

State of the Arts

GRAND JUNCTION COMMISSION ON ARTS & CULTURE 1/2005

2004 Annual Report to the City Council

Established in 1990, the Commission on Arts & Culture is dedicated to creating and nurturing a climate and conditions in which arts and culture can thrive and grow in our community.

Public Art Projects Proliferate in 2004

The City of Grand Junction has four new and unique works of art in its ever expanding collection, the result of numerous 1% for the Arts projects completed in the last 12 months. Cities and towns throughout the country are using artwork to beautify the urban landscape and create a distinctive identity, and Grand Junction is no exception. In fact, over 50 different arts groups and cities have contacted the Arts

Commission since 1995 asking for information about downtown's trend-setting Art on the Corner exhibit and the City's percent for art program.



"Every Day a Hero"

The largest of the new public art pieces is "**Love Song**" by Denny Haskew, a massive sandstone and bronze flute player at the 24½ Road entrance of the newly constructed east side of Canyon View Park. "**Every Day a Hero**", a life-sized bronze firefighter created by Colette Pitcher, stands beside the new Redlands Fire Station.



"Wave Parade"

A colorful concrete and tile piece entitled "**Wave Parade**" by Joe McGrane serves as an entrance feature and bench at the Westlake Park skate park. "**Turtle**", a giant bronze turtle by Mary Zimmerman (who has several sculptures in Art on the Corner), was installed in Wingate Park in December.

Public art projects in 2005 include a 30 foot tall steel kite mobile by Gunnar Anderson for Canyon View Park, a piece which was the "runner-up" favorite during the 1% selection process for Canyon View East, plus tile artwork for the new Duck Pond Park restrooms.

Since the 1% for the Arts program was adopted by City Council in 1997, the Commission has acquired 17 works of art—from paintings to sculpture to tile murals—for 13 different capital projects in City buildings, structures, and parks. In addition to 1% acquisitions, the Arts Commission has purchased half a dozen paintings by local artists and two Art on the Corner sculptures for the City's collection.



"Love Song"

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Grand Junction
 Commission
 on Arts and Culture
 1340 Gunnison Avenue
 Grand Junction, CO 81501
 Phone: (970) 254-3865
 Fax: (970) 242-1637
allisons@ci.grandjct.co.us
www.gjarts.org

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Doug Clary, Chair
 Joan Meyers, Vice Chair
 Terra Anderson
 Pamela Blythe
 Lee Borden
 Jack Delmore
 Karen Kiefer
 Priscilla Mangnall
 Lora Quesenberry
 Allison Sarmo, Cultural
 Arts Coordinator

Business in the Arts Awards Winners

The Commission's annual Grand Junction Business in the Arts Awards recognition program is now over a decade old. Commission Chairman Doug Clary presented the 2004 awards during the November Grand Junction Symphony Gala.

The 2004 winners were the **Grand Junction Free Press** (in the large business category), nominated by the Museum of Western Colorado, and **The Crystal Café** (small business category), nominated by artist Sara Alyn Oakley, representing Grand Valley Artists and the Limners Guild. The *Free Press* has had a significant positive impact on the cultural community, especially through their promotion of arts events and the photography project "A Day in the Life of the Grand Valley". The Crystal Café displays and promotes many area artists of all ages and artistic abilities.

Paintings by local artists Stephen Datz and Debbie Cope were given to the businesses as their awards.

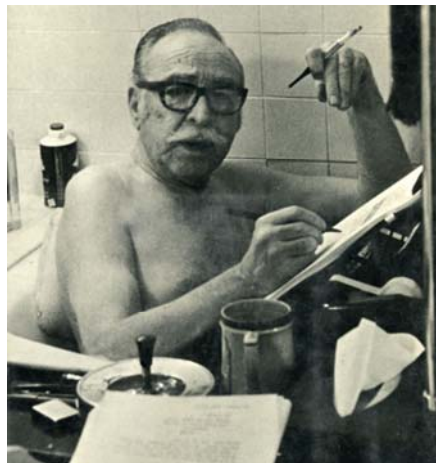
Business in the Arts Awards winners since inception:

1994	Norwest Bank (Wells Fargo)
1995	First Federal Savings Bank Frame Works & Gallery
1996	Hoskin, Farina, Aldrich & Kampf Haining Plumbing & Heating
1997	City Market Taco John's (12th Street)
1998	Home Loan & Investment Elite Expressions Grand Cleaners
1999	Energy Air Drilling Company Picture This
2000	Elam Construction, Inc. Working Artists Studio
2001	Alpine Bank Planet Earth & the 4 Directions Gallery
2002	Old Chicago Restaurant The Neon Factory
2003	Cole & Co. Realty The Coffee Studio
2004	<i>Grand Junction Free Press</i> The Crystal Café

Dalton Trumbo Tribute Festival

In November the Commission has the opportunity to sponsor a touring production by Denver's Curious Theatre Company of the play "**TRUMBO: Red, White & Blacklisted**". At the urging of Commission member Priscilla Mangnall, the Commission partnered with other cultural organizations to expand this into a four day festival honoring Grand Junction notable Dalton Trumbo.

Movie showings, exhibits, and readings were done by Cinema at the Avalon, Friends of Mesa County Public Library, Mesa State College, and the Museum of Western Colorado. About 500 people attended the Trumbo events, including 220 who saw the play.



Dalton Trumbo writing in his bathtub

A legendary screenwriter and novelist, Trumbo was one of the infamous "Hollywood Ten" blacklisted in 1947 and jailed in 1950 by the House Un-American Activities Committee. He won two Academy Awards for screenwriting. Born in Montrose and raised in Grand Junction, Trumbo is notorious locally for his 1935 novel Eclipse which included thinly veiled depictions of actual Grand Junction residents.

Sponsors for the festival included the organizations listed above, plus Cabaret Dinner Theatre, US Tech, the *Free Press*, MSC's Lectures & Forums Committee and Phi Alpha Theta Honorary Society in History.

Grant Program Sponsors Events for 42,000 Citizens

During 2004 \$5,280 in funding from the Colorado Council on the Arts and \$26,000 in City funds was awarded to arts organizations to help underwrite arts and cultural events and projects in Grand Junction. This investment in the cultural community brought arts activities to a total audience of about 22,500, including 5000 children, plus at least an additional 20,000 KPRN public television viewers and KAFM public radio listeners.

Commission grants awards went to:

- Mesa Co. Valley School District #51 Artists-In-Residence Program
- KAFM Public Radio Entertainment Calendar & Radio Room Concerts
- KRMJ-TV Rocky Mt. PBS "Western Bounty" programs
- Western Colorado Center for the Arts Summer Art Camp
- MESA Youth "Fiddler on the Roof" children's theater production
- GJ Musical Arts Association/GJ Symphony music purchase
- Downtown Association's Art & Jazz Festival
- St. Andrews Guild Grand Valley Renaissance Festival
- Mesa State Foundation Music at Mesa Guest Artist Series concert
- Mesa County Public Library "One Book One Community"
- Western CO Botanical Gardens Friday Night Concert Series
- Cinema at the Avalon Senior Matinee Film Series
- JABOA (Just A Bunch Of Artists) Artists Studio Tour

This grant program was developed as a way to help provide more arts activities without the Commission regularly presenting its own events. Over the last twelve years, the Commission and the City have donated \$215,500 to community cultural events and projects. Emphasis is placed on new events, artistic excellence, arts education for children, activities for underserved populations, and projects with broad community benefit and appeal.

Local Collaborations & State Affiliations

Last April the Cultural Arts Coordinator worked with numerous other executive directors to organize the first Western Slope conference of the Colorado Association of Non-Profit Organizations. The training seminar attracted participants from 70 different non-profit groups, from Mesa County to Cortez/Durango.

Commission member Joan Meyers finished her three year term on board of the Colorado Alliance for Arts Education in May.

In June Commission board members volunteered during the annual Art on the Corner Sculpture Change. They cleaned permanent pieces and repainted pedestals in preparation for the new exhibit.

Commission member Karen Kiefer completed eight years on the board of the Colorado Arts Consortium, serving four years as board secretary. The Consortium, a statewide association of local arts councils, is currently on hiatus, a result mainly of funding lost from the Colorado Council on the Arts.

The Colorado Council on the Arts resurrected their technical assistance program—the Peer Assistance Network—after an inactive twelve months. The Cultural Arts Coordinator again became a participating consultant and in December facilitated public art strategic planning meetings for the Carbondale Public Arts Commission and the Gunnison Valley Mural Project Committee.

The Coordinator provided information to Primary Care Partners so they could mount an extensive exhibit of artwork by local artists throughout their new medical building on 12th Street, similar to the art exhibits at City Hall. Commission member Pamela Blythe has been instrumental in encouraging the inclusion of artwork both inside and outside the new medical complex.

State of the Arts in the Grand Valley News from Other Community Arts & Cultural Organizations

Mesa County Public Library District Vote

The county's largest cultural institution, the Mesa County Public Library District, lost its second attempt in two years to pass a bond issue for a new 70,000 square foot Central Library. The election was defeated by less than 1000 votes, the same margin by which it failed in 2003, even though the library board had, at the urging of many citizens, reduced the price tag of the ballot question by \$5.2 million. The board is now contemplating next steps for improvements to the facilities.

The Library District includes the main library and five branch libraries. The Central Library has been in its present location since 1974. The MCPLD has 60,216 library card holders.

Museum's Many Trips Prove Popular

The Museum of Western Colorado continues to expand its successful educational trips, guided tours, local hikes, and dinosaur digs programs. These escorted excursions take participants to historical and scientific sites all over the world, from Mesa County to Mexico, the Four Corners to Peru.

In September a 15 member Museum archaeology expedition conducted a thorough examination of the Alferd Packer murder site in Lake City. The goal was to locate and study two Packer Party campsites, which they did. The project was underwritten and filmed by the History Channel as part of a show entitled "Cannibal Instinct" which is to air in February 2005. Also last September, History Curator David Bailey received the national Award of Merit from the American Association of State and Local History.

The Museum is the second largest cultural institution in the county, established in 1965. It includes the main History Museum, Dinosaur Journey in Fruita, Cross Orchards History Farm, Riggs Hill, Dinosaur Hill, Rabbit Valley Research Area, and Whitman Education Center. The main Museum accomplished a major expansion in 2000 with a move into the remodeled C. D. Smith Building, and the old facility became the Whitman Education Center.

During 2004 the Museum facilities hosted 56,227 visitors. Current Museum membership is 1150, up 20% from past year, and the highest level since 2000 when the new History Museum opened (then 1200 members).

Symphony Orchestrates Opera

The Grand Junction Musical Arts Association (founded in 1978) includes the GJ Symphony (in its 27th season), the Centennial Band (begun in 1981), Grand Valley Children's Choir, the Western Colorado Chorale (in its 20th season), and the Western Colorado Jazz Orchestra (begun in 2002). The Symphony's 15 performances in its 2004 - 2005 season include a fully staged opera performed by local musicians and vocalists – "Die Fledermaus", coming in March 2005 — plus five other classics concerts, children's concerts, a Prairie Portrait Pops concert, and the annual free summer concert in Lincoln Park sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

In the spring of 2004, small ensembles of Symphony musicians (quintets, quartets, trios, and duos) gave 206 performances at 22 elementary schools for 11,500 children. Currently the board is exploring ways to improve the acoustics at the Symphony's main venue, Grand Junction High School.

The Symphony has 1035 season ticket holders this season, about 15% less than the record 1236 in 2002. Season ticket sales have generally been between 1000 – 1200 since 1995 when numbers were first tracked for this report.

Art Center Gets New Director

The Western Colorado Center for the Arts welcomed a new executive director in September, Claudia Crowell, formerly executive director of the Mesa State College Foundation. Art Center Board President Kay Ambrose had been serving as Interim Executive Director since January 2004 on a totally volunteer basis.

The Mesa County Fine Arts Center first opened in a house at 7th and Orchard in 1960. In 1970 the current building was built next door and renamed the Western Colorado Center for the Arts. Additions to the building were constructed in 1982 and 1991.

The 6th annual Fine Art Auction and 2nd annual golf tournament at Redlands Mesa Golf Course were profitable fundraising events for the Center in 2004. Four hundred people are expected to attend this year's auction, coming up February 4.

The Downtown Association and the Art Center worked together to launch the First Friday Art Hops in May 2004. Art classes continue to be both popular and profitable as well.

The Center's exhibit program presents high quality artwork by renowned, established artists, as well as work by young, emerging artists. It includes cutting edge installation art and contemporary works, in addition to traditional pieces, and local artists groups. A major exhibit by early 20th century Colorado landscape painter Charles Partridge Adams, not shown previously in public, is coming in 2005.

The Art Center has 881 members. This is down almost 20% from a record high of 1090 in 2003. The Center's membership has fluctuated between 800 – 1000 for the last ten years.

Botanical Garden Growing

The Western Colorado Botanical Garden, Greenhouse/Butterfly House, opened in 1997, is in its seventh year of operation. In recent years the facility added a children's library/education center, the Elizabeth Harris Amphitheater, the Children's Secret Garden and castle, and numerous different planted areas. The International Garden area east of the greenhouse has been a focus of work this past year.

The Garden lost their executive director in 2004 and, due to operating fund constraints, the position has not been filled. The director's duties are being shared among other staff and board members. The Botanical Garden has 679 members. There has been a steady decline from almost 1000 members in the Garden's early years to the present. The Society is in the middle of a major four year capital campaign for additional garden expansion, and over 50% of the money has been raised.

Cinema at the Avalon Films

The Saturday Cinema at the Avalon independent and foreign film series began in 2001, and in November 2003 became Cinema at the Avalon, showing films on a daily basis. The series offers movies which would not otherwise be available on the large screen in Grand Junction, and has 403 members. The group has garnered support from over 30 sponsors, including two major title sponsors and 29 supporters at the \$500 - \$1000 level. They hope to have a documentary film festival in 2005, along with their regular showings.

KAFM Radio & KRMJ-TV

Public television and community public radio are thriving in the Grand Valley. KRMJ-TV, the local affiliate of Rocky Mountain Public Television, began broadcasting in 1997, and KAFM Community Radio went on the air in 1999. Both have been great additions to local cultural entertainment choices and work hard to promote and be part of the cultural community. KRMJ has 4,624 members in the area. Their "Western Bounty" programs highlight Western Colorado activities, organizations, and individuals.

KAFM membership continues to grow, now numbering 985 households. Their volunteer base is very strong and includes all the on-air programmers and other workers who are the core of the KAFM family.

Commercial Theaters Play Well

Live theater continues to do very well in Grand Junction. There are now four year-round professional theater companies and venues in town: Cabaret Dinner Theater (which opened in 1998), the Metro Playhouse (which Cabaret opened in March 2004), the Empire Theater Company (which moved to a new location in 2004 and became a dinner theater) and Greenshoe Theatre Company. The Atomic Theatre group also performs at the Metro.

The Cabaret has an amazing 6,000 season ticket holders and the Metro has 1,000. During 2004 about 70,000 people saw a show at the Cabaret, including 12,000 school children who saw the children's special "Jack and the Beanstalk". About 30% of the Cabaret's patrons are from out of town. The Metro seated another 13,000 theatergoers last year.

It is a sign of a healthy cultural community that we can support so many private business ventures, in addition to the outstanding Mesa State College Theatre program. The college's strong drama department is in large part responsible for the existence and success of local theaters. Many people working in local theaters here were trained at Mesa State.

Unfortunately for the non-profit sector and for arts education, the excellent Performing Arts Conservatory closed its doors in 2004 after nine years and countless plays and children's theater and dance classes. And the local community theater has been inactive for the past two years.