

The Journal News

Friday
April 27, 2007

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Vincent DiSalvio/The Journal News

Eric Laxman accepts the Visual Artist Award.

A night to honor Rockland's artists

Creativity was honored last night at the 21st annual County Executive Arts Awards ceremony. The event at Riverspace Arts in Nyack was presented by the Arts Council of Rockland and County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef. "Life is short, but art is forever," Vanderhoef told the crowd of more than 300. "Art is the release of the artist's inner self, a reflection of ... his or her life and therefore a reflection of us ... of civilization. We are engaged and enriched by art." **Details, 1B**

Ceremony honors arts contributors

Emily Kratzer
The Journal News

Drums pounded and saxophones soared as artists and performers were honored at the 21st annual County Executive Arts Awards ceremony last night.

The ceremony at Riverspace Arts in Nyack was presented by the Arts Council of Rockland and County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef. Arts Council chairwoman Kimberly Crispino started the evening with thanks to sponsors and the arts community.

"Tonight is evidence of leadership in the arts," John McMahon, CEO of Orange and Rockland Utilities, said of those in attendance.

"Life is short, but art is forever," Vanderhoef told the audience of more than 300. "Art is the release of the artist's inner self, a reflection of ... his or her life and therefore a reflection of us ... of civilization. We are engaged and enriched by art."

Before the ceremony, Sande Lefkowitz said she was rooting for



Members of the Clarkstown North High School Jazz Band perform at last night's awards ceremony.

her son, sculptor Eric Laxman, to win the Visual Arts category, but it was a hard choice because one of the other nominees was Laxman's

mentor, Eugene Powell. After the ceremony, winner Laxman helped the frail but determined Powell up to the stage for pictures.

Laxman said earlier that he had been meeting with Sister Adele Meyers and Sister Ursula Joyce to discuss ideas for the design of the Dowling Gate, which he will create for them at the Dowling Gardens senior residence in Sparkill. He received his award from 2006 winner Ted Ludwiczak.

Joyce won the Mary T. Grant Supporter of the Arts category. She was presented the award by 2006 winner Elaine Vogel of Elmwood Playhouse in Nyack, who said that "she sees herself as an instrument of art. Because of her the lives of many (Dowling Garden and Thorpe Village residents) are brightened" because she brings art and music to the residences.

Riverspace Arts in Nyack won the Arts Organization award. It received the award from Angelo Parra, a representative from the 2006 winner, Penguin Repertory Theater.

"They jumped in when a resource in Nyack was about to be lost and they ... got it right," Parra said.

Riverspace artistic directors

Please see ARTS, 2B

Award winners

Arts Education: Shirley Goebel Christie

Arts Organization: Riverspace Arts in Nyack

Literary Artist: Neva Powell

Performing Artist: Ed Simons

Supporter of the Arts: Sister Ursula Joyce

Visual Artist: Eric Laxman