

Watauga County Arts Council
Annual Meeting
January 9, 2008
Annual Report for 2007

Board of Directors, 2007

John Bond
Velma Burnley
Jo Harris
Louise Harris
Clara Hollar
Janet Montgomery
Kathleen McFadden

Carmen Patella
Barbi Quatrano
Bruce Richter
Ivette Rubio
John Turner
Mike Wise

Advisory Council Members, 2007

Kay Borkowski
Unal Boya
Andrea Capua
Harry Davis
Hank Foreman
Jo Ann Hallmark
Sandy Kadyk

Shelby Lane
Joe Miller
Roland Moy
Jimmie Owen
Helen Taulman
Ned Trivette
Jonnie West

Financial Report

The Watauga County Arts Council's fiscal year begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th. Therefore, 2007 saw the ending of the 2006-2007 fiscal year and the first half of the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The Arts Council works on with a "Project Budget" style of budgeting, which enables staff and members of the board to better monitor individual programming areas.

The 2006-2007 fiscal year ended with a \$44,000+ surplus. However, it must be noted that these "surplus" funds were actually funds which had been earmarked by the source for special projects which would not be completed until the next fiscal year. The most notable of these is the Appalachian Arts in Education Partnership funds, which is the remaining funds from a grant from the federal Department of Education. Through this grant, four counties (Watauga, Ashe, Avery, and Wilkes) implemented a three-year program of integrating the arts into school curriculums in selected schools within each county using the A+ model.

Overall, the Arts Council finances were still in a healthy condition in 2007 thanks in large part to a strong Finance Committee who took on the responsibility of meeting at least monthly with the Treasurer and Executive Director to guide the overall management of the Arts Council's financial affairs. One new tool, the development of a "Designated

Funds” account and a corresponding spreadsheet which clearly indicated which funds were designated to which purpose, was implemented in late 2006 and has proven to be quite valuable.

The 2007-2008 budget was developed from the experience of the prior year by a joint effort of the Finance Committee and the staff. At the mid-way point of this fiscal year, 61% of the projected income has already been received. Of the projected expenditures, only 43% have been completed by mid-year. One reason for the apparent discrepancy between these two figures is the fact that most grant funding is awarded in a lump sum in the first half of the fiscal year. Those funds are currently located in the Designated Funds account.

Activities of the Arts Council

General Operations

2007 was a very positive year for the Arts Council in large part due to the fact that the year was begun with a strategic planning session. This session was a follow-up of planning efforts which were begun in May of 2006 and has provided very valuable guidance to the Board of Directors and to the staff for 2007.

Administration

In 2007, our Community Arts in Education Coordinator of eight years, Charlotte Smith, resigned to pursue some long-held academic dreams. The Arts in Education Partnership (including Denise Ringler of Appalachian's Office of Arts and Cultural Programs and Marshall Ashcraft of Watauga County Schools) assisted Executive Director, Cherry Johnson, in the selection of a new coordinator. Christy Chenausky was hired in early November. The fall arts in education programming was handled with the invaluable assistance of Louise Harris and Barbi Quatrano.

Marketing

Thanks to our wonderful media partners, MTN television, Aisling Broadcasting, and High Country Media, the Arts Council has enjoyed an even greater public profile than ever before through weekly television interviews, radio interviews on two stations, and a weekly column in the Watauga Democrat. In addition, the staff continued to put out a monthly newsletter which is primarily distributed to our membership with regular updates on the Arts Council's programming. Our website has continued to develop and grow to the point where it has actually become one of our best informational tools. The staff works on a near-daily basis with our webmaster to continually update and improve the information it contains and, as a result, we receive many more “hits” than similar organizations.

Fundraising

As a result of the strategic planning efforts and upon the recommendations of the consultant who conducted the original planning retreat, the Board of Directors made a decision to focus its fundraising efforts to three to four major events each year.

- The resurrected *Artfull Palette* was held in January at the Mariam and Robert Hayes Performing Arts Center. The crowd was unexpectedly large and profits exceeded \$5,800.

- The annual winetasting, which was renamed in 2007 as “*The Art of the Vine*” was held in May at the beautiful Inn at Crestwood and netted more than \$3,000 in profits.
- The annual Pigpickin, held each year at the farm of Ned Trivette, broke its all-time record by netting more than \$4,500 in profits.

The Board of Directors also made a concerted effort to place an emphasis upon developing the support of the business community. Together with the Annual Fund Drive, which began in early April, donations and undesignated business contributions exceeded \$19,500. In addition, business sponsorships of Arts Council programming also grew substantially in 2007.

Arts in the Community

Allocations

The Watauga County Arts Council is a Designated County Partner of the North Carolina Arts Council and distributes Grassroots Grant funds allocated by the North Carolina Legislature in accordance with state guidelines. Until the summer of 2007, the annual allocation was to be divided into two halves with one half going toward the programming and administrative costs of the Arts Council and the other half being subgranted to organizations from within our community. In 2007, a new set of guidelines was established which still maintained the first half of the funding being held by the Arts Council for its own programming, but due to the size of our county, no longer was the Arts Council required to subgrant the other half. However, the Board of Directors felt it was important to retain the subgranting program and set aside a major portion of that half of the funding for that purpose. With the remaining funds, a “Project Pool” was established which allows members of the staff the opportunity to take advantage of newly emerging project ideas which were not originally included in the overall Arts Council budget.

Artist Services

Regional Artist Project Grants are grants offered in partnership with Ashe, Alleghany, and Wilkes counties. The grants are offered to artists who reside within any of the four counties. The grants are intended to assist artists in developing their artistic abilities and careers. In 2007, eleven artists completed their projects (seven of them from Watauga County) by mid-year and in the fall ten more artists won grant awards (four of them from Watauga County) and will complete their projects by late spring of 2008.

The *Arts Placement Service* offers artists an opportunity to display their artwork for sale in area business establishments throughout the community. In 2007, we expanded from three placement venues to a total of nine businesses serving 52 artists with more than 212 works of art on display.

Gallery Program - The Arts Council operates three galleries in the Jones House Community Center. The Mazie Jones Gallery and the Open Door Gallery host eleven shows each year. On the first Friday of the month, a gallery reception is held in conjunction with the Downtown Boone Art Crawl. Attendance this year at these receptions has steadily increased and the gallery exhibits are booked well into 2009. A

third gallery, the Senior Gallery, displays the work of area senior adults and is managed in cooperation with the Lois Harrill Senior Center. The gallery committee has taken on a new expanded role of selecting and assisting in the installation of work.

ArtWalk Partnership – ArtWalk, an emporium-style downtown business which exclusively displays works of art with an emphasis upon local artists, works with the Arts Council to offer two booth spaces which are managed by the Arts Council's Visual Arts Coordinator. This gives artists an opportunity to sell their work through this venue without the added commitment of leasing booth space of their own. We serve approximately twenty artists through this program who work in a variety of media.

Art Fan Attic Sale – Through this effort we not only cleaned out the attic of works of arts either donated or abandoned over the years, but we also enabled people who could not normally afford to purchase original art by local artists to do so. As a bonus, we were able to profit more than \$1,700 through this effort.

Sherry Ann Edwards Memorial Sculpture Exhibition – This outdoor sculpture site displayed works by two artists in 2007: In the first portion of the year, Kelly LaForte's "The Gamble" was displayed and, in December, we installed "Gravitational Pull" by Wayne Trapp.

Arts in Education

The *Touring Arts Program* brings quality performances that coordinate with the curriculum to school children of all ages. Private and home school students are included. The Touring Arts Program provided 14 performances serving approx. 4550 students. Evaluations for the Touring Arts Program showed that the excellence in programming is something that is appreciated by all. Many teachers gave remarks similar to this one, written by a 5th Grade teacher at Valle Crucis, "We always enjoy attending your very special shows at Farthing!"

The *Mountain Arts Program* offers schools subsidized, week-long residencies with regional artists. Through this program six MAP artists worked with three schools and served approx. 615 students. Students worked with the following artists to learn their disciplines: Tracie Owensby, Origami - Mickey McMasters, Visual Arts - Dan Dutterer, Poetry and Theatre - Shiner Antiorio, American Sign Language - Jane Campbell, Fiber Arts - Singrid Hice, Creative Writing and Book Making.

Summer Arts Camp is a week-long, multi-disciplinary arts camp for children who are rising first graders through rising 10th graders. Local artists lead classes in the visual arts, music, storytelling, movement, and more. Children also receive an introduction to the world of theatre by rehearsing, and starring in, a theatrical production led by Missoula Children's Theatre. This past summer, 63 children from our community worked together to present "The Little Mermaid." There was an overwhelmingly positive response to this camp gathered from post-camp evaluations given by parents and campers alike.

Michael R. Patricelli Craft Enrichment Program: The Watauga Arts Council in partnership with Appalachian State University offers a unique series of craft workshops

to students and community members. Participants study and interact with a wide variety of accomplished craftsmen and learn the techniques and practices of their art forms.

Traditional Arts

Concerts on the Lawn is a summer outdoor music series presented at the Jones House Community Center. In the 15th season, Concerts on the Lawn featured 18 concerts with 29 acts, 108 musicians, and one storyteller. Attendance include more than 3000 people throughout the series with concerts ranging from traditional mountain stringband music to Dixieland jazz to Celtic fiddling to rock and popular music. During the past two seasons, the Concerts have been expanded to include an opening series, providing additional performance opportunities for more local musicians. Sponsorships have increased in numbers to allow for the additional performances and an increase in pay for musicians and sound engineers.

Junior Appalachian Musicians is a new program which provides affordable lessons in traditional fiddle, banjo, and guitar for children in grades 3-12. The program has expanded from one weekly lesson to two one-hour sessions per week. Programming has also been coordinated with the Western Youth Network to provide traditional instruments for Mabel, Bethel, and Cove Creek schools and the Western Watauga Community Center after-school site.

Jones House music – A weekly jam session has continued to take place over the past two-and-a-half years. The jam has established an old-time musical community, providing a meeting place and venue for local musicians, making connections between ASU students and local residents, and a friendly atmosphere for Jones House visitors and tourists to experience local traditional music. Summer music lessons for all ages began at the Jones House last summer, and plans are to continue the Jones House music lessons in summer 2008.

Documenting the Traditional Arts – Our Folklorist is charged with interviewing, documenting, and celebrating traditional artists in the community. This work is presented through monthly columns in the Watauga Democrat, freelance writing for the High Country Magazine and Old-time Herald, and Traditional Arts e-Updates. Our Folklorist has also been working with the North Carolina Folklife Institute and Blue Ridge National Heritage Area to compile a directory of Traditional Artists in northwestern North Carolina.

Community Events/Festivals – Our Folklorist has worked and partnered with several local organizations to organize and put-on events. Festivals and annual events have included the Kraut Creek Festival, and Tellabration. Community concerts have been held at Watauga County Public Library, Jones House Community Center, and Green Valley Park. Monthly community concerts and dances have also been organized for the Todd Mercantile.