

COCA profile

Curator balances serving gallery and artists

By **Courteney Jones**
Council on Culture & Arts

When Cynthia Hollis, executive director of 621 Gallery in Railroad Square, first came to Tallahassee in 1995, she didn't plan on staying long.

"My intention was to come down here, go to graduate school and then leave," she said.

But nearly 20 years after earning her master's degree in arts administration from Florida State University, Hollis is still here.

"I just kept having these fulfilling job experiences," said Hollis, who also worked at the Mary Brogan Museum after graduating. "Plus, I really like Tallahassee. It's a really livable, lovely community."

After studying painting at Bard College in upstate New York, Hollis moved to Los Angeles to help a friend from school start a production com-



COURTENEY JONES
Cynthia Hollis is the director of the 621 Gallery in Railroad Square.

pany. While she was living in L.A., she started to show her work at local galleries. She eventually became more involved with one gallery in particular, and was invited to curate a few shows.

"I think the turning point, for me, was curating an expedition that was selected to travel to the University of Arizona," she said. "And so I



traveled that show, and I thought, 'I really enjoy this, I want to do more of this.' So I started to investigate what that would take."

Hollis first considered FSU's arts administration program because of its reputation, but also because her son and his family had recently relocated to Tallahassee from California.

"For me, it was kind of a no-brainer, to go to a really good school but also be close to my son," she said.

Hollis started as the executive director of 621 in December of 2010, but has been involved with the gallery for more than a decade.

"I've always really felt that this is an important cultural venue," she said. "One of the reasons is it

shows contemporary art, and not just contemporary art, but really good, cutting edge, new contemporary art, in an area where we don't have a lot of venues that do that."

Hollis considers 621 to be the anchor and catalyst of the transformation of Railroad Square into the art park it is today.

621 isn't the only gallery she directs. A few years ago she started Smalls, a gallery space she runs out of her home. The space consists of her garage-turned-gallery, and two outdoor spaces for installation art.

Hollis is also an adjunct professor of a graduate level art history course at FSU, and created Smalls so that students in the MFA program would have more opportunities to showcase their art. Though the venue options in town have grown since she started the gallery, she still considers Smalls an important alternative

space created for and by students; it was her students who first helped her transform the garage.

This week, 621 is hosting its 20th annual art auction. The viewing of the live auction pieces and bidding on silent auction pieces opened on Friday, and will remain open during gallery hours until the reception and live auction on this coming Friday night.

"The auction provides us with about 25 to 30 percent of our revenue for the year, so it's really important event for fundraising," said Hollis.

The auction doesn't just support the gallery,

though. The artists who provide work for the auction can decide what portion of the sale goes to 621. Many have benefited from 621 and want support the gallery in return, but Hollis understands the symbiotic relationship between the gallery and artists; she wants to provide for them as well.

"Many of them do 100 percent, but some of them do 50 percent because they need the money," she said. "So we like to provide that option for them. It's nice for them to make a little money off of this as well."

Editor's note: The Democrat's Mark Hinson will emcee the live auction.

IF YOU GO

What: 621 Gallery's 20th Annual Art Auction
When: 5:30 p.m. Friday. Silent auction ends at 7 p.m., live auction begins at 7:30 p.m.
Where: 621 Gallery, 621 Industrial Drive, Railroad Square Arts Park
Cost: \$10
Call: 224-6163 or visit www.621gallery.org

Tallahassee Writers Association book review

'Hunter's Moon' transcends 'young adult' genre

M.R. Street, one of North Florida's premier writers of young adult and middle grade fiction, has, with the sequel to her award-winning novel, "The Werewolf's Daughter," written a story that



Peggy Kassees
TLH blogger

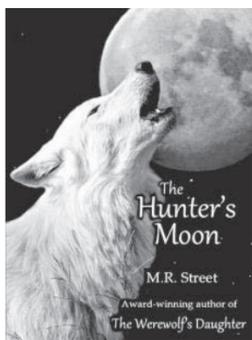
causes the pulse to throb, and shortens one's breath. Fast-paced action held my fingers tight on the pages in anticipation of each turn of events. "The Hunter's Moon" will surely win her another literary

award to add to the many she currently holds.

"The Hunter's Moon" follows Lani Morgan, who in the first book thought she had ended the werewolf curse that afflicted her family. Unfortunately, the curse is still active; Lani's best friend's father is a werewolf, and Lani and her friend, Lisa, must travel to Romania to find a cure. Not the usual cure — a silver bullet — a better one made of herbs and secret ingredients.

I thoroughly enjoyed the ride with Lani and Lisa as they traveled to and through Romania. If you like adventure that takes you to places you've never been — teaches you a smattering of a different language,

and brings you closer to people you may not ever meet — then this book is for you. I felt as though I was on the journey with the two girls. I understood their surprise when seeing the Danube River, and was amazed at the sights of gothic libraries with vaulted ceilings, filled with ancient tomes. For the space of time that I held this book, I was there.



"The Hunter's Moon" by M.R. Street
Turtle Cove Press, 2014, 336 pages

As you read Street's book, dainty tidbits of the culture of Romania slide into the words as part of everyday

life — like the fact that peanut butter is hard to find in this small country. Skillful weaving of words combines to present a work for anyone who loves a good adventure in young adult fiction. In truth, I found that as I read the book, I did not

SUBMISSIONS

To submit a book for review, send a copy to: Tallahassee Writers Association, D-4357, 2910 Kerry Forest Parkway, Tallahassee, FL 32309. For review of an e-book, submit a request to TallyWritersBlog@gmail.com.

ONLINE

Read more from members of the Tallahassee Writers Association at Tallahassee.com/TWA

BOOK SIGNING

M.R. Street's book signing and official launch for "The Hunter's Moon" will be 7:30-9 p.m. Wednesday at Black Dog Café. This event coincides with the Full Hunter's Moon of October.

lump it in a genre, but rather in the "you've got to read this" group.

Peggy Kassees is 2014 president for the Tallahassee Writers Association.

When not at her day job working for the state, she spends her time writing, reading, listening to music and knitting. She was recently notified that she is a finalist in the 2014 Royal Palm Literary Award for Dark Fantasy/Horror.

Local names

City hydroelectric plant named for former power superintendent C.H. Corn

By **Gerald Ensley**
Democrat senior writer

The C.H. Corn Hydro-Electric facility at the Lake Talquin dam is named for the city's former superintendent of power production, Clemer Herbert Corn.

Corn, born in 1923, was a native of Pikeville, Indiana. He was in the U.S. Navy during and after World War II, serving as a gunner's mate on two ships. He became a mechanical engineer and worked many years for the Jacksonville Electric Authority. He came to Tallahassee in 1972, as superintendent of Tallahassee's then-two power plants. He was married for 49 years to the former Lucky Strickland and they had four daughters.

The hydro-electric plant was built in 1929, when the Ochlockonee River was dammed to create Lake Talquin. It was run by Florida Power until 1970, then was abandoned until the city acquired it in 1978. The city received a federal grant and made it operational again in 1986, when it was named for Corn, who oversaw its acquisition.

The C.H. Corn Hydro-Electric facility, off State Road 20 in western Leon County, is one of only two hydro-electric plants in Florida. It produces about one percent of Tallahassee's electric power, operating only when rainfall fills Lake Talquin and allows water to pass through the dam and power the genera-



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF TALLAHASSEE
The late Clemer Corn being interviewed April 4, 1986 during the dedication of the city's hydro-electric plant in his name.



tors. Corn retired in 1987. He died in 1997 at age 74 and is buried in Tallahassee's Roselawn Cemetery.

GERALD ENSLEY/DEMOCRAT
The C.H. Corn Hydroelectric Station, at the south end of Lake Talquin, is one of only two hydroelectric power operations in Florida.

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