

Recognizing our varied arts community

By Ronni Hannaman

I recently took a journey through Carson City's artistic community and was pleased and surprised to find how deep our artistic roots truly are. I discovered all sorts of wonderful artists who have chosen to live in our community and the surrounding areas to pursue their

passions. Some have relocated here from places we think of as resort communities, and I was curious as to why they chose to leave beautiful beach communities and larger cities with a more visible artist colony to relocate to Northern Nevada where our arts culture is far less visible.

The answers were all about the same. The clear blue dramatic skies, the proximity to Lake Tahoe, the slower pace, the lack of traffic, the appreciative citizenry, the scenery and the ability to enjoy the outdoors year-round and, most of all, the ability to be able to connect easily to other artists.

Here, most artists felt they could afford to live, work and play while pursuing their passions. Performers told us they felt privileged to be able to perform stating they would not have had this opportunity in much larger cities where they felt they could not compete with what they think are more talented folks. Writers told us they love the quiet environment so conducive to writing, and musicians love to perform in the smaller venues giving them more connection with their audiences.

Music students enjoyed the supportive teachers beginning with their introduction to band in the fifth grade and the ability to continue to excel all the way to graduation. Budding actors find the environment just right to learn their craft with the various local theater companies and the excellent theater programs offered at Carson High. Those with talent are excited to be able to continue their musical and theatrical studies right here with WNC's Western Nevada Musical Theater Company.

As I dug deep into our artistic community to put together the fifth issue of the Chamber's bi-annual "In Focus" magazine to be delivered to your homes on March 31, I found so much talent and such interesting artists that I found myself wondering how I could profile them all. Unfortunately, I could not. I chose to profile those who are excellent in their craft that may be lesser known yet make a major impact on who we are artistically.

For those who may not recall, "Business Week" online granted Carson City quite the honor naming our city as number three in their list of top 10 artist communities nationwide. At first

we were stunned. What? We have a more artistic community than New York, Boulder and San Francisco? We rank right up there with Los Angeles (No. 1) and Santa Fe, NM (No. 2)? Those who participate within the arts community knew this to be plausible. Those of us not in the least bit artistic were the skeptics.

In February 2002, another one of the many studies to determine who we are and what we want to be when we grow up was published. Entitled "Creative Capital, Carson City Community Arts Plan," the consultant determined, "The arts help give Carson City a unique sense of place by offering a means of expression to those who live here."

In the summary of recommendations by the Carson City Arts Steering Committee, it was determined that St. Teresa's Catholic Church be renovated for use as a recital and concert hall. That was accomplished. The other recommendations under the performing arts category have been tabled or ignored, perhaps because of funding issues. Those recommendations included building a theater at WNC, enlarging and renovating the current Community Center Theater and transforming the Carson City Community Center into the Carson City Cultural Center. Nice ideas that never got off the ground for one reason or another.

Under the visual arts category, it was recommended that one or more educational, professional galleries be established in the city. That could be considered accomplished under the Carson City Arts Initiative. CCAI operates a gallery on the second floor of the courthouse that is a bit out of the way for those who would not normally hang around a courthouse. There was a thought to establish an "Art in Public Places" program in city buildings and retail establishments. The Chamber is working on making this a success.

The proposed Arts Commission was established as the Carson City Arts and Culture Commission under the city's Office of Business Development, but the rest of the proposal to make the commission a nonprofit with paid staff never became a reality. The plan was to use staff support from the OBD to implement "new arts and cultural programs that benefit the community as a whole."

Other ambitious goals included the revitalization of Stewart Indian School as a multiuse cultural center, a lofty goal since the land is owned by the State of Nevada and the state protects its real estate. There was thought of creating a fund to purchase art for public purposes. Plus, as with any government programs, the talk of establishing a tax of one kind or another to fund the many proposed programs was discussed because of the success of the Question 18 funding voters approved to build parks and purchase open space. The reasoning was if we taxed ourselves for parks, we were sure to tax ourselves for art.

All-in-all, the committee was determined and committed to visibly showcase art in Carson City. Even though not much came to pass, artists came, found a home and are productive and content.

Look for and enjoy your next edition of the Chamber's "In Focus" magazine where you will learn about local artists and what makes us tick as an arts community. Additional copies are available at the Chamber office. ■

"The arts help give Carson City a unique sense of place by offering a means of expression to those who live here."



Nevada Artist Association instructor Mark Tompkins assists one of his students.



Ian Bullis shows his swing at last year's Chamber golf tournament. Shoes optional, of course.

Break out the clubs, it's time for golf

by Ronni Hannaman

We hear so much about quality of life, three words that can translate to whatever one considers their quality of life.

To golfers, quality of life translates to the number of golf courses within the region. Lucky for us, we have golf courses to the south of us, to the east of us, to the north of us and right here almost in the middle of the city and all within 30 minutes from a golfer's home or local hotel. This is truly a golf haven for those who love to swing that club and watch that little ball soar.

Many local non-profits are already planning their annual fundraising golf tournaments at the various courses. Be sure to support their special causes while enjoying a day of golf with friends. Most courses offer special rates for local golfers and feature five tees. Golf courses, too, are popular venues for weddings and other major events so be sure to plan well in advance.

Dayton Valley Golf is an Arnold Palmer designed 18-hole championship course, home to a PGA Tour Qualifier since 1995. The views on this course are incredible with 10 of the eighteen holes surrounded by the majestic mountains of the eastern Sierra Nevada. Open to the public. Club house and golf shop. 775-246-7888.

Eagle Valley Golf, located in Centennial Park, features two 18-hole golf courses and is Carson City's municipal course. The West Course at Eagle Valley is a championship links-style course that winds along the Carson City foothills and is perfect for the low-handicap golfer. The East Course at Eagle Valley has a wide open layout that is fun for beginner and intermediate players and a great venue for the lower handicappers to show off their skills. Restaurant and golf shop. 775-887-2380.

Empire Ranch Golf Course features an inviting 27-hole championship layout for all levels of golfers. Located along the Carson River and sheltered between the bluffs on 250 acres of historic ranch land with lush fairways wandering through environmentally protected wet-

lands challenging the low-handicapper, but plays fairly for the higher handicapper. Restaurant and golf shop. 775-885-2100.

Genoa Lakes features two championship courses: the "Lakes Course" and the "Resort Course" which are located just 2 miles apart offering separate unique golf experiences. There's an UpLink GPS system in every cart with a built in tournament scoring package perfect for tournament play. Club house and golf shop. 775-782-4653.

Silver Oak Golf Course is a public course offering 18 scenic holes winding through the Sierra Foothills and spread out over 160 acres and is perfect for golfers of all ages and skill levels. Clubhouse and golf shop. 775-841-7000.

Thunder Canyon is a private 18-hole course designed by Robert Muir Graves with a 73.3 rating. Those lucky enough to be able to play there are generally guests of members. The course is a popular tournament venue allowing many to play this fine course. The restaurant is open to the public for lunch, Wednesday-Saturday, brunch on Saturday and Sunday. 775-882-0882. ■

FREE Crystal Darkness Parents Toolkit available from the Carson City Chamber of Commerce

Meth dealers are continually targeting our youth by singing the praises of this highly addictive drug. Parents need to know the signs of drug use to fight back and prevent addiction that may lead to personal tragedy. The Chamber is distributing free copies of the Crystal Darkness Parents Toolkit to protect children from this deadly drug.

Stop by the Carson City Chamber of Commerce located at 1900 S. Carson Street, Suite 200.

For more information visit the website at: www.crystaldarkness.com



Unemployment figures are not always what they seem to be

by Ronni Hannaman

The state unemployment figures recently published continue to show Carson City with one of the highest unemployment rates in the state.

As a natural skeptic when it comes to statistics, I wondered how these figures came to be especially since Carson City has fared this recession better than most communities and we constantly see building going on and retail openings that have created jobs.

I've written that while small businesses seem to be disappearing, perhaps this is not caused solely by the downturn in the economy since small businesses are documented to have limited chance of success unless well capitalized. And, let's remember that many small businesses are Mom and Pop businesses and the self-employed are not counted in unemployment figures.

Though government cutbacks are touted loudly and clearly as saving taxpayers dollars, keep in mind that most of the so-called cutbacks are mostly attrition. Simply put, the savings come from not rehiring and jobs lost to attrition are not counted unless

government is telling you how they have cut back.

We have some folks touting Carson City's unemployment figures without checking into the reason and viability of the statistics. Before we continue to spout this unemployment figure, I think it is imperative we understand what is happening here and how we are tied into our neighboring counties giving us higher unemployment figures than we probably deserve.

How is the unemployment figure calculated?

In speaking to one of the researchers at Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation Research and Analysis Division, it was explained that even though Carson City did not overbuild and local construction jobs were limited when taking into account the housing building frenzy that so defined Reno and Lyon County, we were impacted and here's where it gets interesting.

If a builder has headquarters in Carson City and builds elsewhere and that project goes belly up as so many did in Washoe and Lyon counties, the unemployment figures caused by the cessation became the figures attrib-

uted to our city. Simply put, those local builders need not ever have pounded one nail in one building here yet when it came to their layoffs we were charged with the unemployment count whether the worker lived here or not. That means local builders who built a myriad of housing communities in both Lyon and Washoe counties that became victim to the economy and had to cease building and layoff employees are counted in our statistics.

If commercial builders based here also had less business no matter where the building took place, this too counted against our numbers even though they may not have had much building here.

We are all aware of what has happened to the Reno and Lyon County housing markets and because "we are all tied together," eventhough we continue to grow and create jobs.

When we spout the unemployment figures attributed to Carson City and use them to further any cause, we need to be mindful of how figures are computed. Things are not always as they seem on the surface. As they say, Buyer Beware. ■

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England swings like a pendulum do

We're going to see the pendulum swing on Big Ben when in London this October. Join fellow travelers from our area on a once-in-a-lifetime trip to a country that is on most bucket lists. We'll see just about every major highlight and get a taste of Scotland when in Edinburg and stay at a delightful castle in Wales. Maybe you can solve the mystery of Stonehenge and become an actor on Shakespeare's stage. See a London play and so much more. And, if you want to stay longer, we can accommodate your wishes. Call us for your free brochure or go online to www.carsoncitychamber.com. Come swing with us in England!



Look for In Focus magazine this Thursday

Make sure you don't miss your personal copy of the Chamber's popular local magazine that will be inserted in your Nevada Appeal this coming Thursday, March 31. Do want extra copies? Come on by the

Chamber or stop by the Nevada Appeal between 8:30 - 5 p.m. Monday - Friday. We'll be glad to give you past copies as well.

It's Keep America Beautiful Month: April 22 is Earth Day

There are plenty of areas all over the city needing special attention to Keep Carson City Beautiful. Those pesky white plastic bags continue to get stuck in the sagebrush and it seems no one wants to stop to pluck them off the bushes. The area around Roop Street and Northridge Drive is particularly unsightly as are the empty lots along Highway 50 in the vicinity of the Gold Dust West. We need to do our part by containing our trash, especially on trash days when there are high winds. Visitors judge us by the amount of trash on our roadways. Get out, get some exercise and join us in keeping Carson City clean!

April is National Garden and Stress Awareness Month as well

What could be a better stress reducer than to work in your garden! Greenhouse Garden Center is ready to show you how to plant a garden that will allow you to relax and enjoy the summer months as you sip your ice tea or other preferred beverage. They've started their free Saturday morning classes to make gardening easy and stress free. Call for schedule: 882-8600.

Become a Senior Project Judge

If you haven't been a Senior Project Judge at Carson High, now is the time to sign up for this great volunteer opportunity. CHS seniors are required to complete their Senior Project before they can graduate. They prepare a portfolio that must be graded and then make their oral presentation before a panel of judges. The community-at-large is invited to become a judge, and you will find this worthwhile experience. Judging begins May 2. Training available May 10, 12 & 14 for new judges. To learn how you can become a judge, call 283-1640 before April 1.



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Shop local is more than a slogan

by Ronni Hannaman

Communities and Chambers all over the United States are being challenged to encourage residents to shop within their county lines. Seemingly, it makes sense to shop local merchants for that was a given at one time. Increasingly more and more shoppers, however, have turned to their computer to shop the Internet looking for pricing "deals" that may not be able to be matched locally. Too, until Congress changes the sales tax rules and allows states to collect local sales tax on out of state purchases, people think they are saving the sales tax off the top only to be absorbed by shipping costs that may actually result in higher costs.

While Internet shopping seems convenient when you are online at midnight on a Sunday evening, know the consequences are many to local brick and mortar merchants that could leave vacant buildings so many abhor. Also, it is important to understand our sales tax revenues are used to pay for many of the services we have come to expect from our state and local government. The math is simple, the more you shop online, the less we collect for the general fund meaning that somewhere, somehow, somebody has to make up the shortfall. That shortfall generally is made up by the only stable tax base we have: the property owner.

Want that new state-of-the-art recreation center that has been promised or better ball fields funded by the Question 18 sales tax that was approved by voters? Well, then spend dollars here to increase that

fund! Buy your car locally. That's a huge investment in your community in more ways than one. Carson City now has many of the national stores that should provide for most of our spending needs. No one should complain about the lack of services or quality of life programs if they don't spend sales tax dollars at home. Also, don't forget, shopping locally keeps many employed.

The Chamber has been trying to stimulate more spending locally for years through various programs and now that we are all into social media, we're posting our member specials and other incentives on our Twitter account. Do you know that you can get your frequent diner's card from Charley's Grilled Subs triple punched every Thursday or that on Super Tuesday's after 4 p.m. you and the entire family can enjoy a sub for \$2.99? Or

that Wednesday evenings are half-price wines at Brugo's Pizza? Or if you wear a name tag on Wednesday's after 3 p.m., your drinks are only 99 cents at Red's? That's just the tip of the iceberg! So, make sure you follow us on our Shop Local Carson City Twitter.

Think local, shop local, stay local! We'll have an even better community because you are keeping your sales tax dollars right where they belong. Be a part of the solution, not the problem. Shopping at home will keep retail in our backyard where it belongs! ■

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