31st First Night® Springfield rings in the New Year

The Springfield Area Arts Council presents First Night® Springfield, the city’s annual New Year’s Eve Celebration of the Arts on December 31.

First Night originated in Boston in 1976 when a group of artists there wanted to produce a family-friendly, alcohol-free New Year's Eve celebration. The idea caught on, and during the following years, First Night events were organized across the country.

The Springfield Area Arts Council held its first celebration of First Night on December 31, 1987—the first such celebration in Illinois. We’ve been organizing First Night every year since then, and we’re happy to be presenting our 31st annual First Night Springfield. It’s the Arts Council’s signature event and a tradition for us. Please come!

FREE Children’s Events

Springfield’s First Night celebration will begin with FREE children’s events, from 1:00 to 4:00 at the Springfield High School Commons, Auditorium, and Annex. There will be activities for children including making sculptures from clay with John T. Crisp, Junior; face painting with Phil Martin, Sara Ratcliffe, and Mari-anne Stremsterfer; and learning to play the harmonica with Mark Russillo. The N"orthside Children’s Community Library will have books available and will help children design and make bookmarks. A great model train setup will be on display thanks to Phil Smith. Lincoln Memorial Garden and Fun Shop also will provide fun craft projects for children, and Rhiannon Gurley will help kids prepare a giant painting.

Performances at Springfield High will include shows by the popular DePriest Puppets; the SHG Band; Cowboy Randy’s yodeling and trick-roping cowboy show; and comedy juggler Troy Roark. Lowe’s will bring their “build something from wood” tradition to First Night again, this year featuring a birdhouse project for kids. All of this is available at no charge.

The celebration continues at Springfield High School with a special performance in the Auditorium by Mark Gifford on the Barton Theatre Organ, from 4:15 to 5:45. Mark always puts on a great show, and it’s a great chance to hear the organ that once graced the Orpheum Theater in downtown Springfield. This concert does have an admission fee of $5 or a First Night wristband.

Evening Performances

Starting at 5:00, First Night Springfield performances will be held in several locations in downtown Springfield: Lincoln Library (Springfield’s public library); the Lincoln Home Visitors’ Center; the Kari Bedford Photography Studio (more on that below); and of course, the Hoogland Center for the Arts, where we will have shows in three theatres, plus the Club Room and the Board Room, the H. D. Smith Art Gallery, and the Dining Room.

Hoogland Center for the Arts

Our “big stage” is the LRS Theatre, where we will feature Springfield Youth Performance Group, Springfield Dance, Springfield Ballet Company, Springfield Muni, and Springfield Theatre Center. Theatre Three will feature comedy magician Richard Landry (and Snowball), the Central Illinois Irish Dancers, and a delightful Dual Piano performance by Mark Gifford and Damian Kaplan.

We’ll have variety in the Club Room, with Classical Dances of India, Elvis Himselvis, and Capital City Improv taking the stage.

The Board Room will feature original and classic poetry and writings presented by the Springfield Poets and Writers group and local storytelling performers the Top Hat Tellers.
In the H. D. Smith Art Gallery, singers will cover a wide variety of genres, with Becky McKnight kicking things off at 5:00, acoustic duo Jack and Morgan following, and solo singer artist Monica Hay. Theatre Two at the Hoogland is a space we haven’t used before for First Night. We have a special event there on the second floor that the younger kids will love, especially those who like princesses and superheroes. Find out more on New Year’s Eve!

All-Inclusive Performance Space

This year we introduce a venue sponsored by the Hope Learning Academy. Our “All-Inclusive Performance Space” will present children from The Autism Clinic, Hope School, and other local K-12 students between 5:00 and 7:00. The location is the Dining Room of the Hoogland Center for the Arts. The Dining Room also will host an “All Inclusive Art Gallery,” with a sampling of visual art created by students in the community. As SAAC Board President Courtney Wick noted, “With our All-Inclusive space, we get to broaden access to the arts by encouraging participation and expression for every student we serve. We want First Night to incorporate a variety of artistic perspectives, and to celebrate all artists including those from under-represented communities.”

Following the fireworks, the Dining Room will host acoustic duo Justin Angel and Andrew Shackelford, followed by jazz and blues from Ocean State.

Lincoln Library

Lincoln Library will feature improvisational comedy by the Portuguese Rodeo Clown Company, the Debbie Ross Band playing what Debbie calls “good music,” and blues with Black Magic Johnson.

Lincoln Home Visitors’ Center

At the Lincoln Home Visitors’ Center, we’ll feature folk and Americana music. Performers include Mike Anderson on mountain dulcimer, Lowder and Manning’s dynamic original acoustic sounds, the father-daughter Americana duo Last Acre, and an acoustic set of originals and covers by Ian Wick.

Black Sheep Stage

The Black Sheep Cafe has established itself as a popular spot for young people in Springfield, presenting innovative music by local bands. The Cafe will bring some of its bands to First Night Springfield this year, sponsoring a stage at the Kari Bedford Photography Studio, 314 East Monroe Street (across from Custom Cup Coffee). Admission to this venue only will be available for just $5 or a First Night wristband.

Fireworks

First Night Springfield wouldn’t be complete without fireworks. This year’s display will be another great show, made possible by a generous donation from Horace Mann Insurance Company. Again this year, the show is produced by Carl Steinmacher and Nostalgia Pyrotechnics. Carl has been helping us with fireworks through the entire run of First Night Springfield.

We will pause the performances at 7:45 so everyone can join us for the fireworks. The spectacular display is best viewed from the corner of Fourth Street and Capitol Avenue, and it is offered to the community at no charge. Mayor Jim Langfelder will be there to introduce the fireworks. [Note that Capitol Avenue will be closed from Second Street to Fourth Street, and Second and Fourth Streets will be closed near Capitol Avenue during the fireworks display.]

Afterwards, head back to our performance sites to continue the celebration!

The entertainment will continue until 11:15, then everyone can find their favorite spot to ring in the New Year.

Admission

Admission wristbands for First Night Springfield are now available at the Hoogland Center for the Arts, the HCFTA.org website, and all Bank of Springfield locations. The price is $18 for adults, $5 for youth ages 5–18. On December 31, wristbands can be purchased from the Hoogland Center for the Arts, the HCFTA.org website, Springfield High School (during events there), and (starting at 5:00) at Lincoln Library; prices the day of the event will be $20 for adults, $5 for youth ages 5–18 and for the Kari Bedford Studio.

First Night®Venues

Hoogland Center for the Arts
420 South Sixth Street
Lincoln Library
326 South Seventh Street
Lincoln Home Visitors’ Center
426 South Seventh Street
Kari Bedford Photography
314 East Monroe Street
Springfield High School
101 South Lewis Street

Donations

A donation of only $8.33 per month means a $100 annual contribution to the SAAC. Help us enrich the community through the arts! Visit www.springfieldartsco.org or www.833ToTheSAAC.org to donate today.
SAAC Executive Director resigns

The board of the Springfield Area Arts Council has accepted the resignation of Executive Director Jon Austin. Sheila Walk, program administrator, assumed interim executive director duties on November 15, 2017, to advance the Arts Council’s mission of enriching the region through the arts.

Board president Courtney Wick commented, “We appreciate Jon’s contribution and Sheila’s assuming interim responsibility. This transition is a great time for the board to revisit the strategic plan to ensure the best support for the arts moving forward.”

Austin joined the Arts Council in 2015 following an interim term by former board president Mark Pence necessitated by the retirement of long-time executive director Penny Wollan-Kriel. Austin will be working with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to assist museum restoration after disasters like the recent hurricanes and wildfires.

Accolades for the Arts

Accolades for the Arts is published by the Springfield Area Arts Council. It was written by Misty Hagstrom, Mark Pence, Sheila Walk, and Courtney Wick; layout by Mark Pence. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Call the Arts Council office at (217) 753-3519.

First Night Springfield schedule—New Year’s Eve Celebration of the Arts

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First Night Afternoon Activities

**M.C.** Doug Antonacci, manager, The Music Shoppe: Donating a microphone stand carrying bag

Théa Chesley and Emily Page: Continuing their invaluable weekly service to the Arts Council

**Design Ideas:** Inviting SAAC to be part of their Holiday giving program

Kate Hawkes: Advising us on the use of QuickBooks

Jeff Hoffman: Delivering excess craft supplies to Springfield Boys and Girls Clubs, Scope program, and Senior Services Center of Central Illinois

Mark Pence: Managing the arrangements for First Night Springfield

Melissa and Brett Schwoerter, owners, Engraved Brewing Company: Allowing us to sell 50-50 raffle tickets during its weekly trivia night during December

Penny Wollan-Kriel: Leading a fund-raising campaign

Thanks!

Ms. Lynn Shanklin was in her fourth year on the Arts Council’s board of directors when she passed away in September. She not only served on the board but also volunteered as our bookkeeper, no small task, and willingly helped with First Night Springfield, Uptown Friday Night, and other SAAC programs.

We miss her careful record-keeping, her constant encouragement, her warmth, and her eager sharing of jazz music. We also appreciate her generous bequest to the Springfield Area Arts Council.

SAAC Mission Statement

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.
First Night® Springfield
December 31, 2017

PASSING NOTES: A CONCERT AND CONVERSATION
BENEFITING SPRINGFIELD AREA ARTS COUNCIL

SALLY KIRIS IS A GRAMMY-NOMINATED SONGWRITER LIVING IN NASHVILLE. HER SONGS HAVE BEEN RECORDED BY KEITH URBAN, TRISHA YEARWOOD, MARTINA MAREE, AND LEE ANN WOOLSEY. SHE IS CURRENTLY TOURING TO PROMOTE HER ALBUM, “THE ROAD IN ME.”

TOM ERWIN IS SPRINGFIELD’S OWN LEGEND AND LIAISON BETWEEN MUSICIANS AND MUSIC. HIS WORKS CAN BE FOUND IN THE ILLINOIS TIMES, ON HIS NEW RECORDING, “ALL THAT LOVE,” AND ON HIS ENDURING COLLECTION “BOARDWON GONS.” HIS MUSIC IS also FEATURED IN AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN.

ANY SENTER’S MUSIC HAS TAKE HER FROM COURT TO COURT. HER SONGS HAVE BEEN HEARD ON THE LEGENDARY WABE RADIO STATION, PLAYED ON THE BLUEPRINT STAGE, AND FEATURED ON TLC TELEVISION. SHE IS ENDORSED BY FREED KELLY PIEGAR. HER EP, “THE SUNDAY SESSIONS,” IS NOW AVAILABLE.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20TH
$20 HOFTA.ORG 7 PM

CLUB ROOM, HOOGLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS
SPRINGFIELD, IL

Springfield Area Arts Council
In collaboration with
Ben Bedford
Presents
SIX STRINGS \ SIX WEEKS
A program for adults who always have wanted to play guitar
Tuesdays, January 9 - February 13  6:00-7:00 P.M.
Hoogland Center for the Arts  $60.00
To reserve your spot, call 217-753-3519
or e-mail programs@springfieldartsco.org.

Join us for First Night® Springfield
New Year’s Eve Celebration of the Arts
Details inside!