

State of the Arts

January, 1999 GRAND JUNCTION COMMISSION ON ARTS AND CULTURE

Annual Report to the City Council for 1998 *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

Commission Hosts First Arts Expo ~ *A Showcase of the Arts*

Creating a "matchbox sculpture" from a small lump of clay, weaving part of an evolving fabric art piece on a large loom, and learning to blow through a trumpet for the first time were all part of the hands-on exhibits at the first Arts Expo. Most of the Grand Valley's arts and cultural organizations and many excellent local artists came together for a day-long showcase of the arts at Two Rivers Convention Center on Saturday, November 7, 1998.

The Expo's forty-four exhibit booths included demonstrations and displays of all types of art media: painting, drawing, ceramics, stained glass, photography, fiber art, folk arts, music, theatre, and dance. Two stages offered twenty acts of non-stop entertainment throughout the day. Organizations distributed information about their classes, memberships, up-coming events, and volunteer opportunities. People watched a watercolorist create a finished picture and a batik artist demonstrate the art of painting with wax resists.

An estimated 3,000 people attended or participated in the Expo, with admission at a minimum--adults \$1, 18 and under free. Sixty-five door prizes were donated and given away during the day.

The idea for the Expo originated at a Commission arts roundtable meeting with the school district and local cultural groups in late 1997. The event was so successful the Commission has begun planning for the second Arts Expo on November 6.

Support for Arts & Cultural Activities ~ *More Arts for More People*

The Commission facilitates the development of arts and culture by donating almost half its annual budget to help underwrite cultural events and projects done by local organizations.

In 1998 twenty organizations requested \$39,500 in financial assistance. As was the case in 1997, about half the Commission's grants went to events and programs specifically for children: School District 51's Art Experiences in the Schools (\$8,000), Colorado West Performing Arts dance workshops in the schools (\$1,250), the Art Center's Summer Art Camp (\$1,000) the Public Library's Hispanic storyteller (\$640), Valley Wide PTA's Reflections Exhibit (\$500), Advocates for Children's Enrichment's Creede Repertory play (\$300).

About a third of the Commission's grant funds were donated to the performing arts: a Grand Junction Symphony concert (\$2,000), Performing Arts Conservatory's "Quilters" (\$1,800), the Institute of Dancing Arts' nursing home performances (\$1,500), Grand Valley Community Theater productions (\$1,000), Mesa State College's Music at Mesa piano concert (\$1,000), the third annual "Senior Follies" (\$1,000), and a concert by the US Navy Sea Chanters (\$400).

Visual arts were enhanced by donations to the Western Colorado Watercolor Society's National Juried Art Exhibit (\$1,500) and the Thunder Mt. Camera Club (\$480). Grants for local festivals included the third annual Celtic Festival (\$2,000) and Very Special Arts' festival for disadvantaged adults (\$250).

Funding for the Commission's re-granting program includes \$20,000 from the City plus \$5,000 from the Colorado Council on the Arts.

Fifth Edition of *The Sourcebook* Published

In addition to producing the quarterly *Community Cultural Event Calendar*, another major publication project for the Commission in 1998 was updating and compiling a new edition of *The Sourcebook: A Directory of Grand Junction Area Artists and Arts Organizations*.

The directory contains the names, addresses, phone numbers and artistic media of over 500 artists from Mack to Mesa, 70 local arts and cultural organizations and 53 arts-related businesses.

The first directory was compiled well over a decade ago by local artists working with the Art Center and Chamber of Commerce. In 1992 the Commission revised and republished the book and continues to update it every two year. Two thousand copies are distributed through the mail, the Parks and Recreation office, the Art Center, the Chamber of Commerce, the Visitor and Convention Bureau, the library, and the school district.

1998 Business in the Arts Awards

Congratulations went out this year to three winners of the Commission's annual Business in the Arts Awards. Home Loan & Investment Company was the corporate category winner. They were nominated by the Art Center for their generous contributions to numerous cultural organizations. In the small business category there were two honorees: Elite Expressions, nominated by Jodi McIntosh, Freya Hite, and the Downtown Development Authority for promoting local art and artists, and Grand Cleaners, nominated by the Mesa State College Theatre, Music Theatre, Dance and Speech Department for providing free dry-cleaning of their play costumes.

Business in the Arts Award winners are selected for their ongoing commitment to cultural development and their financial and in-kind support of local arts agencies and artists.

Other companies nominated for the awards include Grand Villa, nominated by Palisade Art Lovers, Woodbury's Plumbing & Mechanical, nominated by Piera Kllanxhja, and K-joy/KNZZ Radio Stations.

The Commission recognizes not only outstanding businesses with these awards but artists as well, by presenting artwork by local artists to each business as their award. At the award presentation which concluded the Arts Expo, Home Loan received a painting by Carolyn Ford entitled "Palisade Peach", Elite Expressions received a raku vase by Terry Shepherd, and Grand Cleaners received a Frank Francese watercolor entitled "Winter, Mesa Lakes".

One Percent for the Arts Projects

The Commission's Cultural Arts Coordinator continues to work closely with the Mt. Garfield Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution's Coalition for a Historical Marker on the commission of a sculpture by nationally renowned Paonia artist Lincoln Fox entitled "The Spirit of Pioneer Women". The seven foot bronze figure atop a five foot granite pedestal will be finished in April, 1999 and installed temporarily at Cross Orchards History Farm as it awaits permanent installation in the new Eagle Rim Park in late 1999.

A major project for the Commission in 1999 will be the selection of \$50,000 of artwork for the City Hall renovation project.

Americans for the Arts, a nationwide association of local arts agencies, held its national conference in Denver last June, which gave the Coordinator the opportunity to attend. Public art programs across the country were a major topic at the four day event, and the groundwork was laid for a national organization encompassing the many communities with established public artwork.

Public Service Steam Plant Study Completed

The Public Service Steam Plant Reuse Study was completed by the Research Bureau of the Western Colorado Business Development Corporation and the Colorado Center for Community Development in August, 1998. The study was a joint effort begun in 1995 by the Downtown Development Authority, the Arts Commission, and the Western Colorado Development Center.

The study grew out of discussions about the possibility of converting the vacant building into an artists business incubator and foundry. This use, as well as other similar uses such as a history museum, children's museum, or a recreation and day care facility were cited by the study as good potential utilizations of the space.

The Commission sent copies of the study to several artists who expressed interest in the arts incubator idea, in hopes of finding an individual or group wanting to use the building.

Collaborations

The Commission joined forces with the Marillac Clinic to decorate their new clinic building with artwork donated by local artists. When the Marillac Clinic underwent a move and major renovation in mid-1998 the Coordinator helped organize and contact a hundred select artists who were incredibly generous in their donations of original paintings, weavings, and sculpture which now grace the remodeled clinic as part of the "Honored Artists of Marillac".

The Commission also worked with and provided statistics on area arts and cultural activities to the Civic Forum and the Trend Benders Coordinating Council's Healthy Communities 2000 project. The recently published *Mesa County: Our Picture of Health* report includes several arts "indicators" relating to community health and well-being.

The Commission began meeting with Mesa State College and other interested groups to help spearhead a comprehensive community-use performing arts facility study in 1999.

Arts Statewide

Commission member and former chair Karen Kiefer continues to serve on the board of the Colorado Arts Consortium, a state association of local arts agencies. One of the Consortium's major focuses in 1998 and 1999 is lobbying for the establishment of a \$6.8 million endowment for the Colorado Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Colorado General Assembly.

Karen Kiefer and Allison Sarmo both traveled to Denver for meetings about the endowment and a visit to the state legislature. The Commission will continue to write letters and advocate for this issue.

The Colorado Council on the Arts recently established a new Peer Assistance Network and invited Sarmo to become one of a dozen peer advisors to provide consulting services to other cultural organizations on a variety of issues. Last October Sarmo and eleven other executive directors of Colorado arts groups received training in effective technical consultantship.

News From Other Arts Organizations

Musical Directors

The big news from local cultural institutions this year has been the change in directors at four of Grand Junction's largest non-profit arts and cultural agencies. The Art Center's executive director, Rich Helm, resigned in September to become executive director of the Museum of Western Colorado. The Center replaced Helm with local businessman, ceramic artist, and Center board member Dan Patten. Patten is a Grand Valley native and a partner in BOSS Office Systems and Dos Rios Pottery. Rich Helm's business background (he and wife Martha own M Street Gifts) helped him streamline operations at the Museum through reorganization and significant staff layoffs.

Long-time Grand Junction Symphony manager Naomi Shepherd was replaced in mid-1998 by Cindy Rhodes, who moved from the orchestra (string bass) to the office as general manager. Rhodes has worked extensively in the non-profit field in human services and consulting. The Western Colorado Botanical Society added a director/curator position in February, 1998 and hired Jeanette Main-Goecke to fill the slot.

Museum of Western Colorado

The first phase of construction of the new museum will open the end of January--a 112 foot elevator/education tower overlooking Grand Junction which was the museum's major project during 1998. When the fund raising campaign for the new museum originally began in 1994, the museum hoped to open a new building in the spring of 1998 which spanned the parking lot space between the Regional History Museum and the C. D. Smith Building and encompassed both those buildings into a new structure. Finances have constrained those plans, however, and the new museum is now being built in phases. Currently the history museum is closed for the next three months for an extensive remodeling of all exhibits. It will be re-opened in April and feature modular exhibits including a uranium mine, the interior of the Placerville post office, new costume, pottery, wildflower and weapons displays, and a redone time line. The museum recently purchased two '98 vans to transport people to their dinosaur dig sites.

During 1999 plans are to renovate the first floor of the former C. D. Smith Building and eventually move exhibits there. 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. Also in 1999 Dinosaur Valley's exhibits will be remodeled and robotic dinosaurs repaired.

The Museum has increased its memberships substantially in the last few months to almost 1000. Admission to all three museum facilities is free the second Wednesday of each month.

Art Center

The Center expanded classroom space, added new courses, and bought new equipment for its ceramics studio in 1998. Art classes, especially pottery, are so popular that many fill up immediately and are a steady source of income for the Center. Two weekly programs begun at the end of 1997--Wednesday Brown Bag Lunches (artists lectures and demonstrations) and Saturday Open Art Sessions (drop in and do art projects)--continue to be a big draw.

Exhibits rotate on a monthly basis, often with two or three different shows at once. Upcoming events include the PTA Reflections Exhibit the latter half of January, the annual Art Center Members Show and Brush and Palette Club Members Show in February, and exhibits by Mesa State College visual art students and the Underwood Collection in March. The Center is hosting a major fine art auction of work by some of the area's most well-known artists February 27.

The Center is working with other local galleries to start "First Fridays", an exhibit opening of art shows throughout Grand Junction on the first Friday of each month. The Art Center is a privately funded nonprofit organization. Membership, which increased substantially in 1997, remains steady at about 950. Admission to the Art Center is free every Tuesday.

Western Colo. Botanical Society

The Botanical Society just moved into their newly remodeled office, "The Big Birdhouse", located beside their Greenhouse/Butterfly House. Butterflies have indeed been flying in the Butterfly House since last July.

In 1998 the Botanical Society hired two full-time staff people, the director/curator and an office manager, plus a half-time volunteer coordinator, a part-time plant manager, and a part-time gift shop manager. Besides gaining a new office and greatly expanding services and activities at the Greenhouse/Butterfly House, during the year the parking lot was completed, the front lawn planted, and a commemorative tile fund raising project begun to finance additional outside gardens. Planned improvements include several themed outdoor garden areas--a memorial rose garden, cactus and Japanese gardens.

The Botanical Society is a privately funded, nonprofit organization with just over 900 members. The Greenhouse/Butterfly House is open free of charge the first Sunday of every month.

Grand Junction Symphony

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. Now in its 21st season, the Symphony offers six regular subscription concerts, two pops concerts, the annual children's concert in February, 1999, plus a free concert with the Centennial Band in Lincoln Park each August, sponsored by Norwest

Banks. The orchestra has added an additional concert to its season both last year and this. The symphony has almost 1000 season ticket holders.

Doo Zoo Children's Museum

The Doo Zoo just reopened, having been closed for the past year while looking for a new, affordable location. Rent increases at their Main Street location last January forced them to plan a move to the second floor of the former C. D. Smith Building, but that did not work out. The Doo Zoo reopened with several new exhibits in a building they share with Partners, Inc. at 248 Colorado Avenue.

Theatre Thrives

Local live theatre is thriving with the addition in 1998 of two new downtown theater spaces. Modern World Productions, the Grand Valley's first professional theatre company, now offers dinner theatre at The Cabaret (formerly The Station) at 7th and Main Streets. About the same time The Cabaret was remodeled and reopened, the Mesa Theater & Club underwent the same transformation. Although primarily a nightclub/concert venue, the Mesa periodically hosts touring plays and musical revues. Modern World will be opening the Broadway farce "Noises Off" February 3.

The Performing Arts Conservatory is in the middle of a very successful fourth season of community/professional theater and classes. Throughout January they are touring area elementary schools with the original play "Tabitha's Time Machine", ending with a performance at the Art Center January 23. PAC's season includes five plays, two of which are musicals-- "Quilters" done last September and "Anne of Green Gables" coming up in June. PAC's fund raising efforts have been so successful this past year that they were able to purchase 80 comfortable new audience chairs and new carpeting for the Art Center's theater gallery. PAC also offers numerous dance and music theater classes at the Center.

Grand Valley Community Theatre, also in its fourth year, offers a four play season with performances at the Avalon Theater. Their next production is "Steel Magnolias" February 26-28, and the season ends with the comedy "Harvey" in May. Currently the Avalon Theater is closed for the next phase of improvements, including upgrades to the stage rigging, grid, and draperies, installation of a loading bridge, and replacement of the roof and the heating and cooling systems.

Other live theater in town includes, of course, the Mesa State College Theatre Department, currently in rehearsals for "The Elephant Man". This drama is directed by Theatre Department prof and Arts Commission chairman Peter Ivanov and plays February 17-20. And the performing group Teatro Salsa offers Latinos an avenue for dramatic expression.

In addition to the reopening of the Doo Zoo and the opening of the Mesa Theater and The Cabaret, two new cultural organizations formed in 1998 were the Western Colorado Classical Guitar Society and the Unique Cinema.

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