

ClydeFEST 2020: A Community Event Full of Old-Fashioned Fun

by, April Starling, Chatham Arts Council



The Chatham Arts Council is gearing up for one of our favorite spring events – ClydeFEST! So grab that early sprouted daffodil and mark your calendar for a day full of fun, messy art. The Chatham Arts Council’s 18th annual ClydeFEST will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2020 from 11am to 4pm at the Bynum Ballfield. (Rain date: Sunday, April 26, 1–5pm.)



What: ClydeFEST 2020
 When: Saturday, April 25, 2020, 11 am to 4 pm
 Where: Bynum Ballfield (173 Bynum Hill Road, Pittsboro, NC)
 How: Tickets are \$7; free for children 2 and under.
 Tickets: ChathamArtsCouncil.org

For those of you who have never heard of ClydeFEST or just moved to Chatham County and are curious about this event, we hope you’ll check it out! Let us share some details with you.

ClydeFEST, sponsored by The Jester Group at Baird, is an old-school kids’ carnival celebrating Clyde Jones, a renowned folk artist, lovingly known locally as the “critter artist.” And the festival is almost as unique as Clyde is. In fact, the Chatham Arts Council (CAC) just won Chatham Magazine’s Best of Chatham Reader’s Favorite Award.

This year’s event will include Clyde’s critter cut-outs, local artists, young and talented musicians, face-painting, old-fashioned carnival games, clowns, community partners full of cool information, and of course, lots of arts and crafts projects!

“One of the things we love most about ClydeFEST is seeing so many different parts of our Chatham community come together to celebrate creativity and art with children,” expressed Cheryl Chamblee, Chatham Arts Council Executive

Director. “Something that started as a small, local event now draws crowds from Raleigh, Durham, and communities across the Triangle. It’s a true gem in Chatham County and we’re thrilled to host it with all of our amazing partners each year.”

ARTISTIC PERFORMANCES

There are so many talented performers in Chatham County and ClydeFEST aims to share many of them with the community. This year’s event will feature music by Carolina Lightnin’, Tim Wells, and Clapping Hands Ukulele Group, in addition to some hoppin’ moves by the Bouncing Bull Dogs and the Takiri Dance Troupe, and more! And of course, Ubi the Clown will be on-hand to bring smiles to the faces of all the children (and children at heart).

GOOD EATS

After enjoying the multitude of performances, ClydeFEST go-ers can feast on delicious local food from the Merry Franksters, Crispy Gyoza, Food by H&V, and top it off with dessert from Maple View Ice Cream.

PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION

As you may know, parking at ClydeFEST is limited. Carolina Brewery has generously offered to ferry people to and from the event again this year. Attendees can park and catch the Sky Blue Express Bus from the Carolina Brewery in Pittsboro to Bynum. The bus will leave on the half hour from Pittsboro and on the hour from Bynum from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm.

GET INVOLVED!

- Sponsor ClydeFEST
- Sign up to volunteer the day before or the day of! It takes a village to run ClydeFEST. Be part of the fun!

TICKETS

Tickets are \$7; free for children 2 and under. Purchase yours at ChathamArtsCouncil.org.

Come on out on April 25 and enjoy a day of hanging with community members, watching children’s smiles grow, seeing Clyde’s amazing critters, and of course, enjoying the art all around you.



March is for Meditation: Mindfulness Makes You a Better Writer

by Michele Tracy Berger



I’ve been a long-time advocate of meditation. I use meditation as a tool in my life and I have taught secular meditative techniques to writers.

Clinical research supports the claim that meditation helps to strengthen the mind, increase concentration and slow our thousands of thoughts down. This is so helpful for writers!

Why do meditation techniques work? Because all human minds, despite their great diversity and capabilities feel and experience the same basic emotions that include joy, fear, rage, happiness, sadness, etc. We also tend to experience similar thoughts both positive (‘I’m great!’) and negative (‘I’m horrible!’). We all also get distracted, frustrated and irritated on a routine basis in relatively the same ways (though about different kinds of things).

There are lots and lots of meditation styles and techniques out there from a variety of secular and spiritual traditions. You’ve probably heard about a type of secular meditation called ‘mindfulness’, so let’s start there.

Mindfulness is a practice of maintaining an awareness of your thoughts,

feelings and environment in the present moment. Slowing down and paying attention to the present moment allows us to be more available to what’s happening right now, instead of living in the past or racing ahead in the future. Mindfulness also involves getting some distance from your thoughts without judging them.

Cultivating mindfulness can mean focusing on one’s breathing and being quiet.

Mindfulness can support your writing in a few ways:

MINDFULNESS CAN GET US BACK IN THE BODY

“Whatever stories we have, they are organically connected to our physical bodies. Cultivating that connection—that pathway between our heads and our bodies—creates deep writing.” Lorraine Herring, author

Ever have that experience where you don’t know where time went and not in a good way? Ever realize that you’ve been on autopilot and not in the moment? To

write well, we have to be connected to the body, our experience, the pain and joy of being alive. Taking a few minutes to recognize we are in a particular place in time and space and we are actually breathing is quite helpful when writing. Sometimes I’m working so intensely, I have hunched my shoulders, clenched my

jaw and have tightened up all my muscles. It’s good in that moment to stop, breathe and readjust my body. Mindfulness can open us up to sensations in the body that we tend to ignore. And, in slowing down, as Herring notes we can open ourselves up to greater bodily knowledge in service of storytelling.

CONTRIBUTES TO WRITERLY EQUANIMITY

Mindfulness helps us stay the course. Bad writing day? OK, we all have them... tomorrow will be better. If we have cultivated equanimity, when we hit an impasse in our writing, we’re more likely to be open to tapping our resources (including connecting with writing buddies, groups,

etc.), trying out other techniques (like taking a walk, freewriting) as opposed to thinking we have to solve it all ourselves or because we can’t figure it out, that we’re bad writers.

DON’T WORRY ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN’T CONTROL

Practicing mindfulness allows us to see when negative thoughts arise, but also to actively let them go (especially helpful when trying to write!). It helps us recognize what we can’t control. If we overemphasize what we can’t control, over time that leads to stress. The only thing we can control is what we create, how much we create over time, and the quality of what we create. We also have a say in how we show up and interact with publishing professionals. We can’t control an audience’s response to our work, nor the shifting and fickle interests of the publishing industry.

HOW TO BEGIN

One easy way to start to practice mindfulness is to begin with the breath. You can practice the following before you write: Breathe in and out a few times (breathe in through the nose and

“Meditation is push-ups for the mind.”

Rachael Herron, author and podcaster