

By DAVID E. MALLOY

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HUNTINGTON -- Elinor Miller of Ashland drove up to the Huntington Museum of Art to get a look at the Blenko Glass collection, then stayed for all the other things going on Sunday afternoon.

Miller was among more than 330 people who attended a free concert at the museum by the city's Musical Art Guild, the **1937 Flood Orchestra** and the opening day of the "American Spirit: The A.G. Edwards/Wachovia Securities Collection." The Sunday afternoon events were free, as were the hors d'oeuvres.

"I have several pieces of Blenko Glass," Miller said. "I've collected them for a long time. I just came up to take a look at the collection in the museum. I stayed around because there a lot of things going on today."

The American Spirit exhibit includes painting and photographs from the A.G. Edwards/Wachovia Securities Collection, as well as items owned by the Huntington Museum of Art, said Margaret Mary Layne, the museum's executive director.

The collection includes items from the Western expansion, to war posters to women's rights, Layne said. "We have three galleries, and we rotate items," she said. The American Spirit Collection will be on display at the museum through July 4, she said.

"This is our country," Layne said. "This is an election year, and the collection will be here through the primary election and through the July 4 holiday."

The exhibit is a way to remind people what they're voting for and what the country stands for, Layne said. "Art can display that," she said.

Getting the private collection to the museum took about two years, said Joe Randolph, an A.G. Edwards branch manager and financial adviser.

"It has a patriotic theme with it," he said. "And this is an election year. This event is a way to treat people to good food, good music and good art."

Jean Dean, a charter member of the Musical Arts Guild, said the more than 40 singers have been practicing for the patriotic musical program since January.

The Musical Arts Guild has been performing in the Huntington area for 45 years and holds a fundraiser in the fall to finance three Marshall University scholarships. This year, the group funded three \$1,000 scholarships in the performing arts, she said.

"It's a way to give back to the community," she said.

This fall's program will be Oct. 25 in the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center on the Marshall University campus, she said.

The **1937 Flood Orchestra** also agreed to participate in the program two years ago, said Charlie Bowen, one of the group's founding members some 34 years ago.

The string band started with three members, including Bowen, Dave Peyton and Joe Dobbs, but now has seven members.

"It's been interesting," Bowen said. "We've had two or three dozen people play with the group over the years. We get together once a week. It's a jam session every Wednesday. We love to learn new stuff. We're always learning new things.

"We've always been friends with the museum," Bowen said. "It's an honor to be here today. We play blues, swing and Appalachian music. We just like to be a Huntington band."

Lois Dickson of Huntington, a museum member, was among those who headed out to the museum for the musical programs.

"We have a good crowd today," she said. "I'm glad to see that. This is a beautiful place. People need to take advantage of it."