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ASIAN FUSION TO BE ONE OF SAMA'S GRANDEST GALAS TO DATE

Loretto – When the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art set out to “Celebrate the Arts” at last summer’s Gala, it resulted in record attendance and one of the most popular Galas in Museum history. This year, SAMA celebrates thirty-five years of the Gala with an event that is expected to surpass last year’s lofty attendance records. Serving as Gala chairs are Jim Cayce, Marian Morgan, Nancy Sheetz, and Michael Strueber.

On Saturday, July 20, the Museum will present its 35th annual Gala, “Asian Fusion.” Guests will be greeted by colorful entrance banners, as well as large hanging paper lights and 30-foot-long hand-painted silk kites. Asian art and decorations will adorn the tent, while tables will be decorated with unique, hand-made ikebana centerpieces. Guests will be entertained by ballet dancers, live music, games of chance, gourmet cuisine, and its always fabulous raw bar. The Gala also coincides with SAMA’s upcoming exhibition, *Stories Joyfully Embroidered: Shaanxi Folk Textiles from Northern China*. The exhibition, which opens June 28, will be making its American premiere after originally opening at the National Museum of China in Beijing.

Guests at the Gala will find a number of fabulous items available in the live and silent auctions, including never-before-seen hand-carved Asian wood and stone reliefs, a magnificent hand-carved stone Chinese Buddha, original and highly collectible decoupage plates and a variety of hand-crafted purses by Nancy Sheetz. The auctions also will feature hand-painted furniture pieces, several hand-crafted wooden and stone statues, antique Chinese porcelain vases, three Chinese cloisonné vases, ca. 1900, and an original 13th century Tibetan manuscript. Also included will be a champagne brunch for ten with private tour at Fallingwater and a \$6,000 tuition scholarship for Saint Francis University. Other items already receiving interest include a variety of garden sculptures, plus an assortment of “tailpipe snakes” painted by students from Hollidaysburg Junior High School. Guests also will be treated to a surprise finale at the end of the Gala.

SAMA's *Asian Fusion* Gala is made possible by the thoughtful contributions of numerous businesses and individuals: Andrews and Beard Law Offices; Karen and Dr. Magdi Azer; Benzel's Bretzel Bakery; Blair Companies; Mary and Dr. Joel Borkow; Jim Cayce and Tom Dosh; Deborah Degol and Bob Krumroy; Jeanne and Rob Gleason; Kooman and Associates, LLC; Laurel Auto Group; Joan and Harry McCreary; Marian and Dr. Owen K. Morgan; Dorothea Nelson; Barry H. Newborn; Barb and Ed O'Brien; Shirley Pechter; Penn State – Altoona; Sheetz, Inc.; Nancy Sheetz; Margaret and Michael Strueber; Carmel and Phil Trimarco; Mary R. Weidlein; Aline and Gerald Wolf; and Dr. Paul Woolley.

The Gala will be held at 6 p.m. on July 20 on the campus of Saint Francis University in Loretto. Tickets are \$175 per person and can be purchased by calling the Museum at (814) 472-3920. Bus transportation will be provided from Altoona, Johnstown, Ligonier and Pittsburgh. Advertising and sponsorship opportunities are available, and interested parties should contact the Museum.

Over the past three decades, the Gala has evolved into one of the most sophisticated and complex outdoor social events in Pennsylvania. The proceeds from the event enable SAMA's four museums – Altoona, Johnstown, Ligonier Valley, and Loretto – to remain open to the public free of charge. The event also helps underwrite the Museum's world-class exhibitions and innovative Arts-in-Education and Museum/Healthcare Partnership programs. For more information on the Gala, call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.