



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. 2 Spring 2009

President's Report

Harmony Village, which surrounds our little arts center, is in full construction mode; the underground work is all done, leaving gravel-filled trenches criss-crossing the property. Carpenters, roofers and other building tradesmen swarm over the old classrooms; they have almost completed a two-story house up on the old football field. Everything is getting a face-lift, except our corner of things. The Art Gallery/Office roof is covered with plastic, with a few leaks coming in while waiting for its new tile roof. The concrete in front is cracked and broken. Our auditorium is cold, dark and abandoned looking. The amphitheater is soggy with algae-covered puddles. This is definitely the bleakest moment—the one that comes at 4 a.m. when everything looks impossible—the one that comes just before the dawn.

However, there are some rays of light coloring O.C.A.'s sky: the county permit people have been consulted, and the way is now clear for Leff construction and their architect, Rick Pate to finish a set of final drawings adequate to pull our permits. In the worst donor climate in decades, the fundraising committee has not been able to make our goal for Phase II, even though at the moment we are financially solvent. But where there is a will there is a way! Instead of focusing on the negative, we are launching our "human capital" campaign with

volunteers and donated materials in May, while continuing to track down financial support from donors and grants. We are actively recruiting a construction volunteer coordinator. Inspirational tee-shirts and caps are on order for our special volunteers. The program committee continues to deliver one quality program after another (see Calendar). The community partnering committee of Diane Masura and Marylu Downing is working hard to cement relationships with our local partner organizations, and Nadja Masura, PhD. is well along the way toward creating a definitive, arts based history of Harmony School and all of the community's emotions around its transformation into a mixed use residential, commercial, and arts complex.

For five years, we have known there would be a home for the Occidental Center for the Arts in the new "Harmony Village." It has taken hundreds of baby steps to get to this point. Now we are all more than ready to pick up our hammers and chisels and sculpt a facility we all can be proud of. You who read this are welcome to join us: apply for board membership, help with events, become a construction volunteer, or simply donate or pledge funds. Together, we can assure the 70,000 people who live within 10 miles of Occidental that "A Home for all the Arts" is on its way.

Yours in Harmony, *Steve Fowler*

Calendar of Events

Please see www.occidentalcenterforthearts.org

April 25, 2009 3pm, "Lazy Afternoon" Cabaret lady, Andrea Van Dyke sings classics from Porter, Jobim, Lerner & Lowe, & others. French Garden, Sebastopol. Refreshments \$15.00 donation.

May 2, 2009 9am: Kick Off!! Human Capital Campaign. Construction Volunteer Workday. Skilled and unskilled volunteers needed--come add your sweat equity to the Center. Phone: 707-823-7455

May 3, 2009 4pm: Celebration of the Union Hotel, John LeBaron's new release, readings by Robin Beeman, Chester Aaron and music to boot! Bocce Ballroom, Union Hotel. FREE to the public!

Starting June 28th 2009 and every fourth Sunday through August: Spaghetti Western's with...well, spaghetti! Negri's. Watch for time to be posted in town and on your postcards!



Featured Volunteer: Judith Moorman



Judith is a volunteer who's been a tireless contributor to OCA's efforts. We caught up with her recently:

Hello to you, Judith. When did you first become involved with OCA?

I've been volunteering for about 2-1/2 years. When I retired, I decided I wanted to do some volunteer work. After attending an event at OCA, I felt this was a very special place and this was where I wanted to do my work.

And, how had you heard about it? I knew Marylu (Downing) and she helped me get involved. I also wanted to get to know people in my community and this has been a very positive aspect of working with the Board and committee members.

What types of volunteer work have you done with OCA over the years? I'm on the Program Development Committee. My main focus is getting out publicity about our events. Suze Cohan and I work on this together. I also give suggestions for and help develop upcoming events. I like this part best because I get to meet the musicians, actors, writers, etc. who are participating in our programs.

Why is the idea of a center for the arts in communities, important to you?

I think our Center is even more important in these difficult times. My husband and I used to drive out of the area for cultural events. My vision is that our Center, which is not a long drive for many parts of our county, will have all kinds of events that will appeal to a diverse population. And no one will need to pay huge sums for gas or parking fees! We all need entertainment in our lives.

What are some of your personal interests?

I enjoy spending time with my husband Barry and our dog Melvis. Since I've retired, I have more time for my writing. I mostly write short stories and memoir pieces that are satirical and humorous. I've also just begun taking a class in learning to speak Yiddish.

Thank you, Judith, for all your contributions.
-Chris Riebli

The Center Facilities Update

Remodeling Starts in May.--Patrick Fanning

The drawings for our Phase II remodel of the auditorium and gallery will go to the county plan checker in April, and by May we hope to pull our first building permit. We will be revamping the bathroom plumbing and opening up walls for seismic, acoustical, and electrical upgrades. Meanwhile, we're looking for a Construction Volunteer Coordinator with construction supervisory experience to donate about 200 hours of time this Spring and Summer to run our weekend volunteer work days. Our first volunteer workday will be Saturday, May 2nd. We need all skill and experience levels. If you have construction experience, all the better. For more information and to reserve your stylish volunteer builder T-shirt, call Patrick Fanning at (707) 823-7455.

Arts Alive in Occidental: Projects

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**. Please contact us with any photos, stories, or artifacts you'd like to share about Harmony School. Phone: 707-829-1270 Email: nadjam@comcast.net, subject: HarmonyOCA

Help Wanted Section Feel like "digging in" with us?

_____ 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: _____



The Center Fundraising Update

How do you fundraise in a down economy?

--Candace Rossman

PHASE II: \$350,000

This was the question at a fundraising workshop at the Volunteer Center in Santa Rosa. There, Judith Reimuller and I were reminded about the art of fundraising. One needs a matchmaker, a storyteller, a solicitor and a thanker. Forgetting this in the Fundraising Committee, we focus on and are discouraged by the "ask," feeling alone facing rejection every time in this economy. But we are not alone. Turns out we have all of these roles with our volunteers and board members. In an economic downturn, fundraising is not as simple, but the upside is it forces us to develop long term relationships at a deeper level, creating greater donor sustainability.

When getting my "green" MBA, we often discussed the "triple bottom line," which directed businesses to look at their human and environmental capital in addition to their financial capital. This is a good metric to understand the sustainability of a company. The same holds true for our non-profit. While addressing the renovation needs of the Occidental Center for the Arts, an economic downturn requires us to balance all of our capital even more carefully. Environmental capital: First, reduce, reuse and recycle. This starts with plans, stems to materials and ends up in our hands, creating a smaller environmental footprint. Starting the Center in a pre-existing footprint helps. We have received gallery and office furniture donations by working with iReuse. Human capital: many people are out of work, feeling scared and wanting to give back to their communities. We will partner with community volunteers to "raise this barn" together, answering this call May 2nd! Finally, I believe fundraising in a down economy is a benefit, because although your timeline may be longer,

you are building better community relationships, with potentially less harm to the environment and frugality that makes those who have donated proud. We have no space to be over budget, because, frankly, we don't have it!

Highlights from the Community Meeting

On Tuesday January 27th, 2009, the meeting was held at the Union Hotel. Orrin Thiessen distributed a hand out of the proposed Harmony Village development. Steve Fowler, president of the OCA spoke about the Center's capital campaign and future plans. Dr. Masura presented her plan for creating a "living history" entitled "Remembering Harmony" by using video interviews, photos and live theater.

Kenny Cohan provided a brief history of the Harmony Village development. Originally turned down by Burbank Gardens low income housing and many others, Thiessen Homes stepped in and agreed to buy it after examining the following concerns: sustainability, storm drain infrastructure, and a donation of part of the school to the OCA. Thiessen discussed the hydrology concerns with Brock Dolman of the OAEC with regard to the potential for sediment dumping into the Dutch Bill Creek watershed. A catchment system was suggested and has been developed. No grading will be done on the property and the exiting elevation is being maintained for new construction.

The old school office will be used for commercial space, the play yard will be used for parking. There will be a plaza surrounded by residential condos and single family homes will be built on the hill and in other areas. Row houses will also be built. At this point the meeting was opened up for questions and answers that can all be found on our website www.occidentalcenterforthearts.org

Visualize This: An active and diverse Center that serves the community's needs and is financially sustainable

How will we accomplish this? We start with two anchor tenants to rent space. The Redwood Arts Council and the Occidental Community Choir always have exciting performances for the community. To find out more about world class music performances and the premiere of "The Emperor's Nightingale," in May, please see www.redwoodarts.org and www.occidentalchoir.org

The Occidental Library, KOWS and others have expressed interest in rental space as well. With some regular renters to begin, we then intend to add more intermittent event-based rentals for classes, art gallery exhibits, music rehearsals, lessons and community meetings. Local contacts have revealed a need for a conference center that is near businesses that attendees can visit for accommodations and meals. The Occidental Center for the Arts would be perfectly positioned for this. Have more ideas or want to be a part of our fiscal planning? Contact us!

Community Need and Vision



Financial Sustainability



Occidental Center for the Arts
PO Box 1019
Occidental, CA 95465

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A Home for all our Thanks

Capital Fundraising Campaign-WALL OF FAME-Listed Prominently by name in the new lobby
Founder's Circle: Orrin & Terri Thiessen

Major Donors: Pat Fanning & Nancy Kesselring, Kit Neustadter, Doris Murphy,
Candace Rossman

Sustaining Donors: David Benefiel & Susan Piernan, Steve Fowler, Pieter & Marya
Myers, Delia Moon, Ralph & Joan Schoolcraft, Rich Yonash

Other Donors

Chester Aaron, Michael & Tracee Alexander, Robin Beeman, Benjamin Bouck, Corrick & Norma Brown ,
Marylu Downing , Barbara Doyle, Gary Lee Getchell, Marshall Greenberg, Gerald Heft, Allan S. Hill, Dale
Jewell, Roderick Larue, Diane Masura, Ken & Lolly Mesches, Judith Moorman, Sue Nosker, Claire Pearson,
Anne Ransome, Judith Reimuller, Shirley Silver, Sunshine Arts, Everett Traverso, Traditional Medicinals, The
Union Hotel, Negri's, and The French Garden. We would also like to thank those artists who have donated
their fees back to the center.



**This being our inaugural thanks section, if you believe that we have missed you, please contact Candace at
707-544-1512.**