

Arts Future BC - we're at it again!

The campaign continues for sustainable government investment in BC's arts and culture sector

The Assembly of BC Arts Councils is once again joining our colleagues from other arts organizations to urge the provincial government to increase its investment in our province's arts and culture sector. Under the banner of Arts Future BC we have spearheaded a campaign to bring the issue of arts and culture funding in this province to the attention of our elected officials. To ensure core, sustainable funding for the arts Arts Future BC is recommending an increase to BC Arts Council's budget to bring it to \$32 million.

Last year with the support of individuals and organizations across the province Arts Future BC was successful in getting the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to recommend that arts funding through BC Arts Council be increased in the 2007-08 provincial budget. Unfortunately, despite significant support, the recommendation did not make it past Treasury Board.

Over the past two months the Assembly has been working closely with the Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture, Pro Arts Alliance of Victoria, and other local, regional and provincial arts organizations to ensure our message is heard. With other members of the Arts

Future BC coalition, the Assembly has coordinated presentations before the Finance Committee public hearings in eleven of their fourteen stops around the province. Committee members have heard how the arts contribute in myriad ways to communities large and small. Each presenter has addressed arts funding in the context of local issues. But the unvarying theme has been that greater core, sustainable support is needed, and that the BC Arts Council is the best vehicle for administering this support.

The fact that per capita government spending on arts and culture in British Columbia is below the national average has also been emphasized in the presentations. At \$14.2 million, the BC Arts Council has one of the lowest budgets of any provincial arts council in Canada. Provincial government funding from all sources averages 7% of the operating budgets of performing arts organizations in BC, the lowest level of support in the country. The cost of increasing BC Arts Council's budget to \$32 million from its current \$14 million would amount to barely 1% of the projected provincial surplus.

In contrast to this low level of

government investment, BC has the highest number of artists per capita in Canada. In 2003 individuals in BC spent 11% more on arts and culture than the Canadian average. British Columbians spent 67% more on live performing arts than on live sports events.

The Finance Committee will present their report to Treasury Board in mid November. Arts Future's campaign includes delivering our message to every member of Cabinet and Treasury Board.

Call to action

Public support is critical to our success. The most important thing Assembly members and supporters can do is encourage staff, directors, volunteers, subscribers, audiences, suppliers, and supporters of all kinds to contact your MLA now—by letter, phone call, fax, email or in person. Let him or her know that arts and culture are central to who we are as British Columbians; that increased government investment in the arts is critical to the sustainability of the arts sector; that, with BC Arts Council, the provincial government already has in place the agency best suited to provide direct, province-wide support to the arts and culture community.



Assembly of BC Arts Councils

Recognizing the unique ways in which the arts and artists contribute to strong, healthy communities, the Assembly of British Columbia Arts Councils is dedicated to advancing community arts and cultural development in British Columbia. We undertake this work through: advocacy, communication, education and training, research, programs and services and in partnership with community and regional arts councils, and other agencies, organizations and individuals who share our objectives.

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Published four times a year by the
Assembly of BC Arts Councils

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Contact us at:

PO Box 92 Stn A, Nanimo, BC V9R 5K4

Tel: 250-754-3388 / Fax: 250-754-3390

Toll Free: 888-315-2288

E-Mail: info@assemblybcartsCouncils.ca

Web site: www.assemblybcartsCouncils.ca

The Assembly of BC Arts Councils gratefully acknowledges the support of the Government of British Columbia through British Columbia Arts Council and British Columbia Gaming Commission.

Thanks also to our generous sponsors:
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DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

We welcome submissions on the role of arts in community development and the work of community arts organizations in BC. The next edition of *Community Arts Connect* will be published in January 2008. **Deadline for submissions is December 15, 2007**

Assembly News

Presidential ramblings ...

Greetings. To help you adjust to the upcoming “season of hibernation” I’ve collected a list from the Internet to occupy you during those dark, cold days to come. This is a tiny (very tiny) sampling of the number and variety of sites out there which have in some way to do with the D word... Yes! Diversity, in many of its forms.

In my mind, diversity is a given. As a best practice in order to broaden experiences, better understand our community/region/province, and share that information through projects, seek new viewpoints and perspectives, we seek diversity in all we do. It isn’t something that we do to fulfill grant requirements and then forget about. It is an intrinsic part of our activities and our lives.

Still, many arts councils have problems with a real or perceived lack of diversity and inclusiveness. Perhaps it is the lack of depth that we are able to go to in order to find the diversity within our own communities—and that may already be there in many hidden forms—that may be the weak link. At times organizational diversity can be seen as a difficult subject to tackle. Sometimes you may have diverse membership, but have difficulty finding diverse representation on your board. Or other organizational issues may present the problem.

If you are already very diverse in your organization and outlook you need not look further. Should you need inspiration for a different way to look at things, are searching for ideas for projects, or would like to connect with a diverse cultural group here or anywhere in the world... here is a start.

It took me about an hour to find these sites (after which I spent about 3 hours just reading them, and linking to more and more and more interesting sites...) There are so many different avenues of approach to the subject, it was hard to know where to start or stop.

Enjoy. I hope you find these resources at the most inspiring. And at the least, they will provide contact information for you for future reference if/when your arts council wishes to look into the subject further.

Have a good fall and winter,
Deb Borsos

Selected sites for researching approaches to diversity

- http://d06.cgpublisher.com/proposals/228/index_html
- <http://www.culturalcommons.org/directorydetail.cfm?ID=6248>
- <http://www.guardianweekly.co.uk/culture>
- http://www.alaskaphotographics.com/alaska_culture_photos.shtml
- <http://www.turtleisland.org/culture/culture.htm>
- <http://www.thesah.org/template/index.cfm>
- http://www.pca cares.org/pca_sl_Seniors_Celebrate_the_Arts.aspx
- <http://nadc.ucla.edu/>
- <http://www.culturelink.org/dbase/links.html>
- <http://www.ifacca.org/whatsnew/events/>



The Meadows School project

Bringing seniors and children together to participate in the arts

by Sharon MacKenzie

*Youth + Aged + Arts
= Living +
Loving Connections!*

Imagine! Youth and seniors: painting, writing and performing poetry, sketching portraits, sculpting with clay, playdough, and bread dough, painting cookies, performing in talent shows, displaying collections, creating puppet plays, designing Easter bonnets, chiming out verses from old autograph books, robustly singing songs, delicately dancing, clapping games and skipping rhymes, crocheting, dressing up as story book characters, sporting fashions through the decades in a past-present-and-future-catwalk... Youth and seniors: not isolated or alienated by their age difference, but rather networked by it. Here is the joy of creating and sharing, the essence of the arts, but now, with an expression of the rarely exposed richness of time spent... just time spent in creative pursuits.

The Meadows School Project, an inter-generational immersion activity, has had tremendous success over the last six years connecting students from grades five to seven, seniors, and community partners. It is one part of an alternative educational initiative emanating from Kidston Elementary School near Vernon, BC. The overall intent of this community embedded 'coming to know' is to engage students meaningfully in situational learning, where information and skills are applied in real life contexts, embedded with personal and social responsibility. There are three strands within the

context: community, society, and environment. The Meadows School Project is an out-growth of the community strand.

In this project, the classroom is moved into a seniors' residence for five weeks in the fall and three weeks in the spring, with bi-weekly cross-over visits for the balance of the school year. The activities are divided to include inter-generational partnerships, core government mandated curriculum, and public service. Learning outcomes are specific and yet wide-ranging, incorporating fundamental human connectedness within a community context.

The project, mentored by the late June Callwood, has reached the attention of Governor General Michaëlle Jean and out-going Lieutenant Governor Iona Campagnola. Recently the initiative has been selected as an example of best/promising practice by the Ministry of Health. It has been featured twice on CBC Radio *Sounds Like Canada* with Shelagh Rogers, and is the topic of the recently released inspirational documentary 'Whose Grandma Are You?', produced by Jim Elderton.

So what does all of this have to do with the arts? One of our goals was to break down stereotypes through understanding and friendship, another was to facilitate seniors and youth learning from one another, but the goal that has truly blossomed out of this inter-generational contact is that of an overwhelming sense of well-being, happiness, and developing of loving, active, and creative relationships. Anyone who has worked with seniors and children in a creative and intimate atmosphere no doubt has witnessed the



Passing on skills in the Meadows School project

emergence of this phenomenon. Our project has reflected the success of such a combination, over and over again. Youth + Aged + Arts = Living + Loving Connections! So simple and so direct.

The arts are rooted in human expression, and we know that such expression flourishes in light of two things, reflective time and impending social change. Not surprisingly, though rarely considered, seniors and youth in an uncomplicated world live between these two tracks. What we have found is that by setting up situations where seniors and children can participate together in any area of the arts that fits our timeframe, place, budget and personnel, we can create opportunities for inter-generational learning, understanding, and wellness.

Take for example our playdough and clay mornings. The first time that we

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The Meadows School project - *continued*



Bridging the generations with playdough and clay

tried this, we orchestrated a free play time where seniors and children sat side-by-side around large tables. The playdough was meant for the seniors—soft, easily malleable, exercise for arthritic fingers, the clay more robust for the eleven year olds. Within thirty minutes the tables had turned, seniors reaching for clay bits, the children eagerly re-living the pre-school glory of playdough. Creations started to emerge, grey horses with orange coloured tails, flowers with coloured leaves and clay ball centres. Could we save these? Not for long. Did it matter? No. The excitement and connections had been made in the creative process.

Budgets for these events rarely go beyond what is available on a normal basis for recreational expenses. Regardless, the worth of the connection far exceeds the cost, as seniors and youth bridge the generation gap through melding creative spirits in the arts.

Sharon MacKenzie, B.A. (Fine Arts and Theatre), M.Ed.) is the project director for the Meadows School Project. A puppeteer and very creative Grade 6 teacher at Kidston Elementary School in Vernon, she moves her classroom to a seniors home for a few months every year. Sharon was also a panelist for the "Arts and Healthcare" forum at the Assembly's 2006 conference in Mission.

Improved coverage, better rates with 2007/08 Assembly insurance programs

One of the benefits of membership in the Assembly of BC Arts Councils is access to low-cost insurance under our insurance master policies. The program offers exclusive subscriptions for arts organizations to policies for General Liability, Property, and Directors and Officers Error and Omissions Insurance.

General Liability Insurance protects an organization against claims brought by third parties who are injured or suffer property damage while on the organization's premises or while attending an organization's event at another venue and caused by the negligence of an organization's staff, board members or volunteers.

The General Liability and Property policy has been revised effective August 23, 2007 for new applicants and October 1, 2007 for renewals. The property coverage

continues to include sewer backup, water damage, and earthquake. It now also includes a 'multi peril endorsement,' which includes limited coverage for valuable papers, extra expense, outdoor signs, and more at no additional cost.

The Assembly was notified in August by our broker at Shaw Sabey and Associates of a newly redesigned Directors and Officers Errors and Omissions program again exclusively for Assembly members. Under the terms of the master policy individual directors and officers are protected against claims for such things as damages arising from negligence in financial procedures and reporting, breach of contract, actions that jeopardize an organization's non-profit status and wrongful dismissal. Renewal date for existing policies was October 1. However

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New program for local arts events

The Canadian government, through the Ministry of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages, has a new funding program which can help arts councils and other community arts organizations produce festivals and similar community events.

The new program, entitled *Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage* (BCAH), provides funding for locally-produced events, especially those with a heritage component, featuring local artists and performers.

The elements that the funder is looking for include:

- A not for profit organization that has produced the same or a similar event in the last two years
- Support, either in-kind or financial, from your local government

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Director profiles

Each newsletter profiles members of the Assembly Board of Directors. This edition introduces two new board members, Joan Richoz, representative for the Southwest Region and Justin Muir, director at large.



Justin Muir is an arts administrator, curator and director. He graduated with honours in visual arts

from the University of Victoria in 2004.

Since then, Justin has been working on various projects in the arts world, all connected to the development and promotion of emerging artists in the Greater Vancouver area. He worked as the executive director of the Langley Arts Council from 2005-07. He currently works as the business manager for the Federation of Canadian Artists on Granville Island in Vancouver.

Justin is also the president of the Helen Pitt Gallery in Vancouver, which was first established by students of the Vancouver School of Art (later the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design). It originally served as a venue for expression and community building for the students and instructors of the school, but has become an independent artist-run gallery dedicated to the promotion of experimental contemporary art that addresses social, political, cultural, and critical issues outside of the mainstream commercial art practice.

In 2006, Justin founded Balcone, a nonprofit art society dedicated to the promotion and support of Canadian artists outside of conventional gallery structures. The aim is to provide new territory for the support and development

of emerging artists in Canada by mentoring, promoting and publishing these artists' works.

Justin is primarily interested in contemporary art's precarious potential to both impel and repel social engagement, collaboration, and intervention between culturally diverse peoples. His career objective is to contribute to the enhancement of Canada's cultural capital by introducing innovative new programs to nonprofit arts organizations.

Justin joined the the Assembly board as one of two elected Directors at Large in 2007.

Joan Richoz has been involved with the Whistler Arts Council since 1983, the year after its beginning. At the time she had

two young children attending the local elementary school where there were no arts programs. The school's population was small and, as usual, the arts were not given the importance they deserve in the budget.

It was in 1983 that two local women had the idea to create a "Children's Art Festival", focusing on offering arts workshops given by professional artists and artisans to school aged children. Joan became involved with marketing, publicity and eventually became coordinator for several years.

Joan joined the arts council board in



1984 and has served as Secretary, Treasurer, and President. She currently serves as Chair. Over the years she coordinated most of the programs that became the foundation of the arts council's success including a performance series, art exhibits, and annual crafts fair.

Joan has also sat on the board of Maurice Young Millennium Place, Whistler's performing arts facility. Most of the arts council's performance series events are held in the 240-seat theatre.

Although not an artist herself, Joan's professional life was based on the literary arts. She started the first public library in Whistler in 1986 and remained in the position of Library Director until her retirement in 2006.

"One of the best parts of my job was organizing author readings and meeting such well-known BC authors as W.P. Kinsella, Susan Musgrave, and William Deverell."

She also worked with the arts council to develop literary events in conjunction with Celebration 2010, the arts council's pre-Olympic arts festivals held every February since 2003.

Joan was elected to the Assembly board in May 2007 and is looking forward to representing the Southwest area. The Sea-to-Sky corridor – from Lion's Bay to Mt. Currie – has representatives from various organizations working on creating a cultural corridor in part to promote the arts as part of local tourism strategies. Joan hopes that the other arts councils in the southwest region will work with the Whistler Arts Council on a similar approach to promoting the arts and cultural tourism.



Update on Assembly insurance program - continued from page 4

coverage for new policies can begin immediately upon acceptance of the applications. Coverage under both of these master policies is available to all Assembly of BC Arts Councils member organizations with the bonus benefit of being extended to their member groups as well. A condition of eligibility is that the organization's primary purpose and activities must be arts and culture related.

Coverage Highlights:

- Local Claims Service;
- Coverage for the organizations, directors and officers, members of committee, employees and volunteers, whether compensated or not;
- No exclusion for claims made against the Directors and Officers for alleged Wrongful Dismissal;
- No exclusion for Libel or Slander;

- Spousal coverage included (legal or common-law);
- The Insurer pays on behalf of the Insured (as opposed to reimbursement);
- Interest paid on Judgement;
- Worldwide Coverage.
- Arranged for Assembly of British Columbia Arts Councils Members by a BC Insurance Broker through a BC based Insurance Company.

The program provides optimum coverage at competitive premiums. To obtain a quote, contact the Shaw Sabey office and ask for an application form. Forms are also available on the Assembly web site at www.assemblybcartscouncils.ca/About/Insurance.asp. In most cases, financial statements and copies of your by-laws are not required. The exceptions are for Operating Budgets greater than

\$1,000,000. and/or deficits greater than \$5,000., the latest Audited, Review Engagement, or Notice to Reader Financial Statements are required.

Kari Montes is the broker working on our behalf. Kari has extensive experience in the arts community. She holds an MA in Music Theory and sits on the board of Elektra Women's Choir.

For more information or to discuss applications for Directors and Officers Liability or General Liability and Property coverage, contact:

Kari Montes or Harry Peterson at
Shaw Sabey & Associates
#1710-1066 W Hastings St
Vancouver, BC V6E 3X1
Phone 604-689-2441,
Tollfree 1-800-684-1911
Email: kmontes@shawsabey.com, or
hpeterson@shawsabey.com

New program for community arts events - continued from page 4

- A strong volunteer component
- Presenting the work of local artists and artisans and/or aspects of local historical heritage
- Open to the general public (and may or may not charge admission)

Events that are not eligible include:

- Projects that forecast a deficit
- Festivals and other events or related activities that receive support under the Arts Presentation Canada program or the Celebration, Commemoration and Learning Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage
- Activities celebrating Canada Day, National Aboriginal Day, Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day or Canadian Multiculturalism Day, or the national days of other countries
- Sport and recreation events

- Activities of a primarily religious or political nature
- Conferences, workshops and other events not open to the general public
- Events of a primarily commercial nature
- Book fairs

A copy of the Guide and Application Form can be found on the website <http://pch.gc.ca/progs/dcap-bcah/index-e.cfm>.

The application form, while lengthy, is fairly straight forward, and includes a sample budget and fairly detailed instructions for filling it out. A key requirement is confirmed support (cash or in-kind) from the local municipal government. Some of the questions asked are:

- The main objective of your project
- A description of proposed programming
- How the project activities are linked

with the goals of your organization or group

- How volunteers will be involved
- Indication that the project is open to the general public
- A list of activities, both for the event you are applying for, and for the last event of its kind that you produced.

• A detailed, balanced budget and a declaration from your municipal government of their support
Deadlines are October 31, 2007 for projects taking place between January 1 and May 31, 2008, and January 14, 2008 for projects taking place between June 1 and December 31, 2008. You do need to plan well ahead as it is expected that processing the application will take about four months.

