



OCCIDENTAL
CENTER for the
ARTS

Muse News

The Occidental Center for the Arts exists to provide a welcoming and accessible venue for the performing and visual arts in Occidental, California. Our mission is to enrich our community by providing diverse cultural experiences that inspire, educate, and entertain.

A Triennial Newsletter

Issue No. 1 Winter 2008-2009

President's Report

Truly, artists see, feel, and hear more intensely than the rest of us, and they work to cast light into the shadows, teaching us how to move through, celebrate, and understand human experience. We who are working to make a first-rate Arts Center at Harmony Village are engaged in promoting this understanding-through arts as a core value in the West County. Thus our motto: "A home for all the arts."

Ironically, for about a year, we have been without a home ourselves, as construction on Harmony Village has begun. Still, the past year has seen more progress than perhaps any previous one. We completed (and paid for) all the conceptual architectural work for our renovation, by Cavagnero & Associates, San Francisco. We have selected and worked for some months with David Leff Construction and Development Corporation to arrive at cost and phasing estimates for the next stages of development, and we will shortly be able to make initial contact with the county permit folks. We have met monthly as a board, in committees; hired a half time coordinator, and found extra time for a research trip to the Gualala Arts Center and the community renovated Point Arena Theater. We have worked closely with Thiessen Homes to coordinate

our deeply interwoven projects.

This year, we said a mournful farewell to OCA co-founder and friend, Kit Neustadter.

About once a month, we hosted literary and musical events at the Bocce Ballroom (Thanks, Barbara Gonnella!), put on an Italian Film and Food Festival at Negri's (Thanks, Evelyn Negri!), and put on chamber music at the church and comedy at the community center. Finally, we staffed a table at the Occidental Farmer's Market all summer (Thanks Gene Gaffney, Steve McNeal, DDS & Bistro Des Copains for sponsoring us!), bringing our local artists right out on to the street in front of Howard's Station (Thanks Chris Martin for all of the free coffee). This brainchild of the Community Partnering Committee members: Marylu Downing, Diane Masura and Beth Anderson, exposed the casual strollers to arts demonstrations and donated items for raffle.

There is no way to thank all of our donors and volunteers here; perhaps in the future newsletters—we plan at least three a year. However, one thing is clear to me: The Occidental Center for the Arts has captured the imagination and the support of a significant portion of the local population. With luck, hard work, and your support we will be back in our home at Harmony Village by late summer, 2009.

Yours in Harmony, *Steve Fowler*

Calendar of Events

Please see www.occidentalcenterforthearts.org for the latest listings!

January 21, 2009 5:30pm, 7pm: Noelle Oxenhandler author of the memoir, *A Wishing Year: A House, A Man, My Soul*. An opportunity for creative participation. Union Hotel in Occidental. 5:30p.m. \$15.00 fixed price dinner 7:00p.m. presentation, \$10.00 donation.

January 27, 2009 7pm: Harmony Village and OCA Community Meeting. Update on Harmony Village construction & plans. Union Hotel Bocce Ballroom.

February 21, 2009 3pm: Nota Bene: A Winter Baroque Concert at the French Garden in Sebastopol, \$20.00 donation.

March 14, 2009 8pm: "Who's your Da-da?" Pat Fanning, Guy Beiderman and friends will present an evening of comedy and drama. Occidental Community Center, \$20.00 donation.





Visualize This: Building & Remodeling Plan

All new west wing with green room, amphitheater access, storage, restrooms, and kitchen.

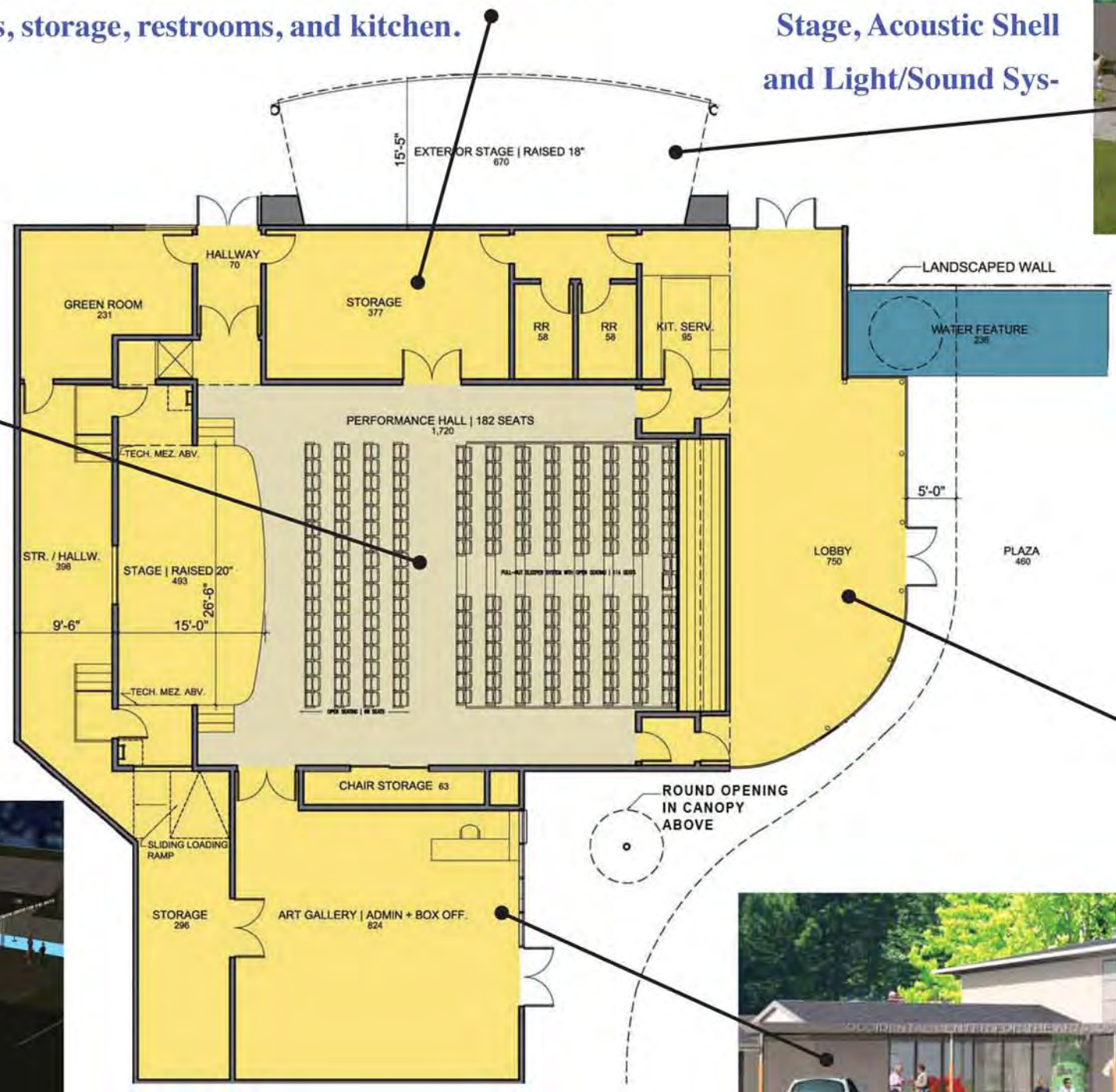
New Amphitheater Stage, Acoustic Shell and Light/Sound Sys-



- PHASE I: \$725,000**
- Auditorium
 - Gallery Space & Land Parcel
 - Architectural Design Documents ✓ COMPLETE!

OCCIDENTAL CENTER for the ARTS

- Auditorium Renovation:**
- Acoustical Retrofit
 - Retractable, raked seating for better sight lines
 - More flexible stage
 - Professional light and sound system



New Plaza and Lobby Entrance

- PHASE II: \$350,000**
- Complete acoustic design
 - Choose a contractor
 - Connections for sewer and water hookups
 - Prepare drawings with engineers and architects
 - Apply for our Phase II Building Permits.
 - House and stage lighting and upgrading the existing restrooms.
 - Setting up separate utility services, and installing fire sprinklers.



New Gallery Space, Covered Promenade and Box Office

- PHASE III: \$600,000**
- Build a new stage
 - New plaza entrance and lobby
 - Storage areas
 - Kitchen
 - Retractable seating
 - Green room
 - Sound system
 - Box office
 - Access to and a shell for the outdoor stage

What activities will the Occidental Center for the Arts host?

The Buildings and Land Parcel generously donated by Orrin and Teri Thiessen will be the future home of the Redwood Arts Council, Occidental Community Choir, and other West County arts organizations and individuals. It will be used for classes, community meetings, conferences, lessons, performances, gallery events and exhibits and much more!

Featured Volunteer: Beth Anderson



Fashion designer. Special Education school bus driver. Bicyclist. Parent. Grandparent. Artist.

Beth lists these as "the first part of my life."

Beth lives in Occidental with Simba the cat, who decided life was better with her after a dog moved in next door with her daughter's family. "About a year ago," she says, "I entered the second part of my life. I now have shapes I can fit into my life." Spending time with her family and biking three times/week are two of those shapes. She's also preparing for an exhibit of her "representational with an abstract slant" paintings at Domaine Realty, Sebastopol, opening in February 2009.

As a volunteer, Beth uses her talent to design the artwork for our postcards. She is also on the Program Development committee and is our Volunteer Coordinator.

"I think the Center is a wonderful place to work," Beth states. "The volunteers become your friends. Everyone has so much to contribute." And we at OCA thank our dynamic Beth!

-Judith Felix Moorman

The Center Fundraising Update

What's the long term plan for raising the money to create our Center?--Candace Rossman

As all of us worry about the status of the global economy, the Occidental Center for the Arts is bracing for a slightly longer, but highly successful capital fundraising campaign. The Fundraising Committee is engaging donors in the initial phase, approaching community members who have been involved with the Center in the past. For our fundraising goals, please see the inside of this newsletter. Look for the official public campaign launch, indicated by a huge thermometer at the Center! In the meantime, we are partnering up with the community to gain momentum and support for the

project, publicizing our campaign, and compiling grant information to submit for public and foundation monies.

The Center Facilities Update

As Harmony Village is breaking ground, find out what we're doing to begin our own construction.--Patrick Fanning

Our auditorium and classroom/gallery are dark and cold right now, while Orrin Thiessen and the Calvi brothers are installing new storm drains, sewers, water mains and electrical lines for Harmony Village. We have completed our conceptual design for a state-of-the-art performance and gallery space, and are working with Leff Construction of Sebastopol and the county building department to develop working drawings so that we can pull our first building permits. By mid-2009 we plan to reopen our gallery and auditorium with improved acoustics, new lighting, fire sprinklers, and freshly remodeled restrooms.

Arts Alive in Occidental: Projects

Writing Workshop for Everyone with Chester Aaron

Well known published author, Chester Aaron is leading a writing group for adults preparing for publication or writing for their own satisfaction. Meeting alternate Fridays starting in Jan. 30 2009 for two hours. Fee: sliding scale, \$10.00-\$20.00 donations benefit The Occidental Center for the Arts. For reservations, questions, etc, please phone 874-9392.

Harmony Memorial Project

The school site is currently in transition to become a new vibrant center of our community. The Occidental Center for the Arts, along with researcher Dr. Nadja Masura, invite the community to claim this transition of place by getting involved in our **Harmony Memorial Project**.

To honor the memories of Occidental's former Harmony School please contact us with any photos, stories, or artifacts you'd like to share.

Phone: 707-829-1270 to leave a message or

Email: nadjam@comcast.net, subject: HarmonyOCA

Help Wanted Section

Feel like "digging in" with us? Looking for a way to get those end of the year donations taken care of? We can help!

I am enclosing \$_____ to help sustain the dream of our Center.

I am interested in getting my hands dirty with construction at the Occidental Center for the Arts.

I am interested in volunteering my time.

Please contact me about the Capital Fundraising Campaign.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Good time to call: _____ Email Address: _____