

Bringing people together

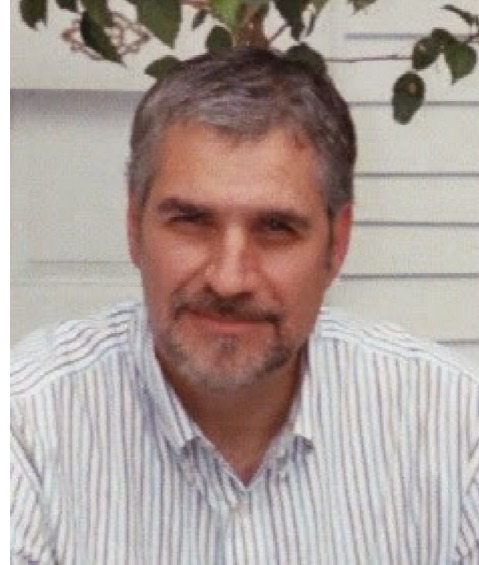
By Cathy L. Eberly (MEd, Curry '00)

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Stan Rosen (Studio Art '76) is a New England innkeeper, welcoming guests to a gabled, white clapboard getaway in the Berkshires. But that's not what he's been doing since his Charlottesville days. The road that took him to Lenox, Mass., went through Georgia and had an assist from Dick Clark. But you might say the journey started in Mad Bowl.

As InterFraternity Council president in 1975, Rosen saw possibilities where others saw headaches — in Easters, a weekend that had morphed from a sedate springtime dance weekend to a loud and large party that attracted young people from up and down the Eastern seaboard.

He persuaded the fraternities to throw one large, centrally controlled party, and he booked national musical acts, including the Tams and Jr. Walker & the All Stars. "We treated it like an outdoor rock concert, complete with a student security force and portable toilets," he said.



Stan Rosen.
Photo courtesy of Stan Rosen.

His efforts were perhaps too successful. According to The Cavalier Daily, the 8,000 individuals who descended upon Charlottesville brought some of the old problems — underage drinking, traffic jams, trash and injuries — although University officials acknowledged the party was better controlled than in previous years. By the mid-1980s, after President Frank Hereford convened a commission to study it, Easters had been discontinued.

By then, Rosen was on to other ventures. After graduation, he had returned home to Macon, Ga., and his family's financial planning business. But he stayed involved in music. He joined the board of the Macon Concert Association, just as the group was considering closing up shop after years of diminishing subscription sales and donating their sizeable nest egg to another music organization.

Rosen had other ideas. "I proposed investing their accumulation into an anniversary season that would either raise ticket sales to a healthy level or end their 50-year run with a bang," he said. The series he helped plan attracted a new generation of subscribers that sustains the organization today.

But Rosen didn't limit himself to the classics. A pianist who played for visitors to his Lawn room, he was proud of the hometown he shared with Little Richard and Otis Redding. Leasing the Macon Coliseum and City Auditorium and a high school football stadium, he produced shows by the Moody Blues, Jefferson Starship, Kool & the Gang and Willie Nelson, among others.

In 1986, he promoted a show that brought together two bands fronted by Macon natives Greg Allman and Dickie Betts, estranged members of the Allman Brothers Band. Rosen's goal was to bring a reunion of the surviving original members to Macon — he sold 3,000 tickets to fans who shared his dream. Allman and Betts argued about everything, Rosen recalled, including which band should perform first.

"After Allman's set, he went back for an encore and Betts joined him," Rosen said.

"After a couple of songs, Greg looked at Dickie and smiled, and Dickie nodded yes. At that point, the remaining members — Butch Trucks, Jai Johnny Johansen and Chuck Leavell — joined them on stage. The place was electric." The band played until 1:00 a.m., he said, "when the fire marshals made us close the show."

As Rosen pulled off other successful events, including Little Richard's nationally covered homecoming to Macon after 30 years, his reputation grew. At various times he led the Macon Arts Alliance, the Macon Heritage Foundation and the Macon Sports Commission and served as director of development for the Macon-based Georgia Music Hall of Fame.

Then Dick Clark called. A founder and chairman of the National Music Foundation, he was looking for someone to direct the foundation's fund-raising efforts. Rosen, his wife Susan and their four children moved to Lenox, where they chose to stay when the foundation moved its headquarters to Florida three years later.

Home to Tanglewood, summer base of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the village is a destination for travelers in search of culture and cool temperatures. In 1999 he and Susan bought Hampton Terrace Bed and Breakfast (www.hamptonterrace.com), a 19th century residence that had opened to guests in the 1930s. "We love Lenox — it's a Mecca," he said. "We saw great potential in the property."

Rosen brings all of his skills to play as an innkeeper. He and Susan Rosen welcome guests from around the world, including U. Va. "I try not to lose contact with old friends, because I always assume there is a project out there just waiting for us to do together," Rosen said. "It all boils down to seeing the possibilities, to matching the right ideas with the right people."

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