (5th and 1st place in digital / experimental photography). Being a part of my school's student council, I got to work on several fun projects, and I am glad that I could apply my creativity to help boost our school spirit. I will be attending Lincoln Land Community College in the fall to major in Digital Media and Communications. After those two years, I will attend Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, to pursue my bachelor's degree. I know I will gain skills in this internship that will be very convenient in the future.

This brings me to here. I am just now in the middle of my summer internship, which I know will be a great experience. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected our summer and our lives, I know that the council will prevail during these tough times. Art can lift the spirits of many people in many ways. It is a form of expression that comes in many mediums. Most people think that being an artist just takes talent, but what you may not realize is that art is all around us and exists within everyone.

By Leia Philbrick

When I first heard about this internship opportunity, I jumped at the chance and applied. I was very nervous during my interview because I had never done an actual job interview before. I didn't let my nerves get to me, and I am so excited I got the summer internship with the Springfield Area Arts Council. The other organizations at the Hoogland Center For The Arts have surrounded and shaped me my entire life. Being a part of yet another program here at the Hoogland brings me so much joy. My passion in life is to go out and make the world a better place by helping those around me. Never does it fail to bring a smile to my face and to others.

Growing up, I was always in the Hoogland. I have been a part of the Sangamon Valley Youth Symphony for as long as I can remember. I currently play the cello in the highest group for junior high and high school students; I am the second chair. I also have been in many shows that either run out of or rehearse in the Hoogland. I am well-known in downtown Springfield but am always interested in meeting new people and making new friends. I can be very shy but can also be an outgoing person.

Following this internship, I am going to be a junior at Rochester High School where I help out organizing events and shows as well as participating in those events and shows. I plan to go to college at LLCC and University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana with a major and master's degree in Early Childhood Development with a minor and bachelor's degree in Special Education. I love kids with every bit of my heart. Almost everyone in my family is a teacher. I've always felt a calling to be a teacher.

I hope to gain more communication skills during and following this internship as well as watch the Arts Council grow and become more successful over the years. I want to gain public speaking and technical skills as my internship progresses.



Leia Philbrick (photo by Shelby Hodel)



Shelby Hodel (photo by Paige Dambacher)

# Music Comes to Moxo by Shelby Hodel

The Springfield Area Arts Council is joining the Adams Family for five weeks this summer to help local musicians share their talent with our community.

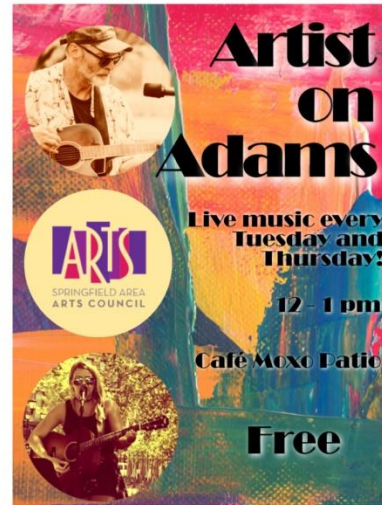
For over thirty years, the Springfield Area Arts Council has hosted a summertime concert series called Artist on the Plaza. Some things have been changed in order to make this series publicly safe. This year, we are hosting this program with a new title, Artist on Adams, and a new location, outside Café Moxo. Just like in previous years, this series consists of performances by local musicians and is free to the public. The performances are family-friendly and enjoyable for all. The Arts Council acknowledges the Illinois Arts Council Agency for funding the concerts this year through an arts relief grant.

Over thirty years ago, Springfield Area Arts Council provided summer-time entertainment for the visitors to and residents of downtown Springfield with scores of people and several food trucks filling Old State Capitol Plaza during Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday lunch hours. As state government offices moved to the west side and to Chicago, performances were reduced to two days a week. When sponsorship revenue declined, Artist on the Plaza moved to Wednesday noon-hours on the Old State Capitol's south lawn. Throughout these years, the showcase continued to be supported by local retailers and restaurants.

This season, instead of asking downtown merchants for support, the Arts Council applied for an arts relief grant and received funding from the Illinois Arts Council Agency. It is worth mentioning that, in years past, Downtown Springfield, Inc. and Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Springfield) had enough resources to contribute to the Artist on the Plaza concert series. Clearly this year, they also are facing new challenges.

Even with the financial struggles caused by COVID-19, our mission remains: to enrich the community by providing creative opportunities to participate in and enjoy the arts. This year, the pandemic brings changes in location and sponsorship. Although the Old State Capitol grounds can't host us this season, Café Moxo can. We are thankful for the support from Café Moxo and the rest of the Adams Family (a collaboration of local businesses located on East Adams Street).

- ☒ Tuesdays and Thursdays, July 7 – August 6, 2020
- ☒ 12:00-1:00 P.M.
- ☒ Café Moxo: 411 E. Adams St., Springfield, IL
- ☒ Free on-street parking
- ☒ All health protocols will be in place.



## Elf Shelf Books & Music



## Uptown Friday Night: My "Office Hours"

by Théa Chesley

I may not have attended Uptown Friday Night from its absolute beginning, but those who frequented the 5:30-7:30 PM jazz happy hour at Robbie's Restaurant on the Old State Capitol Plaza absolutely know that I was a staunch regular.

When I was working, UFN (as I always abbreviated it in my calendar) was the capstone of the work week and the signal to relax and unwind for the very welcome weekend. Soon after I retired in 2009, I started calling UFN my "office hours" – because if anyone wanted to find me during the week, they could almost certainly find me there.

I could also say that Robbie's was also my personal "Cheers" bar, "where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came." Over my many years of showing up at UFN, I met many wonderful people (including Robbie's staff who are like family now), nurtured connections to valued friends, heard local musicians I already knew and loved, and discovered new musicians I continue to enjoy and follow.

The Jazzy Nachos, Snappy Wings and other special appetizers that chef-owner Archer Bailey served on Fridays were a departure from the regular menu at Robbie's, and made UFN a special end-of-week treat.

To many of us, the five-month suspension of Uptown Friday Night during Robbie's Restaurant's 5 month closure in 2019 due to water damage was a crisis. The "office hours crowd" rallied in Facebook, and got together in other venues while Robbie's was being repaired and renovated. We were elated to reconvene at Robbie's in November – with no inkling that a viral pandemic would escalate crisis to catastrophe, and drive us to meet via Zoom. It's nowhere near the same as UFN.

I'm sure that many other UFN regulars join me in congratulating Archer Bailey for a wonderful partnership with the Springfield Area Arts Council to bring Uptown Friday Night to its grateful public for so long. Thank you, Arch, and enjoy your well-deserved retirement!

Théa Chesley  
Route 66 Film Festival Board Member;  
President, Springfield Poets & Writers

## Uptown Friday Night: A Musician's Take

By Virgil Rhodes

Uptown Friday Night at Robbie's was always one of my favorite venues to perform in because it had the Big City Jazz Club ambience, meaning the listening audience and the performers connected.

A million thanks to Archer Bailey and his staff who always made sure the musicians had those little extra perks that assure a successful performance.

I not only performed, but also I was a loyal and faithful patron of Uptown Friday Night because of the talented local and international jazz groups that graced the front window performing space.

Every jazz musician knows you learn the best and most by performing. Thanks for all the years of learning at Robbie's.

Oh! The food and drink were excellent, too.

Virgil Rhodes (aka Jazzman)  
Retired Law Professor;  
and Professional Musician

## SAAC Mission

The Springfield Area Arts Council enriches the community by promoting and supporting all art forms and providing creative opportunities to participate in and enjoy the arts.



## Accolades for the Arts

"Accolades for the Arts" is published by the Springfield Area Arts Council. Your comments are welcome.  
Call the Arts Council Office at (217)753-3519.

# Levitt AMP Springfield Is Still Plugged In

By Abner Jacobson,  
The Mortimer and Mimi Levitt Foundation

Experience an all-new virtual concert from harmony-driven acoustic folk trio The Deep Hollow as part of the Levitt AMP Virtual Music Series! The show is co-presented by Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation in partnership with Downtown Springfield, Inc. and Springfield Area Arts Council, the nonprofits behind the Levitt AMP Springfield Music Series. Known in their native Springfield and beyond for their raw, sparse and powerful take on traditional Americana, The Deep Hollow are a Midwestern sensation with a rapidly rising profile. View the concert at [http://levittamp.org/virtual].

Situated in the heart of the vast, flat prairies that span most of central Illinois, the state capital of Springfield is home to about 120,000 residents. Springfield - not to be confused with its fictional Simpsons namesake - is perhaps best known for its historical ties to America's 16th president, Abraham Lincoln. Prior to becoming president, Lincoln lived in Springfield for 17 years, with many pivotal moments in his life and political career unfolding there.

Though much of the city's identity is tied to its history, Springfield is very much a modern urban hub for arts and culture. "If you visit Springfield for the Lincoln sites," says Lisa Clemmons Stott, executive director of Downtown Springfield, Inc., "you will find a warm, welcoming community with a strong foodie culture, with many farm to table restaurants and the largest farmers market in downstate Illinois, and an amazing arts and culture scene." The historical-meets-modern aspect of Springfield is most apparent in the city's downtown district, where 19th century buildings, locally-celebrated restaurants, and emerging businesses come together in one place. Many consider Springfield a community on the rise, and a recent article from Business Insider even ranked it as [https://www.businessinsider.com/best-cities-in-the-midwest-to-move-to-2020-7] the #1 Midwestern city to move to after the pandemic.

For this summer's Levitt AMP Virtual Music Series, Stott and the rest of the Levitt AMP Springfield team wanted to "share a band that was quintessentially Springfield," and The Deep Hollow fit that description perfectly. All three members of the band were raised in Springfield, and even as their artistic profile grows, they remain deeply rooted in their community. "We love that we can show a homegrown band that has national or even international chops," says Stott. Tonight's virtual concert was recorded live at Springfield's Hoogland Center for the Arts with the help of Crowdsong Creative Media Production.

For decades, a large vacant lot has dominated an entire city block in the center of downtown Springfield. Once home to the Hotel Abraham Lincoln, which was demolished in 1978, the lot - known as the "Y-Block" - fell into disuse after a plan to build a state court complex and legal education center on the site disintegrated shortly after the demolition. For many years, the vacant space served as an informal parking lot for city employees, but was of little use to the general public. In 2014, the City of Springfield purchased the lot, though revitalizing it proved to be difficult after three rounds of proposals, a consensus had not been achieved, and years later, the site remained entirely unused.

In 2018, a group of nonprofits in downtown Springfield partnered to apply for a Levitt AMP Grant as a first step towards activating this "sleeping block" in the heart of the community. After seeing how a Levitt AMP series in nearby Jacksonville, Illinois, about a 45 minute drive from Springfield, had revitalized a public space in that community, Stott and other organizers hoped that a Levitt AMP series would engage the public and bring residents from all parts of the city into the discussion surrounding the lot. "The city had been squabbling over whether it should be a park, or a park and a building, or a giant residential area," recalls Stott, "and we thought Levitt AMP would help us have a more intelligent conversation about the future of [this space]."

Nearly 8,000 people attended the inaugural Levitt AMP Springfield Music Series last summer, and lawn surveys conducted by volunteers show an enthusiastic response from the community. Over 80 percent of respondents said that they would like to see a permanent concert venue in the space, and would regularly attend concerts if a permanent band shell was constructed. Other suggestions from the community include a dog park, tennis courts, food truck plaza, and more to occupy the space. "No one was using this block before Levitt AMP," says Stott, and "now people see the possibilities."

In addition to renewing interest in this long-dormant public space, the Levitt AMP Springfield Music Series also has served as a catalyst for addressing deep-seeded divides in the city. More than three quarters of Springfield residents are white, while 15 percent are Black, and historically, race relations have been difficult. In 1908, a violent riot erupted against the city's Black community, creating a wound that is far from healed over a century later. "We have this dual nature," says Stott. "We're the home of Abraham Lincoln, but we are also the site of such a tragic incident." In response to the violence in Springfield, W.E.B DuBois, Ida B. Wells, and others founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), now a leading civil rights organization. As a neutral site where the East and West sides of Springfield literally come together, Stott and other organizers hoped the concerts would foster a space where people of all cultures and skin colors could feel welcome.

Through a partnership with Urban Action Network, a local nonprofit, volunteers went door-to-door in historically black neighborhoods on the city's East side to personally invite residents to the free concerts downtown. For a Merengue Night concert last summer featuring several major Latinx artists, Levitt AMP Springfield organizers recruited community member Julio Barrenzuola to serve as "Salsa Ambassador." Barrenzuola danced to music that would be featured in the show at 30 Zumba classes around Springfield in the days leading up to it, resulting in massive turnout, especially from the Latinx community. An artist featured in the concert recalled seeing at least a dozen nationalities represented in the audience that night.

Overall, survey data from the 2019 series showed that demographics on the Levitt lawn largely matched the demographics of the city, with many concertgoers attesting to its inclusive, welcoming atmosphere. One audience member succinctly summed up their experience as follows: "You look around, look at all the different people here, there are no political parties, there is no animosity, just two great musicians. This is all family. It's just us together. That's what I see. There are so many different age groups, diversity and there is no one arguing. That's what's cool."

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, another round of Levitt AMP concerts won't take place this summer, but Stott already is looking forward to resuming the series in 2021. As the Springfield community continues to assess the economic fallout from the virus, many things remain uncertain, but the impact of the series continues to resonate. "Levitt spawned a local feeling that we're all in this together," says Stott. "We have a long way to go, but it's a great jumping off point for these important conversations about the economy and race."



## SAAC Signature Project

By Leia Philbrick

This year has been a little bit different. COVID-19 hit the world pretty hard, and it changed summer for everyone. Here at the Springfield Area Arts Council, we have come up with a way to make the most of what we have the ability to do safely. I am one of the interns for the summer, and the other intern and I are required to complete a signature project. We settled on doing a single project together. Employing Shelby's skill as a photographer and my talent in music, we did a Downtown Springfield photoshoot.

On Day 1, we started by making a plan. We wrote down how we were going to tackle all the work we wanted to put into the project. We decided what exactly we were going to do and we figured out the 5 Ws: Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

On Day 2, we walked around downtown and took pictures with various filters, colors, and musical instruments in front of different forms of art (statues, murals, window art, etc.). Shelby edited the photos to show off her artistic skills.

On ensuing days, we gathered materials. We figured out a layout and did some editing on the pictures. We added inspiring arts-related quotes as well.

In the end, we will have created a wonderful project to show the different types of art and how much art can help in a time of crisis.



Art Alley  
Words from "If" by R. Kipling  
Leia Philbrick (pictured)  
Photo by Shelby Hodel

Gov. Pritzker Announces 2020 Illinois Poet Laureate Search Committee  
John Prine Bestowed Honorary Illinois Poet Laureate Designation

Tuesday, June 30, 2020 - Chicago

Governor Pritzker today announced the formation of the 2020 Illinois Poet Laureate Search Committee. The committee, which is comprised of poets, writers, and academics from across the state, will review nominations and recommend an Illinois resident to become the next state poet laureate, a position that has been vacant since late 2017.

"Illinois has been home to many talented poets like Carl Sandburg, Sandra Cisneros, and Gwendolyn Brooks who all used their words to inspire readers across the world," said Governor JB Pritzker. "I look forward to hearing from the next generation of great writers and announcing the next Illinois Poet Laureate in the coming months."

To commemorate the life of Illinois native John Prine and celebrate his writing and musical contributions, Governor Pritzker has proclaimed Prine an Honorary Poet Laureate of the state. The legendary singer-songwriter, who was born in Maywood, passed away on April 7, 2020 after contracting COVID-19. Prine is the first to receive such an honorary designation.

"I have no doubt that John would be proud and delighted to receive this recognition from his home state of Illinois," said Fiona Whelan Prine, wife of John Prine. "Although he had moved to Nashville in the early 1980's, he continued to visit Chicago, and Maywood in particular, to spend time with his family. John continued to follow Chicago sports teams and had never found a hot dog, pizza or Italian Beef sandwich to rival the originals. Watching John, as I did many times, play to an Illinois audience was always thrilling. A home boy delighting in the love and approval of his loyal fans - some of them family, longtime friends, old school buddies and neighbors."

Whelan Prine added, "John had a great respect for Writers of all kinds. He regarded Poets as being among those whose work carried weight, relevance and elevated craft. It is such an honor for me, our sons, and the entire Prine family to acknowledge that our beloved John will be named an Honorary Poet Laureate of the State of Illinois. Thank you, Governor Pritzker, for this wonderful recognition."

The first Illinois Poet Laureate, Howard B. Austin, was named in 1936. Only three other poets have held the title, Carl Sandburg (1962-67), Gwendolyn Brooks (1968-2000), and Kevin Stein (2003-2017). First Lady MK Pritzker will serve as the Honorary Chair and final judge in the selection process for the next Illinois Poet Laureate. Honorary Vice-Chair will be the Chairman of the Illinois Arts Council Shirley Madigan. The 2020 Search Committee members are:

Nora Brooks Blakely, Committee Chair, President of Brooks Permissions and daughter of Pulitzer Prize Winner Gwendolyn Brooks  
Dr. Ruben Quesada, Committee Vice-Chair, Poet, Founder of Latinx Writers Caucus, and Poetry Editor at AGNI  
Chris Aldana, Poet and Founder of Luya Poetry  
Tara Betts, Poet and Literary Editor at Newcity  
Kevin Coval, Poet, Artistic Director at Young Chicago Authors, and Co-Founder of the Louder Than a Bomb youth poetry festival  
Susan Dickson, Program Director at the Illinois Arts Council Agency  
Mark Eleveld, English Teacher at Joliet West High School, Professor of Philosophy at Lewis University, and Editor of The Spoken Word Revolution poetry books  
Kara Jackson, 2019 National Youth Poet Laureate and 2018 Youth Poet Laureate of Chicago  
Allison Joseph, Poet, Professor of English at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and Editor of Crab Orchard Review  
Greg McCormick, Executive Director of the Illinois State Library  
Kristin Runyon, English Teacher at Charleston High School  
Mark Turcotte, Poet and Senior Lecturer in English at DePaul University  
*Sheila Walk, Executive Director of Springfield Area Arts Council*

Nominations may be emailed to [IllinoisPoet2020@illinois.gov](mailto:IllinoisPoet2020@illinois.gov) or mailed to:

Illinois Poet Laureate Search Committee  
c/o Office of the Governor  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

A full description of the position qualifications and nominating requirements is available on the website of the Illinois Poet Laureate [www.illinois.gov/poetlaureate](http://www.illinois.gov/poetlaureate). For more information or questions regarding the Illinois Poet Laureate nomination process and position, please contact: [IllinoisPoet2020@illinois.gov](mailto:IllinoisPoet2020@illinois.gov).

## Director's Note by Sheila Walk

dor-mant  
/ dŏrmənt/  
Adjective

having normal physical functions suspended or slowed down for a period of time; "dormant butterflies"  
[Dictionary.com]

Although Adult Prom and our annual meeting were Covid-cancelled, the Arts Council itself has only slowed, not stopped. Certainly, I'm busy every day. Thanks to our dues-paying members and some new grants and with the help of our summer interns, the Arts Council is stable and looking for new ways to serve the community in these strange and swirling times.

You likely already know that Levitt AMP Springfield has been postponed until Summer 2021. Likewise, Music at the Market is on hiatus until next year since, this season, "Local food is serious, not social." Artist on the Plaza became Artist on Adams; see the article in this newsletter for details.

As for Uptown Friday Night, its venue owner, Archer Bailey, is going to retire instead of re-open. Mr. Bailey has worked in food service for about forty years, so he has earned some time off. I am grateful for his long partnership with the Arts Council, and I wish him well. You'll find further reflections in this edition.

Our last newsletter came to you in April. Since then, the media has been filled with news of pandemic and protest. Regarding the latter, the renewed push for equality in this country, I encourage you to read and listen; take a breath; read and listen some more. When you're ready, find out what you can do to improve our shared planet. Then do it.

As for the former, I hope that you and your friends and family stay safe and well. I'll share a poem that has given me some comfort over these months. I think the third sentence is particularly appropriate during this extraordinary time.

## Paul Robeson

By Gwendolyn Brooks

That time  
we all heard it,  
cool and clear,  
cutting across the hot grit of the  
day.  
The major Voice,  
the adult Voice  
forgoing Rolling River,  
forgoing tearful tale of bale and  
barge  
and other symptoms of an old  
despond.  
Warning, in music-words  
devout and large,  
that we are each other's  
harvest:  
we are each other's  
business,  
we are each other's  
magnitude and bond.



Gwendolyn Brooks,  
Illinois poet laureate



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 Website: www.springfieldartsco.org



This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency

**Creativity is NOT Cancelled!**

## The Impact of COVID-19 on Mid-Sized Nonprofits

### About the Survey

Independent Sector partnered with Washington Council Ernst & Young to conduct this online survey of mid-sized nonprofit organizations between May 27 and June 9, 2020. The survey was sent to a broad group of mid-size nonprofit organizations (nonprofits with between 500 and 5000 employees) and responses were generated from 110 organizations, including human services, arts, youth development, workforce development, health, religion, and environmental organizations.



INDEPENDENT SECTOR

To learn more, please visit [independentsector.org/resource/covid19-survey](https://independentsector.org/resource/covid19-survey)



**83%** of organizations experienced a reduction in revenue



**71%** have responded with a reduction in services or available operations



**47%** experienced a reduction in employment

**67%** have furloughed employees

**51%** have laid off employees



**53%** of organizations had a reduction in individual giving



When asked what types of assistance would be the most helpful, **92%** suggested additional loan options such as forgivable loans