

State of the Arts

January, 1998

GRAND JUNCTION COMMISSION ON ARTS AND CULTURE

Annual Report to the City Council for 1997 The Commission's Year in Review & the State of the Arts in the Grand Valley

The Commission on Arts and Culture is dedicated to developing and improving the quality, quantity, accessibility and affordability of arts and culture for the citizens of Grand Junction.

New One Percent for the Arts Program

The Grand Junction City Council adopted a One Percent for the Arts Program last February to provide funding to acquire works of art in conjunction with certain capital improvement projects. The Commission has been promoting the idea of a public art program since it began in 1990. Applicable City projects include any capital improvements of \$50,000 or more for construction, renovation, or remodeling of any public building, structure, or park. The commissioned or purchased artwork will be placed at the project site in a public location. Major capital projects being planned by the City in the near future include renovation of City Hall and Eagle Rim Park, plus several lesser projects, all of which will result in over \$55,000 in artwork in the next decade.

A statue entitled "Play Ball" by local artist Damian Radice, was installed in November at the junction of the riverfront trail just east of the Western Colorado Botanic Garden Butterfly/Greenhouse. This was the first work of art purchased by the City under the One Percent program. The bronze sculpture appeared in the 1995 Art on the Corner exhibit in downtown Grand Junction. The Commission selected the sculpture from several excellent entries to commemorate the newly completed riverfront trail between the Old Mill Bridge and the Fifth Street Bridge.

The Commission's Coordinator is also working closely with the Mt. Garfield Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution's Coalition for a Historical Marker to purchase a sculpture by nationally renowned Paonia artist Lincoln Fox. "The Spirit of Pioneer Women" is being commissioned to honor the many contributions of the women who helped settle the Grand Valley. The seven foot bronze figure atop a five foot granite pedestal will be installed in 1999 in the new Eagle Rim Park, overlooking the Colorado River, the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail, the Old Mill Bridge, and much of the Grand Valley.

Commission Supports Arts Activities

In keeping with its mission to develop and promote arts and culture, and because the Commission is not a presenting organization itself, one of its major functions is to help underwrite cultural events and programs provided by local organizations.

Last year the Commission reviewed 29 requests for funding totaling almost \$50,000. Twenty-two arts and cultural events, projects, and programs were granted financial assistance with \$15,000 in City funds, \$4,000 from the Colorado Council on the Arts, and \$3,000 in Public Service Company *Art With Energy* funds specifically for arts education in the schools.

It's interesting to note that in 1997 the Commission helped fund four different events in their second annual presentation. Obviously 1996 was a banner year for new arts activities and they continue to prosper and improve. These events included the Museum of Western Colorado's Grand River Indian Artists Gathering, the Celtic Festival and Highland Games, the Marsha Thomas Chamber Music Festival, and Grand Valley Community Theatre's production of "A Christmas Carol".

As has been true for the past two years, the majority of the Commission's support went to children's events and art educational programming. School District 51 and Art Experiences for Children received \$3,000 to initiate a re-granting program which provided up to \$500 per school for a wide variety of arts activities. (This funding helped the district leverage a \$14,000 grant from the Colorado Council on the Arts.)

The Commission also provided funds directly to six area schools for everything from Broadway Elementary's annual Broadway musical production to Lincoln Park Elementary's Arts and Cultural Cluster Classes. Other school programs included over fifty concerts by Grand Junction Symphony musicians, the Art Center's *May Art Week*, the Valley Wide PTA *Reflections* student art exhibit, and the Advocates for Children's Enrichment play by Creede Repertory Theatre.

Other support helped underwrite the Art on the Corner *Art & Jazz Festival*, Performing Arts Conservatory's "A...My Name is Alice" musical, the 50th Anniversary Brush and Palette Club Members Exhibit, and Western Colorado Performing Arts Center's up-coming concert "An Evening of Classical Dance". The Commission is also helping the Western Colorado Botanical Society purchase "Diadems", a statue of a girl with a watering can.

Economic Impact of the Arts Survey

Last October the Commission published the *Economic Impact of the Arts in the Grand Valley*, a survey of the local arts and cultural non-profit organizations. The purpose of the study is to provide information to the Commission, the City Council, businesses, educators, and others about the relationship of local arts and cultural activities to the economy and the community as a whole. The survey updates data the Commission first gathered in 1992 and is a useful tool to help monitor cultural development and arts activities.

The survey reveals that there are 66 arts and cultural organizations, up from about 50 five years ago. Eleven new organizations have begun in the last three years. At the same time there are nine organizations which are at least 25 years old.

Arts and culture had a \$4 million impact on the local economy in 1996 (the last completed fiscal year). Operating expenditures of non-profit arts groups (including Mesa State College's art, dance, music, and theater departments and the Mesa County Public Library) totaled \$4.5 million. An average of 89% of these expenditures were spent in Mesa County,

meaning local arts organizations spent \$4 million on goods, services, and payroll in our community.

The arts industry employs 107 full time equivalent personnel among 14 different organizations, with a total payroll of \$2,318,848 (which includes 60 FTE's employed by the college and the library system.)

About 350,000 people attended the almost 700 arts and cultural events and activities in 1996. An estimated 17% (59,500) of these attendees are from out of town.

Arts Education Roundtable

The Commission's annual Arts Roundtable meeting for local arts organizations was the venue for bringing teachers, school district administration, arts groups, and interested parents together to formulate a strategic plan for arts education in the schools.

The Commission partnered with School District 51 to host a preliminary meeting in June to discuss arts education resources and needs, and the Roundtable in October to formulate specific goals and strategies. The state recently adopted new content standards for teaching visual arts and music and a follow-up meeting will be held in February to address these standards and how to incorporate them into District 51 standards.

Commission Hosts State Conference

Grand Junction and the Commission were privileged to host the annual Colorado Arts Consortium Conference, *Arts in Unison: Boom Towns, Burbs, and Boonies*, in September. Ninety members of arts groups from across the state gathered to network and learn about non-profit organization management, fundraising, arts education, and political advocacy. Keynote speakers Frank Hodsell and Maryo Ewell challenged participants to be inclusive and collaborative in their thought and actions, both toward other art forms, other arts agencies, and other people. "Previous distinctions must be erased," said Hodsell, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts from 1981 to 1989. "Movies and rock-and-roll are just as much art as an exhibition of impressionists."

There was a major emphasis on advocacy during the weekend, with an arts public policy meeting facilitated by former state legislator Tim Foster and the kick-off meeting of the newly formed Colorado Legislative Arts Caucus hosted by caucus co-chair Representative Bill Kaufman. Numerous elected officials were present to voice support for government funding for the arts, including United States Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Colorado Senator Tilman Bishop, and Representatives Kaufman, Gayle Berry, and Matt Smith. As Rep. Kaufman noted, "Government has a long tradition of support for arts and culture. Our country was built on freedom, tolerance, and enlightenment, and the arts are an expression of that."

During the annual business meeting Commission chair Karen Kiefer was elected to the board of the Colorado Arts Consortium.

1997 Business in the Arts Award

The Commission instituted the Grand Junction Business in the Arts Awards in 1994 to celebrate the generosity and involvement of local businesses in the cultural community.

In 1997, the winner in the corporate category was City Market, nominated by the Grand Junction Musical Arts Association/GJ Symphony for their generous support and assistance. As Naomi Shepherd, Symphony Manager, noted, "they have been concert underwriters for more than a decade, and have supported our organization consistently during our nineteen seasons."

In the small business category the winner was the Twelfth Street Taco Johns, owned by Ann and Thomas Temmer, and nominated by the Mesa State College Drama Club for over twenty years of donations of punch and supplies which are sold at intermission during every play performance to raise money for the Drama Club travel and projects.

Award winners are selected on the basis of their ongoing commitment to community cultural development, their financial support of local arts agencies and artists, and the outstanding example they set by promoting and developing a strong business partnership with the arts.

At an award ceremony last March Taco John's was presented with a bronze horse by local sculptor Mike Olson and City Market was presented with a carved cedar owl by local sculptor Darrell King.

Past award winners have included Norwest Bank, First Federal Bank, Frame Works & Gallery, Hoskin, Farina, Aldrich & Kampf, and Haining Plumbing & Heating.

~News From Other Arts Organizations~

Wednesday Music Club

The oldest arts organization in the Grand Valley is the Wednesday Music Club, founded in Grand Junction in 1920. The club is a member of the National Federation of Music Clubs established in 1898 and celebrating its Centennial year this year. Congratulations to the club's membership for their longevity.

The Wednesday Music Club promotes the education and appreciation of music through monthly musical programs and scholarship funds, including one for music students at Mesa State College.

Mesa County Community Concert Association

The second oldest arts organizations is also a musical one, the Mesa County Community Concert Association, founded in the community in 1945, by members of the Wednesday Music Club. The association is a member of the national Community Concerts, Inc.

The association brings a variety of touring musicians, dancers, and multi-media performers to the Grand Valley. This season's shows included "Rhythm in Shoes" in October and cabaret performer Steve Ross in "Top Hat and Tails" in January. Up-coming concerts will be "Banjomania" in February and "Lainie Nelson: White Cliffs of Dover (Songs of World War II)" in April.

Museum of Western Colorado

Plans to start construction of the new museum building in mid-1997 have been postponed until 1998. According to the Museum's latest newsletter, "The money is in the bank, the architectural drawings are complete, and we soon will go out to bid." Current plans still call for construction of the 125-foot elevator-education tower first. The height of the tower has more than doubled from the original 50-foot design to allow for future building expansion, to furnish more educational opportunities, and to provide better views of the Grand Valley and river confluence. The City officially transferred title of the former C. D. Smith Building to the

Museum. The building now houses most of the Museum's administrative staff, Research Center, archives, library, and collection storage plus offices for several other non-profit organizations.

Grand Junction and Dinosaur Valley Museum were the site of the unveiling of the U. S. Postal Service commemorative dinosaur stamps in May. The Museum's various sites continue to offer a vast array of programs, classes, and special events: The Grand River Indian Artists Gathering, Cross Orchard's Apple Jubilee, Fall Day on the Farm, and Country Christmas, the Dinosaur Days Festival downtown, expeditions with Dave Fishell to historic sites, genealogy trips to Salt Lake City, museum trips to Denver, Seventh Street guided walking tours, dinosaur digs, a World Wide Web page, and the Science on Wheels traveling exhibit. Membership at the Museum has remained steady at about 800.

Grand Junction Symphony

With the ongoing musical celebration of the Symphony's 20th Anniversary Season, residents of the Grand Valley and surrounding towns have been treated to music that rivals many larger communities. In September, Eugene Fodor's violin artistry was a great beginning to the season. The Chamber Orchestra performing at the Avalon Theatre in October gave everyone an opportunity to experience both wonderful music and a new look at one of Grand Junction's oldest buildings. The Symphony Orchestra and Symphony Chorus performed together in November. December's production of the *Nutcracker* with the Colorado Ballet was the Symphony's holiday gift to the community and a sell-out both evenings.

January 27 the Young Artist Competition Winner, Thomas Yee, performs Tchaikovsky's very popular *First Piano Concerto*. The competition for next year's Young Artist will be held February 23 in Robinson Theater. On February 28 there will be an afternoon performance of *Hansel & Gretel* with Colorado West Dance, as the annual Children's Concert. Evening brings the Pops Concert with country star Collin Raye. On March 17 Allen Vizzutti makes a return visit to Grand Junction as trumpet virtuoso and composer. The season will conclude April 21 with a performance of the dynamic *Fourth Symphony* by Gustav Mahler featuring soprano Glorietta Allison.

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. Season tickets were down slightly this year, totaling 925.

Western Colorado Center for the Arts

The Art Center just instituted two new weekly programs: Brown Bag Lunches on Wednesdays and Open Art Sessions on Saturdays. Wednesdays at noon bring your lunch and \$2 (members free) and enjoy a different artist, instructor, writer, or performer who demonstrates, reads, performs, and discusses their artistic discipline. Every Saturday the Open Art Sessions teach a single project that adults and children can enjoy and complete. Each month features a theme and February's theme is "Menagerie", with participants creating creatures using paper mache and paints.

Exhibits continue to rotate on a monthly basis, often with two or three different shows at once. Upcoming events include the annual Art Center Members Show, the First Annual Western Slope Veteran's Creative Arts Festival, AG Edwards Corporate Art Collection, the annual Abstract Show in March. February 21 the Center hosts the Park West Fine Art Auction with over 200 paintings, watercolors, lithographs, etc. by internationally recognized artists.

Other special events at the Center in 1997 included May Art Week tours and demonstrations for 3000 elementary students, summer art camps, the fall Micro-Brew Beer Tasting, and the annual Boar's Head Feaste in December. Classes and workshops remain popular with offerings of painting, drawing, ceramics, dance, music theater, creative writing, and art appreciation. The Center will also offer art education in-service training for teachers.

The Performing Arts Conservatory is in the middle of a very successful third season of community/professional theater and classes. Throughout January they are touring area elementary schools with the play "Frankenstudent", ending with performances at the Center January 23-24. PAC's '97-'98 season includes five outstanding plays. "A...My Name is Alice" opened the season in September and "Deathtrap" was performed in October. In March PAC presents the popular musical "Cinderella", and in May a comedy "Moon Over Buffalo". PAC continues to improve the Center's stage and seating, and to offer numerous dance and music theater classes.

The Art Center is privately funded nonprofit organization. Membership has increased over 40% in the last few months to almost 1000 members.

Western Colorado Botanical Society

The Botanical Society's Greenhouse/Butterfly House became a reality this past year. Over 2,500 curious and excited visitors attended the Grand Opening of the new building November 8. It is a good beginning to a project which will be continually changing, growing, and improving.

As of January 15 the Society has a new office manager, Cathy Pabst, and plans to hire a director in February. Having a director means they may apply for a license to fly native butterflies, which will increase appeal for visitors to the new facility. The addition of a director will also facilitate scheduling tours, providing specialized lectures, offering classes for all age groups, and developing a volunteer program to help with the increasing amount of work.

The native garden located south of the greenhouse is being developed into a unique feature to reflect the topography and plant materials of Western Colorado. The Society hopes to open this area of the project to the public this summer. The plan includes a miniature of the Grand Mesa, Mt. Garfield, and the Colorado National Monument, as well as high meadows and nearby deserts. Trails throughout the native garden will give visitors access to all areas and streams will provide added enjoyment.

DooZoo Children's Museum

The Doo Zoo is planning a move in February. Rent increases have made their building at 635 Main Street cost-prohibitive, so they are relocating to the second floor of the C. D. Smith Building. The DooZoo is no longer doing theatrical productions, having lost Kirk McConnell as their director. Dr. Patrice Whistler, who chairs the DooZoo's board, is acting Executive Director. The Doo Zoo plans to continue their popular science programs and expand the arts and crafts center, perhaps involving local artists. They will also be organizing more creative birthday party offerings. The Doo Zoo's Time-Out Fund Raiser will be held April 3.

Two new cultural organizations were formed in 1997, the Italian Cultural Society and Teatro Salsa, and the Collector's Loft Gallery opened upstairs at 523½ Main Street, featuring artwork by several well-known local artists.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Karen Kiefer, Chair

LeRoy Donegan

Ursula Hemmerich

Jeanne Killgore

Peter Ivanov

Bill Reidy

Phil Rogers

Priscilla Rupp

Allison Sarmo, Cultural

Arts Coordinator