

# DER YEARS

## Arts Fest evolves over 44-year history

decided on a juried show," said [name redacted] who was managing director during [name redacted] change.

Those who set up the festival went on in 1978, moving Arts Fest off campus for the first time. The State College Borough Board of Directors plans that year to move the festival to downtown, according to Collegian archives.

Learning from that experience taught us that we could do more with a smaller budget, according to [name redacted] said. "We changed the layout on campus because the campus was getting crowded."

Arts Fest's reputation as a premier arts festival began to grow nationally. In 1979, *Arts Magazine* rated the festival a 9, making it one of just five festivals to receive that ranking.

**1970s**  
The 1970s brought a whirlwind of fun to the festival. David Garfield made the first "unofficial" appearance and hot air balloons were featured in inaugural flights at Arts Fest.

Arts Fest became the "official mascot" of the festival in 1983. During the same festival, the name changed to "A Slice of Beaver Valley" and classic movies were shown on the main stage.

[name redacted] said he remembers sitting on the main stage watching the movies on the main stage. "The lack of modern technology and a lack of interest killed the event," he said.

A new and tasty form of art was created with the festival — ice cream — sponsored by the

Centre County and Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion boards: two giant banana splits were built in canoes.

"[The ice cream] is great, but the little kids are dangerous. You have to keep saying 'No, no, that's OK please don't decorate my legs with ice cream,'" Mark Disabato told a Collegian reporter in 1988.

That messy tradition unfortunately soon disappeared, too.

### The 1990s

In 1990, Rana McMurray Arnold founded Festival Eyes. Still occurring today, Festival Eyes aims to show the visually impaired visual arts through the use of the other four senses.

Three years later, a great divide happened when George Marion initiated the People's Choice festival, for artists not accepted to Arts Fest to showcase their work.

After he was not accepted into the festival, Marion had had enough. Even a man who made doormats out of used tires was chosen over him.

The People's Choice festival still continues today in Boalsburg.

Then at about 1:30 a.m. on July 13, 1998, a dark cloud fell on Arts Fest. A riot broke out when a trashcan was thrown into Beaver Avenue near Beaver Canyon. The crowd grew from 150 to 1,500 people.

An estimated \$150,000 worth of damage ensued after three fires were started and 33 lampposts were broken. Twenty people were arrested, 11 of whom were university students.

Sixteen police officers and two pedestrians were treated for minor injuries, according to Collegian archives.

### The 2000s

Early in the new decade, history repeated itself with a 2,500-person riot, but police quickly quelled it before any damage could be done.

Also in 2000, the now-popular Italian Street Painting was added to the festival.

Pam Lautsch, sidewalk sale and exhibition coordinator, said street painting was included because it was "beyond hopscotch creativity."

"The interaction with the people coming to the festival because the creation would happen as people were wandering the streets [is a reason it was added]," she said. "It had also become a popular item across the country where people would be using that medium."

In 2001, in an effort to deter rioting, AfterFest hosted a few years of concerts at the HUB-Robeson Center until 3 a.m. Local churches also held Christian music festivals called Bless the Fest, another event that has now stopped running.

### Today

This year, the festival will premiere BookFest PA.

"Things change with the festival," Bryant said. "[We're] keeping it fresh by changing the elements whenever necessary... hopefully that tradition will stay on."

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2006 - Security cameras in Beaver Canyon are monitored for the first time.



2000 - Italian street painting starts.



1993 - People's Choice festival begins.

1994 - First sand sculptures are created at festival.



1998 - Thousands flood downtown in a riot that results in \$50,000 in damage.

performers are first time.