

The Comm

Quarterly Newsletter

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Remembering Dorrance Reynolds Belin



In this September edition of The Comm newsletter, we look back on the life of a dear friend and benefactor of the Waverly Community House, the late Dorrance Reynolds

Belin, and the important role he played in our history.

Dorrance's involvement with The Comm spanned decades. He joined the Board in the 1990s and quickly became involved in its finances and long-term planning, helping to bring greater financial stability during an important period in the organization's history. He was also instrumental in establishing The Comm's first operating agreement with Waverly Township, helping to create the foundation for a guiding document that remains in place today.

Dorrance went on to serve as Board President, but his commitment to The Comm continued long after his formal Board service ended. He and his wife, Susan, remained steadfast supporters, and Dorrance was always willing to offer his experience and perspective when called upon. In 2019, as The Comm celebrated its long-awaited Centennial Anniversary, he once again played an important role, providing significant guidance during the Centennial Campaign.

His connection to The Comm was also deeply rooted in his family's history. In 2016, Dorrance sat down with his sister

Mary Rhodes, Gia Tugend, who served as The Comm's Archive Coordinator at the time and is now Executive Director. Reflecting on The Comm nearly a century after its founding, he said:

"I keep thinking, what would our great-grandparents think of The Comm today? I think they'd be absolutely thrilled with what's going on here. Very impressive. It has grown and prospered and become even more relevant now than in the past. It's serving its mission very well and doing what it was intended to do. It means a lot to me, and what really impresses me is how viable it continues to be, how it keeps serving the community, and how it's just as popular as ever."

The sense of stewardship and responsibility reflected in those words extended well beyond The Comm. A graduate of Deerfield Academy, Yale University and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Dorrance served as an artillery officer in the U.S. Marine Corps before beginning his legal career. He spent 40 years as a partner at Oliver, Price and Rhodes, focusing on wills and trusts, estate planning and administration, and charitable giving.

He was particularly devoted to conservation and to preserving the natural character of the community and region he called home. Dorrance helped found the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and served as a trustee for 22 years. He was also a founding member of the Countryside Conservancy, serving on its Board for more than 20 years,

including as President. His many years of community service included leadership roles with the Geisinger Health System Foundation, Scranton Area Community Foundation, Johnson College, Pennsylvania Environmental Council and Scranton Public Library.

Dorrance is survived by Susan, his wife of 60 years; their three sons, H. Hedrick, David and Daniel, and their families; six grandchildren; his sister, Mary Rhodes; his brother, Charles Belin; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Dorrance's legacy at The Comm extends far beyond the positions he held or any single contribution. For decades, he provided steady leadership, thoughtful guidance and quiet support, always with a deep understanding of The Comm and a genuine commitment to its future. His influence remains woven into The Comm today—in the strength of the institution he helped shape and in the enduring spirit of community and stewardship that he valued so greatly.

We are honored to announce that the first phase of our Memorial Theater Garden project has been completed and that the garden will be named the Dorrance Reynolds Belin Memorial Garden in his memory. It is a fitting and lasting tribute to someone whose dedication to The Comm spanned decades, whose life reflected a deep commitment to stewardship and community, and whose impact will continue to be felt here for generations to come.



On Tuesday, October 6, The Waverly Community House will celebrate its first-ever Giving Day, 24 hours dedicated to supporting the programs, spaces and experiences that make The Comm such an important part of our community.

When you make a Giving Day gift, your contribution supports our Sustaining Fund—the foundation that makes

One Day. One Community. A Lasting Impact.

everything we do possible. Your generosity helps care for our historic building, strengthen the programs our community relies on and ensure The Comm remains welcoming and vibrant for years to come.

Your Giving Day Gift Supports:

Arts + Culture: Inspiring programs, exhibits and creative experiences for all ages.

Comm Kids: Essential school-age care and enriching programs that support local children and families.

Recreation: Welcoming spaces for play, activity and connection,

including our gym, playground and tennis courts.

History: The preservation of our historic building and its important connections to Scranton Lace and Destination Freedom.

Events + Community: Meaningful events and gathering spaces that keep The Comm at the heart of our community.

Our Future: Critical renovations, including our new HVAC system, that will help sustain The Comm for decades.

Be Part of The Comm's Future
For generations, The Comm

has been a place where people come together to learn, create, play and connect. On Giving Day, our community will come together once again to protect that legacy and help build an even stronger future.

Every gift, at every level, makes a meaningful difference. Together, we can preserve what generations have built while ensuring The Comm remains a vibrant and welcoming place for generations yet to come.

Every gift
makes a
difference.



MAKE YOUR
GIVING DAY
DONATION HERE

Tanner Simon Named 2026 Belin Arts Scholarship Recipient

The Waverly Community House is proud to announce Tanner Simon of Honesdale as the recipient of the 2026 Belin Arts Scholarship. Through this award, Simon will receive support to continue developing his artistic practice and create an ambitious large-scale painting installation.

With a bachelor's degree in history from Elizabethtown College and a Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts from the University of South Florida, Simon brings together a wide range of interests, including painting, sculpture, technology, and experimentation. His path toward becoming an artist began somewhat unexpectedly during his senior year of high school, when he first tried painting to impress a girl.

"The relationship did not work out, but my love for painting grew quite strong," Simon shared.

While attending college, he transformed an abandoned attic into a studio where he could experiment with different paints and materials. That experience ultimately inspired him to change his academic focus from electrical engineering to art. His interest in creating, however, began even earlier. As a child, Simon enjoyed taking apart electronics and once attempted to construct a "death ray" using discarded parts collected from local junkyards.

Whether he is working in painting, sculpture, or another medium, Simon is most interested in the process of turning an idea into a physical object. His artistic practice gives him a reason to think deeply and observe the world around him, from ants, stars, and tree bark to office workers, shadows, and reflections.

The landscape of Northeastern and Central Pennsylvania has also played a defining role in Simon's development. Between 2017 and 2021, he spent nearly every day painting outdoors in the region's hills.

"Had it not been for the sublime landscape around us here, in particular that distant sliver of a blue mountain ridge that is always

on the horizon, I would likely be on a very different life trajectory," he said.

Simon draws inspiration from artists and works spanning several periods and styles. Among the most influential are Anton Mauve's Dutch Road, the smaller



paintings John Singer Sargent created in Morocco and Egypt, Jacques-Louis David's Napoleon Crossing the Alps, and Calvin Marcus' No Need Here. These works helped shape his appreciation for subtle color, expressive paint handling, scale, visual

persuasion, and contemporary artistic practice.

Today, Simon is exploring painting not simply as a way to create an image, but as a physical object. He experiments with the traditional components of a painting, including its frame, surface, shape, depth, movement, and relationship to the viewer. His ideas imagine paintings that may extend several feet from a wall, take on unexpected forms, or change according to the viewer's position.

Digital tools also play an important role in his process. Simon has long used programs such as Microsoft Paint and Paint 3D to design physical paintings. He is particularly interested in what happens when traditional painting techniques are recreated digitally and those digital images are then translated back into physical works.

With support from the Belin Arts Scholarship, Simon will create an ambitious large-scale painting installation consisting of 15 wooden columns. Using a visual technique known as anamorphosis, portions of the separate columns will appear to align when viewed from specific positions.

The installation will combine classical ideas about painting, imagery, and art objects with Simon's ongoing exploration of digital representations of painting. Digital sketches will be projected onto the wooden columns, helping establish the precise perspectives required for the installation.

Receiving the scholarship will give Simon

something especially valuable: time.

"I have been funding my art practice through art handling on weekends and adjuncting on top of my full-time job, so all of the time I would have spent working can now be dedicated to my studio practice," he explained. "I am so grateful to the Waverly Community House for this amazing opportunity."

Simon looks forward to becoming part of The Comm's creative community and sharing his completed work locally. Although this will be his first involvement with the Waverly Community House, he has deep connections to the regional arts community. Early encouragement came from the Wayne County Arts Alliance, which exhibited his artwork near the beginning of his painting career, and from Ellen Silberlicht, a former teacher at Honesdale High School who regularly discussed his creative projects with him.

For young artists considering a creative career, Simon recommends finding flexible employment that leaves time and energy for making art, building genuine relationships within the arts community, attending exhibitions, avoiding unnecessary debt, traveling, visiting museums, and spending less time on the phone.

Most importantly, he encourages young artists to enjoy the experience.



A New Fall Tradition at The Comm

The Waverly Community House is excited to launch its inaugural **Fall Farmers Market** on Friday, September 4! The market will be held every Friday from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. through October 30.

As a producer-only market, every participating vendor grows, raises, bakes or creates the products they sell. Our goal is to support local agriculture, showcase the incredible goods produced throughout our region and make fresh, healthy food more accessible to our community.

Visitors can look forward to local farmers and producers such as Endless Roots, Wild Notion Farms, Peace Grain Bread, Lackawanna Lemonade, Scranton Bars and many more. We hope you will join us each Friday to shop local, connect with neighbors and help make this exciting new market a cherished community tradition!





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Note from our Executive Director, Gia Tugend:

The Comm takes great pride in caring for our building and beautiful grounds. Many of our gardens and landscaped areas have been newly planted, and several hold special meaning as memorial gardens honoring community members.

We kindly ask those walking their dogs on the grounds to please be mindful of our gardens and landscaped areas and keep pets away from the plantings. Please also remember to clean up after your dog.

Thank you for helping us protect these special spaces and keep the Comm grounds beautiful for everyone to enjoy!

Meet our New Trustees



Lauren Cognetti

Lauren Bailey Cognetti is a marketing and nonprofit administration

leader with more than two decades of experience advancing the performing arts. She serves as Director of Marketing and Engagement at Miller Theatre at Columbia University, where she oversees audience development, institutional messaging, and engagement strategy. Previously, she held senior marketing roles at several New York City-based organizations, including the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Situation Interactive. Lauren is also the founder of L/Bailey Design, a boutique graphic design studio. A Virginia native and graduate of the

University of Richmond, she now lives in Waverly with her husband, Stephen, and their two sons. Lauren looks forward to serving on the Development Committee and Special Activities Committee.



Elizabeth Krug

Liz Krug, a regenerative farmer and owner of

Endless Roots Farm has developed a deep connection with her community and a strong desire to ensure that nutrients stay within local areas, supporting sustainable and accessible food systems. She brings 15 years of expertise in land stewardship, direct to consumer sales, and year round growing.

Liz is an advisory council member for Pasa

Sustainable Agriculture and is a leader in regenerative agriculture across the state. A Chicago native, Liz has traveled the country, getting her graduate degree from Western Carolina University. For the last 13 years she calls North Abington home where she lives on the farm with her husband Mike and their two kids. Liz looks forward to serving on the Special Activities Committee and Belin Arts Scholarship Committee.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



- Sept 11**–9/11 Ceremony 9:30 at the flag pole
- Sept 18**–WSWG Patrick Gerrity Art Reception 5-7
- Sept 28**–Comm Classic Golf Tournament
- Oct 6**–Giving Day
- Oct 16**–Watterman/Edwards Art Opening 5-7
- Oct 24**–Family Halloween Party
- Nov 21-22**–The Artisans' Marketplace
- Nov 21** WSWG Holiday Invitational
- Dec 4**–Wreath Making with Abby Peck 10-2
- Dec 5**–Holiday Dinner Dance Fundraiser- 6:30
- Dec 12**–Family Breakfast with Santa



Memorials & Celebrations

In Memory Of

Dorrance Belin

- Daniel and Christine Belin
- Sally and Peter Bohlin
- The Eureka Foundation
- Josiah and Vicky Lewis
- Cass Morgan
- Hal Baillie

Susan Belin

- Richard Lewis
- Mary Rhodes

In Honor Of

George Ginader's Special Birthday

- Patricia Taylor & Don Bernstein

Mary Rhode's 90th Birthday

- Charles Belin