MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

STATE OF THE Arts

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MAC Notes

Jackie Parsons, chair of the Montana Arts Council, received the Community Spirit Award at the First People's Fund award ceremony, Oct. 4 in Minneapolis.

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Artist Gathering

Montana artists network and learn in Kalispell

By Cindy Kittredge
Folk Arts and Market Development Specialist

Over the final weekend in September, 75 Montana artists involved in MAP (the Montana Artrepreneur Program) attended the Artist Gathering 2012 at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell. They shared their art with the public, networked with each other, and learned more about the business of art from a number of professionals, including New York City's Creative Capital group, an organization nationally recognized for its training and support of artists across the country.

Participating artists came from towns large and small across Montana. The weekend provided them with the opportunity to get to know other artists from throughout the state and to begin the process of building collaborative relationships.

"This is an incredible opportunity for all of us interested in developing Montana's creative economies," said Arni Fishbaugh, Montana Arts Council executive director. "Through support from LINC and the USDA and because Creative Capital received special funding, we have been able to shape this kind of event to help artists showcase their art and learn more about the business of art, while giving them the opportunity to network and share information."

The Artist Showcase and Sale opened Friday, Sept. 28 with a reception hosted by Flathead Valley Community College. This showcase, which featured all artists and represented a rich range of media, continued all day Saturday, Sept. 29. Artwork included art quilts, watercolor, oil and acrylic paintings, art glass, hand-bound books, silver, brass, stone and beaded jewelry, hand-thrown pottery, hand-painted silk scarves, metal, glass, stone and clay sculptures, art dolls, photography, paper and kites, hand-spun and dyed fiber, hand-woven tapestries, embellished gourds and ledger art.

Bitterroot Valley glass artist Stephanie Smith talks to a prospective customer during the Artist Showcase and Sale.

This event was designed to introduce artists and their work to galleries, architects, interior designers and the general public from across the state. The public had the opportunity to purchase art and to interact with artists, learning more about the creative process and the work.

At a Saturday night dinner, held to honor the MAP artists and their work, the following seven artists were awarded MAP Certificates of Market Readiness: Deb Essen, a handweaver from Victor; textile artist Louise Barker, metal artist Karen Chesna, and watercolorist Linda Christensen, all from Kalispell; quilt artist Kelly Bort, and oil painter Linda Katsuda, both from Whitefish; and Angelika Harden-Norman, a photographer and digital artist from Browning.

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Big anniversary for Big Productions

By Kristi Niemeyer

After 25 years of organizing the largest rural performing arts series in the state, Chas and Margie Cantlon have a bundle of memories to share.

Prior to one show, a Broadway performer offered a class to members of Ronan's Show Choir. She sang, accompanied only by a piano, with no microphone, "yet her voice was in their laps," says Margie. "The kids were leaning forward, just blown away."

And for Lake County Youth Home, a facility for kids who are estranged from their families and whose residents benefit from the series' proceeds, the concerts have delivered unexpected blessings. The artists often have dinner with the kids before the concert, allowing residents to become "part of the 'in' crowd and get attention they don't typically get," says Cantlon.

Margie and Chas Cantlon celebrate the 25th anniversary of the largest rural performing arts series in Montana.

He remembers one youngster who was trained by a tech person to manage the light board for a concert. "His future opened up that night," he says.

Residents have also learned "to go, sit in the audience and pay attention." The concert series "has changed the culture of the Youth Home," he adds. "It blends with our mission beautifully."

The series got its start in 1987, after a board member of what was then the Folkshop suggested offering concerts to raise funds for the organization, which served developmentally disabled people in the Mission Valley. "We wanted to be able to give people something back for their money," recalls Cantlon, who was the Folkshop executive director.

That previous summer, the members of the Montana Band were killed when their plane crashed into a hill above Flathead Lake. "In the aftermath, and rising out of the dust of that tragedy, was Rob Quist (a former Montana Band member) and Great Northern," says Cantlon. "I said, to be taken seriously, we need to talk to Rob, who was then living in Colorado."

After several efforts to connect, Quist showed up at the Folkshop in Ronan. "I hear you were looking for me," he told Cantlon.

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Dance meets literature in "Synchronicity and the Sacred Space"

Hamilton scientist, adventurer and author Jon Turk has collaborated with Weber Dance Company of Boston to create a mixed dance and storytelling event, "Synchronicity and the Sacred Space."

The piece debuts in Montana at 7 p.m. Nov. 10-11 at the Downtown Dance Collective in Missoula; Nov 14 at the Hamilton Performing Arts Center; and Nov. 16 at the O'Shaughnessy Center in Whitefish.

Turk, a world-renowned traveler, has kayaked the Arctic multiple times, as well as navigated Cape Horn and the Solomon Islands, explored Siberia on cross-country skis and reconnected indigenous coastal communities in Eastern Russia with those of the interior who still practice traditional reindeer herding.

"Jon's work as an explorer is staggering and his stories from the Kamchatka Peninsula tell a provocative tale of both the tragedy of deep cultural loss and the beauty of alternative ways of perceiving/living in the world," writes choreographer Jody Weber.

More than a year ago, the choreographer joined forces with the explorer to create an evening-length performance that documents portions of Turk's experience through both movement and spoken word.

When it premiered last October, the piece was rated as "one of Boston's 10 Best Fall Dance Events" by the *Boston Phoenix*, and was a Critics' Pick of the *Boston Globe*.

Visit www.weberdance.com for details.