



## **Celebrating St. Patrick and the Arts**

First Friday, Gettysburg Style has become a downtown Gettysburg/GARMA tradition ever since it was first introduced over 20 years ago by the late Jennifer LeVan. Every month has a theme that GARMA merchants can expand upon to create a festive, entertaining, enjoyable shopping experience. A lot of the themes are centered around holidays or observances that occur during that particular month. GARMA also likes to feature a local non-profit each month to heighten awareness as to what they do in the community, their operating needs and opportunities to become involved with their organization.

St. Patrick's Day is the theme for First Friday on March 6. If you ask anyone what they associate with this holiday you can be assured most answers will be the color green and lots of alcohol consumption. What St. Patrick's Day really is about is the observance of the death of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. The holiday has evolved into a celebration of Irish culture with parades, special foods, music, dancing, drinking and the color green. While Gettysburg doesn't have a parade, many of our restaurants, bars and pubs have their own traditions for celebrating. A wee bit of Irish resides in Gettysburg in the form of The Garryowen Irish Pub on Chambersburg St. For authentic Irish delights, whether it be beverages such as Smithwick's or Magners Irish Cider or Irish Nachos and Bangers & Mash to tempt your palate, you definitely feel like you are "across the pond".

The Adams County Arts Council is our featured non-profit. Located on S. Washington St., the ACAC offers a variety of classes that help you find the inner artist that you may not have known was in you. Art is such an important part of our academic curriculum and self-development. Art instruction helps children with the development of motor skills, language skills, social skills, decision making, risk taking and inventiveness. There is no right or wrong in art because it's an expression of yourself. An artist communicates with their audience through their expressions and visions. Everyone is an artist in their own way, whether they realize it or not. Whether it's painting, singing or playing an instrument, you are sharing your special craft or skill with the world and saying "this is me, this is who I am and what I can do". I was very fortunate to have had an extremely artistic, influential woman in my schooling that made me believe in myself and my abilities. Judy Pyle was my Gettysburg High School art teacher. She impacted my life, and I'm sure the lives of many of her students, by encouraging us to express ourselves through our art without conforming to social normalcies. Personally, Judy, a heartfelt thank you for believing in me and my abilities.

Gettysburg is a work of art. This town has so much to offer its residents and visitors culturally, artistically and historically. Explore the opportunities that Gettysburg has to offer. I'm sure you'll be glad you did.

To find out about future First Friday themes and events, visit [www.gettysburgretailmerchants.com](http://www.gettysburgretailmerchants.com).

*Jennie Dillon is the Vice President of GARMA, owner of Artworks on York St. and the Office and Events Manager at Gettysburg Rental Center.*