



Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Art  
Tourism  
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History

**NEWS**  
For immediate release

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## Steve Sigel Awarded State Arts Administration Fellowship

**HARTFORD, Conn. (May 7, 2010)** The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism (CCT) has selected Steve Sigel, Executive Director of the Garde Arts Center in New London, to receive the Elizabeth L. Mahaffey Arts Administration Fellowship for the year 2010. Sigel, a resident of New London, was chosen for the award in recognition of his outstanding arts management abilities.

The annual Fellowship of \$2,500, to be used for professional development activities, acknowledges the important role that administrators play in Connecticut's arts industry. It was named in honor of Elizabeth Mahaffey, who contributed markedly to the development of arts administrators during her 23-year career with the Commission. Criteria considered in selecting Sigel included his record of accomplishment in the field of arts administration, the positive impact he has had on the Garde Arts Center, and his potential for continued career achievement.

"CCT invests in the state's nonprofit arts industry not only by offering grants and services, but also by supporting its infrastructure, that is, the talented and dedicated administrators who serve the field," said Karen Senich, executive director of CCT. "Steve Sigel is an exceptional leader whose passion and knowledge have enabled the Garde Arts Center to grow to become one of the premier performance venues in the state, and one which has had a significant impact on the cultural vitality and economy of the New London region. He truly embodies the qualities this award is meant to recognize."

Steve Sigel became the first Executive Director of the Garde Arts Center in April, 1988, and has established the Garde as the major performing arts center for Southeastern Connecticut. He spearheaded a \$15 million campaign to renovate the 1500-seat historic theatre and helped acquire four adjacent office holdings for additional theatre, education and community services. His career combines a unique mix of community development, theatre production and administration.

In support of the Garde's mission as a cultural and economic catalyst, Sigel was a founding member of City Center District, New London's downtown business improvement district, the New London Main Street Program, and Mystic Coast and Country travel and leisure council. He was also a founder of the Arts Alliance of Southeastern Connecticut, twice produced the Governor's Arts Awards and hosted and produced The Library of Congress Film Preservation Tour and the national launch of the National Endowment for Arts Shakespeare touring initiative.

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“As manager of the Garde Art Center, Steve has played a pivotal role in keeping the arts alive in New London during a time of severe financial constraint and instability,” noted Alice F. Fitzpatrick, President of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut, in a letter of support. “[The Garde] is the region’s premier arts center and central gathering place, and has become a symbol of redevelopment and revitalization for the city. His campaign to preserve that landmark and keep it full has been his life’s work. New London is deeply indebted to him.”

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### **About the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism**

The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism brings together tourism, history and the arts. Its mission is to preserve and promote Connecticut’s cultural and tourism assets in order to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of the state. For more information, log on to [www.cultureandtourism.org](http://www.cultureandtourism.org).

#### **Contacts:**

Karen Senich  
Executive Director  
Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism  
(860) 256-2727 (Leigh Johnson)

An-Ming Truxes  
Arts Division Director  
Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism  
(860) 256-2722