



# State of the Arts

January 1996 GRAND JUNCTION COMMISSION ON ARTS AND CULTURE

## Annual Report to the City Council for 1995 ~ The Commission's Year in Review

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### NEW OFFICE, NEW DEPARTMENT

The Grand Junction Commission on Arts and Culture, along with the Downtown Development Authority, the Downtown Association, and the Mesa County Riverfront Commission, relocated in January, 1995 to join the Museum of Western Colorado in the C. D. Smith Building. The building was purchased for the museum by the City Council, but is only partially utilized for museum offices and storage. The unused space was made available to the downtown and other cultural organizations for the next few years until the museum raises the capital funding necessary to realize their dream of a new facility.

In September a new conference room was constructed in the building. The Commission and numerous other agencies and organizations now use this as their meeting headquarters, including the DDA, the Riverfront, the Symphony, the Botanical Society, the Avalon, Historic Preservation, the

Museum, the Audubon Society, and others.

Besides a new office and conference room, the Commission now operates as part of the City Parks and Recreation Department. When the Commission first hired half-time staff in 1994, supervision of the new employee went to the Parks and Recreation Director. In conjunction with the change in the City's budgeting and accounting system last April, the Commission's budget and function officially became part of the Parks Department in 1995.

### SUPPORT FOR ARTS EVENTS & PROJECTS

To accommodate increasing requests for financial assistance from local arts organizations, the Commission formalized its special projects grant program in January, 1995. A written criteria for funding was adopted, an application form designed, and a contract finalized to be used between the Commission and all financial recipients. Because the

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- COMMISSION MEMBERS:
- Richard Leinaweaver, Chair
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  - Jeanne Killgore
  - Peter Ivanov
  - Phil Rogers
  - Ann Sanders
  - Allison Sarmo, Cultural Arts Coordinator

Commission is not a presenting organization itself, one of its major functions is to help underwrite the cultural events and programs provided by local arts groups and area artists.

In April the Commission received sixteen applications for funding, totaling over \$22,000. Twelve requests were approved and \$7500 in City and State monies were allocated to support a variety of cultural events, projects, and programs.

Much of the Commission's funding went to children's events and art educational programming: The Grand Junction Symphony's Kinderkonzert "Peter and the Wolf", the Art Experiences for Children Committee's *Art After School* classes, the Avalon Theater-Children's Theater production "The Fisherman's Wife" by the Missoula Children's Theater Company, the DooZoo Children's Theater's Family Theater productions, the C\*ASTA String Camp, and the Very Special Arts Children's Festival.

Other support helped underwrite the production of Stravinsky's "Soldier's Tale", the first annual Marsha Thomas Chamber Music Festival coming in May, 1996, the Museum of Western Colorado's new Grand River Native American Arts Festival, also in May, a neon sculpture show by local artist Gary Hauschulz at the Western Colorado Center for the Arts, the first annual

studio tour of JABOA (Just A Bunch Of Artists), and music for the Schumann Singers.

The Commission received \$3000 from Public Service Company in December, 1995 through their *Art With Energy* Program. The funding is to be used to underwrite arts education programs in the public schools. This money will be combined with the Commission's regular annual support program funded through the City and State.

## Cultural Event Promotions

Advertising and promotion being a universal need of non-profit organizations, the Commission provides financial support not only for events and programs but promotional support as well. The Commission's *Community Cultural Calendar* continues to be published quarterly and distributed through a growing mailing list of people and at numerous locations, including the Visitor's and Convention Bureau, City Hall, the Public Library, the Chamber of Commerce, the Parks office, Mesa State College, the School District, plus several retail outlets, medical offices, and real estate offices.

Beginning last September the Commission teamed up with KREX-TV to do a weekly one-minute news/cultural events spot

entitled "Art Happenings". Currently, however, it is off the air due to lack of sponsorship.

In the fall the Commission began including a listing of cultural events in the Parks and Recreation brochures.

Free statewide promotional opportunities are also pursued whenever they become available. In past surveys of arts organizations and the general public the need for additional advertising of cultural events was often referenced, and the Commission strives to help meet that demand through various promotional avenues.

## 1995 Business in the Arts Award Winners

Grand Valley businesses are very supportive of cultural events and organizations. In an effort to recognize this the Commission and the Chamber of Commerce instituted the Grand Junction Business in the Arts Awards in 1994. The first award was given to Norwest Bank for their outstanding support of cultural endeavors and events.

In 1995 two business categories were awarded from a field of eight nominees sent in by local arts organizations. First Federal Bank won in the corporate business group and Frame Works and Gallery was named the small business winner. First Federal was nominated by the Grand Junction Musical Arts

Association for donating an entire floor of free office space, furnishings, and utilities to the symphony and other musical groups for over a decade. Frame Works was nominated by artist Ron Hoeksema for their excellent representation and promotion of original work by area artists. The winners were each presented with a bronze sculpture by Summer Wisel as their awards.

### **Governor's Award for Arts Excellence**

Former head of the theater department at Mesa State College, William S. Robinson, was nominated by the Arts Commission for the Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts. The Commission nominated Robinson for his commitment to bringing high-quality live theater to Grand Junction and to the students of Mesa State.

Robinson was honored by the Commission, the college, and friends at a reception in

December. He will receive his award from Gov. Romer in Denver March 6.

### **Public Service Steamplant Study**

The Arts Commission, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Western Colorado Small Business Development Center have teamed up to do a feasibility study of possible uses for the City-owned Public Service Steamplant at Fifth and South Streets. The study is being funded through a grant from the Colorado Historical Society and by the City. The work is being done by the Western Colorado Bureau of Economic and Business Research and by University of Colorado at Denver Colorado Center for Community Development interns.

The first phase of the study researched a wide variety of potential uses, from commercial to public to housing. The initial interviews

determined that "a combination of art related activities is the most cited need in the community". An in-depth investigation is now being conducted to assess the feasibility of art related and other uses of the building. The study will be completed by May.

### **Art Mind/Business Mind Conference**

The Commission joined the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts, the Colorado Council on the Arts, Colorado Lawyers for the Arts, the Small Business Development Center, and the Art Center for the second year in a row to present *Art Mind/Business Mind*, a workshop for local artists on the business of art in December, 1995. The seminar included bookkeeping and accounting, taxes, law, how to price artwork, and the impact of computers.

## **News From Other Arts Organizations ~ The State of the Arts in the Grand Valley**

### **Museum of Western Colorado**

Dr. Janice McLean joined the Museum as its new Executive Director in December, 1995. Prior to coming to Grand Junction, McLean was in Administrative positions at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the San Diego Natural History Museum. She is experienced in many aspects of non-profit administration, long-range and strategic planning, and educational programming. Jan has degrees in zoology from UCLA, and has developed and led many educational expeditions throughout North and Central America.

Fundraising for the Museum's capital and endowment funds continues to build with a donation of \$100,000 over the next five years from the Grand Junction Lion's Club, \$25,000 from Norwest

Banks, and \$5000 from Home Loan and Investment. The Celebrity Waiter Event in November raised \$7,500, and the Grand River Indian Artist Gathering coming up May 17, 18, and 19 hopes to raise more. This festival will feature art from contemporary Native American artists, traditional dances and music, Native American foods, museum exhibits, and seminars about Native American expression and culture.

The Museum's Administrative staff will move into temporary offices on the main floor of the former C. D. Smith Building within the next two months. From there, final plans will be made to relocate to the second floor after the roof is repaired and the HVAC, elevator, and restrooms are installed.

Numerous exhibits at the Museum's Dinosaur Valley have been added or expanded in the last few months. In April the Museum will bring back the popular Cowboy Poetry Gathering at Two Rivers Convention Center.

In its 1996 budget the Museum receives only 34% of its funding from Mesa County and raises the rest through grants, donations, admissions, programs, and sales.

## Western Colorado Center for the Arts

Richard Helm was named interim Director of the Art Center in December, 1995. Helm was a member of the Center's Board of Trustees prior to his appointment and also owns and operates M Street Gifts in downtown Grand Junction. He has extensive experience in business management, human resource development, fiscal administration and fundraising. The board appointed a search committee of board and community members which will spend the next year soliciting and interviewing candidates for the new director.

The Center's Performing Arts Conservatory theater and education program which began last summer under the direction of Rachel Fortner continues to draw enthusiastic audiences and participants for its plays and classes. PAC is presenting an original children's play by Sheri Kilcrease "The Door to Everything" January 26-27, and is currently touring twenty local elementary schools with this production which promotes the benefits of reading. Plays this spring include Neil Simon's "Fools" in March, and "Bleacher Bums" in May, both comedies.

Local artists and artwork are being featured extensively at the Center in 1996. The annual Art Center Members Show runs through January, an Abstract Show is coming up in February, Jac Kephart and Nick Landrum will display their work during March, college, highschool and middle school students exhibit in April, the local Brush and Palette members show is in May, and Gary Hauschultz's neon sculptures will be exhibited in August.

The Western Colorado Center for the Arts is privately funded and has over 800 members. About four percent of the Center's annual budget is funded through grants from government sources.

## Grand Junction Symphony

The symphony's annual Children's Concert this February will be "Peter and the Wolf". In March the regular subscription season resumes with a performance featuring the Grand Junction Symphony Chorus. In April the orchestra performs with several of its soloists, and the May concert features visiting pianist Janina Fialkowska. This summer Norwest will again sponsor the annual free concert in Lincoln Park by the symphony and Centennial Band.

The symphony, along with the Centennial Band, the Western Colorado Chorale, and the Grand Valley Children's Choir comprise the Grand Junction Musical Arts Association, a privately funded nonprofit organization. The symphony has almost 1200 season ticket holders. About four percent of

its budget comes from government grants. In 1994 the Musical Arts Association created a trust for the purpose of providing a vehicle to manage funds donated to the symphony for long term endowment purposes.

## The Avalon Theater

The Avalon Theater has just reopened following extensive renovation to serve as the Grand Valley's premier community and performing arts events center. The theater now has seating for 1000, remodeled and handicapped accessible restrooms, new dressing areas, and upgraded mechanical systems. The most visible improvement is the reconstruction of the building's original 1923 facade, funded in part by a grant from the Colorado Historical Society.

Over 600 individuals, numerous organizations, service clubs, corporations, businesses, state and local foundations, the City, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs have also donated toward this renovation. The next phase of the project, beginning this spring, will include new carpeting manufactured to match the original by the original manufacturer, lobby and stage remodeling, and extensive new equipment. To date the Avalon has sold 1500 bricks--from a total of over 2500 available--in its *Buy-A-Brick* fundraising campaign.

## DooZoo Children's Museum

Children's theater is alive and thriving at the DooZoo with the Family Theater Company begun last spring by Director Kirk McConnell. The program includes both family oriented plays and performing arts classes for children. Numerous outstanding productions were done in 1995, culminating with "Tillie's Holiday Extravaganza" a "diner theater" at Talley's Restaurant. In early February there will be a puppet theater show "The Groundhog Shadow" and a Mother Goose comedy called "Goosebumps". March will feature another "diner theater" play, "Shoestring and Wire" at Jitters Restaurant. Last October the DooZoo introduced a new publication to the Grand Valley, *Western Colorado Parent*, a monthly family news magazine and resource guide. Hands-on Science half-day and full-day workshops were also instituted last fall.

The DooZoo is Western Colorado's only privately funded nonprofit interactive children's development center. Over 25,000 people visit the facility annually. Less than one percent of its annual budget comes from city, county, state, or federal government funding.

## Marsha Thomas Music Festival

A new chamber music festival will be presented throughout downtown Grand Junction May 18 and 19. Musicians playing in groups ranging from soloists to trios to quintets will perform numerous small concerts at eight different locations over two days. The highlight of the festival will be evening performances both nights featuring Gershwin numbers by the twelve piece Orchestra de Musica Brillante, with Gershwin specialist Lalan Parrot, at the Avalon Theater. This festival honors former KPRN activist and manager Marsha Thomas.

## Cooperation & Collaboration

Last summer the Commission began hosting quarterly meetings of the major local arts organizations. This was an idea which grew out of the annual Roundtable meetings the Commission holds each fall of all area arts groups and their board members. The hope is to provide a form to discuss issues of mutual interest as well as provide an opportunity to share information about up-coming events, fund raising efforts, and other news. To date meetings have been held at City Hall, the Art Center, and Mesa State College.

Any arts and cultural provider, organization, or agency with staff (on the assumption that this constitutes a relatively large or “major” organization) is invited to the gatherings, including the Museum, the Art Center, the Symphony, Mesa County Public Library, the DooZoo, the Avalon, Art on the Corner, Mesa State College, KPRN Public Radio, and the School District 51 Music Coordinator.

Cooperation and collaboration among arts groups is an on-going topic of discussion, especially in light of the fact that there is the perception that local cultural organizations often do not cooperate with each other. There have been conversations about presenting combined events, such as the Native American exhibit done by the Art Center and the Museum or the Grand West Performing Arts Festival which included numerous local arts groups and entertainment. Coordinating event scheduling has also been mentioned.

Actual combining of arts organizations has been addressed, but there are no local cultural groups whose mission and function overlap enough to make this either feasible or desirable. The Grand Valley’s cultural community has almost no duplication of services. In general, the constituency of the various organizations is as diverse as their mission statements. A comparison of the membership of the Art Center, the Museum, and the Symphony several years ago showed that only a minority of the members belonged to more than one of those organizations. This minority has grown slightly in recent years, and the Center and the Symphony particularly share a number of volunteers. Organizations differ widely depending on whether their activities are basically event driven or facility driven. They also vary in their level of public support, from the Mesa County Public Library to clubs which raise all their funds from their members.

Other discussion topics have included: How to promote the arts and art and cultural events, starting an *Art in Public Places* Program (a one percent set-aside for artwork for local public capital construction), establishing a central ticket office, starting a local arts council, measuring the economic impact of the arts industry in Grand Junction, and fund raising.