

Letter from the President

Spring is upon us! Finally. The winter was not the worst in my memory, but it was not easy either. No matter how you look at it though, spring brings a freshness you can't ignore. And it tends to energize us after a long hibernation. Since I have the floor here in this little corner of the newsletter, I've decided to remind you of some fun things you might like to do this spring - things that are good for you and the community and the planet, and they are relatively cheap. Here's one: plant a garden. Everybody's doing it! I'm not a gardener for the simple

reason that I forget to water things. So I kept it small. I put a few seeds in a pot in the dining room window until they're big enough to go outside. Then I plan to move them around to find the best sun, which is in short supply in my yard. It's not much, but I'm doing it. Here's another: ride your bike! You know you want to. Go dig it out of the garage and go around the block if that's all you can do. It will be worth it (and I happen to know a good bike mechanic if you need one). Suggestion number three: volunteer! There are a lot of people right now with more time on their hands than they expected and volunteering is a great way

to connect with people and places and discover new skills. How many non-profits are there in Paonia? And don't forget about the social services, businesses who use volunteers, local groups that are mobilizing for good (town park, town trees, river improvement, recycling) and friends and neighbors who need a hand now and again. If you're down in the dumps about the economy, these are great ways to lift your spirits and help you connect with people, nature and yourself. Enjoy!

In love and peace,
Carol Kwiatkowski

Feast with Feast at the Annual Member Meeting

The Blue Sage Center for the Arts will hold its annual membership meeting on Saturday, June 20th, with a barbecue starting at 5 pm. This is a free event for all Blue Sage members and includes a dinner prepared with fresh, locally grown foods from the North Fork Valley, followed by a short program to facilitate Blue Sage business for the coming year. Agenda items will include officer elections, a "State of the Sage" address from our own First Lady, Carol Kwiatkowski, followed by general discussion and a question and answer session regarding the future of the center.

This is the time of year when we ask folks to renew their memberships and support the Blue Sage so that we can continue to bring quality, artistic programs and entertainment to you, our most valued asset. We are not immune from the hard economic times facing the nation and our community. Your continued support is critical to our ability to meet basic operating expenses. One more

reason to renew your membership or encourage a friend to join is that this year marks the 15th Anniversary for the Blue Sage! To celebrate, we offer a double entendre ... FEAST will perform after our magnificent feast and at the conclusion of the business meeting. FEAST is a well-known classical/Celtic group headed by Tyme and Kathryn Mientka, featuring drummer David Alderdice and violinist Alisha Bean. This talented group packs the house every year during the Mountain Harvest Festival, and we are honored that they have agreed to perform for us.



Members are urged to bring their membership cards to the event to lessen time spent at the door. You don't want to be late for dinner!

Paint Paonia Returns

After the huge success of Paint Paonia in its maiden voyage at last year's Mountain Harvest Festival, the Blue Sage Center has decided on a repeat performance, but with some notable changes.

This year's event will kick off the Annual Cherry Days celebration on Thursday, July 2nd. In addition to showcasing our

local artists during this well-attended festival, moving the event to the summer months will allow the artists to capture the differences of the seasons through visual art.

Paint Paonia is known as a "pleine-aire" artist competition. This means that the renderings must be of outdoor subject matter, but can consist of any number of two-dimensional media, such as water color, oil, pen and ink, pastels, etc. The piece must be created during the day of the event and submitted for judging upon completion.

The Blue Sage has added a student category to the competition. Young artists



will be awarded art supplies, classes, and other goods or services yet to be determined by the gallery committee. A panel of judges selected from the art community will assess all entries, and prize money totaling \$1,000 will be awarded to the top three winners.

The art will be displayed at the Blue Sage on Friday, July 3rd, during the gallery walk and downtown sidewalk sale. The three top winning pieces will be auctioned that evening, at the *2nd Annual Writers Anthology Reading*. The remaining artwork will be available at the Blue Sage for sale through silent auction until 5pm on Saturday, July 4th. Artists may choose how much of the auction proceeds they wish to donate to the Blue Sage.

We are proud to feature last year's winning painting by Kathy Steckel on the poster for this event.

Interested artists can call the Blue Sage at 527-SAGE(7243), or check our website at www.bluesage.org for registration forms and more information.

Winners of the 2nd Annual Writers' Contest

The results are in! Following, is a list of the top ten stories and the authors who were judged as winners in the 2nd Annual North Fork Valley Writing Contest.

D. Kemper *The Goose*
Diane Sylvain *Ione*
Thomas Wills *Five Cords*
Patricia McFadden *Moon Dancer*
Rita Clagett *A Few Days of Aggravation*
Marion Stewart *Mayonnaise*
Marylee Hauze *Trash*
Steve Harper *The Breakaway*
Diane Hammond *Memories of Election Day, 2004, For My Dog*
Laura Paskus *How I Learned to Sin (and Why I Know the Promise of Brimstone is Bullshit)*

Keep your eye out for the upcoming *2nd Annual Writers Anthology Reading* to be held at the Blue Sage, during Cherry Days, July 3rd at 7pm. The first and second annual books of winning stories will be available. The competition was tough this year, so if you see one of the authors named above, be sure to congratulate them. Thank you to all the participants who made this year's contest another roaring success!

The Key is Community

by Leah Morris

While planning our yearly membership meeting, the Board and staff of the Blue Sage will ponder long lists of current and expired members, happily thinking about the generosity of families and individuals in the community who regularly contribute to their local arts center. We appreciate all the members who have shared their hard-earned dollars, and we would love it if the Blue Sage could run on membership alone. However, keeping events coming to the Blue Sage requires a great amount of support from other aspects of the community, including business sponsors, non-profit partners, and volunteers.

For example, Rotary International provided sponsorships that enabled local students to attend the Opera Colorado performances; KVNF and the Paradise

Theater constantly share space, time, ideas, advertising, and equipment with the Blue Sage and other area groups. Many businesses and individuals regularly sponsor events, and countless volunteers contribute time to set up, bartend, clean, and run the door at the Blue Sage. Often, a show of support is as simple as allowing us to hang a poster in your business' window.

Bringing arts and culture to a remote area of Colorado is not an easy task; fortunately, the Blue Sage is blessed with a community of arts supporters. While it is impossible to mention everyone who helps to keep the arts alive here, a special Thank You needs to go out to all the organizations and people who spend time, money, and effort toward making sure that the residents of the North Fork Valley have so many opportunities for personal enrichment, not just at the Blue Sage, but throughout the area. Thank you.

Calendar of Events

- Wed, May 6, 1-5pm - **Gardening Seminar** presented by Rick Stelter. \$5
- Wed, May 6, 7pm - **A new drumming class** with David & Arlyn.
- Fri, June 5, 7pm - Musical production premiere - **Sale Saturday**
Matinee - 2pm on Sat/Sun, June 6-7.
- Sat, June 20, 5pm - **Annual membership BBQ and meeting**, followed by a special performance by FEAST!
- Thurs, July 2, 7am-3pm - **Paint Paonia**, pleine-aire art competition.
- Fri, July 3, 7pm - **2nd Annual Writers Anthology Reading**
- Sun, Aug 2, 2pm - **Shakespeare in the Park**. Bring a lawn chair, we'll provide the BBQ and refreshments!

Events - Past & Future

by Donna Mann

Mardi Gras Memories

We certainly have some good memories to take away from the cold winter. February saw the return of Mardi Gras in collaboration with KVNF Mountain Grown Radio. Howard Berkman and Big Bottom Band played great blues and jazz tunes to some pretty wildly dressed party



goers. The King (Thomas Smith) and Queen (Carol Vallee) were crowned amongst great frivolity - thanks for being such good sports! Thanks to Sally, Cyn and all the great folks at KVNF for helping with the festivities. We look forward to a bigger and better celebration next year!

If it Ain't Baroque...

Once again The Blue Sage Center was the scene of another fantastic performance by Opera Colorado. The show happened to fall on St. Patrick's Day and was well attended by students and patrons alike. This year's ensemble performed a very entertaining and hilarious rendition of Richard Wargo's *The Music Shop*. As the story goes, Ivan's wife had been commissioned to sing at the Prince's wedding, so she sent poor Ivan to purchase the sheet music of a very particular aria for the occasion. Unfortunately, absent-minded Ivan had forgotten which aria he was supposed to purchase, so he asked the shop owner and his aide to sing all of the songs until he could recognize the tune.

In addition to the operetta, audience members were treated to pieces ranging from *Carmen* to *Hansel and Gretel* by these extremely gifted performers. Each year Opera Colorado selects six to eight candidates who have completed many years of study and feel they are ready to perform in front of diverse audiences in different situations. This year's Outreach Ensemble, according to long-time patrons of the event, were absolutely sensational. Congratulations are in order to Opera Colorado, as they are celebrating an amazing 25 years with this wonderful program, which affords small markets like the North Fork Valley the opportunity to experience this superb art form.

Many thanks to Paonia's own Rotary Club, who generously provided scholarships to deserving students in the area, giving them the opportunity to attend. We enthusiastically look forward to working with both the Rotary Club and Opera Colorado in the years to come.

Paonia Theatre - Alive and Well

In late winter, a very successful run of local playwright Marty Durlin's original theatrical production *Babbitt* graced the stage at the Paradise Theater. Then in April, Lisa Howden and her cast of future Tony nominees brought down the house at the Blue Sage with a production by yet another local writer's work, Patricia McFadden's *Fairy Tale Trio*. Do we sense a pattern here? Perhaps Paonia's Town Council should consider changing the name of Grand Avenue to Broadway as yet another area playwright will be showcased in early June with the world premiere of *Sale Saturday*, a two-act musical written by Zach Mann and his mother, the late Patricia Fought-Mann.

Sale Saturday is the tale of a Goodland, Kansas farm family who is facing foreclosure. Though the subject matter may seem a little grim on the surface, this musical offers much to smile about as the Browns come to terms with what seems to be the demise of the family farm system.

On a personal note, Zach Mann, who happens to be my husband, has chosen me to direct this play. Because it was written before I even knew him, back in

the early eighties, I have been familiar with *Sale Saturday* for all of our twenty-one years together. Other than the sole surviving writer himself, I know the Brown family better than any other person alive and I am thoroughly enjoying watching my incredibly talented cast finally bring these characters to life. The original soundtrack for *Sale Saturday* which features thirteen original songs is being recorded and produced by Paonia's own Randy Utterback, who has a national reputation as one of the most versatile musicians in the business.

As an added bonus, the Goodland, Kansas newspaper, the Goodland Star-Record, is sponsoring a contest, along with a Goodland radio station, to bring four residents from the area in for the premiere. The lucky winners will receive \$250 cash, overnight accommodations, dinner at the Flying Fork, front row tickets to the play, and passes to the gala cocktail hour before the performance.

Twenty-five percent of the production proceeds will be donated to the Blue Sage.

Shakespeare in the Park

After a four-year hiatus, The Sweetwater Shakespeare Company, in cooperation with the Blue Sage Center, is returning to Paonia Town Park on Sunday, August 2nd at 2:00 pm with a performance of William Shakespeare's rollicking comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Queen Elizabeth was said to be so taken with the ribald knight Sir John Falstaff from "Henry IV" that she asked to see him in love. Shakespeare knew that Falstaff could never truly be in love, so *The Merry Wives of Windsor* finds Prince Hal's wayward mentor not so much served by love, but served up his just desserts. His attempts to woo not one but two virtuous wives--and plunder their husband's ample purses--are frustrated at every turn, but he never gives up, despite one calamity after another--engineered by the cunning wives. Falstaff is portrayed by Peter Ambrose, memorable as the title character in the production of *Babbitt* at the Paradise Theater this winter.



*Committed to
Promoting & Expanding
the Role of Arts & Humanities,
Enhancing
Cultural & Educational
Enrichment in the Community.*

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"I fix & build things"

I will do small jobs; I do return phone calls.

Phone: 970-260-0106 Email: randyc@paonia.com

Create a Meaningful Legacy...

with a simple designation in your will. Talk to your lawyer to plan your estate and leave the Blue Sage a set amount, percentage, or even specific assets. This will provide a charitable estate tax deduction and is an effective way to leave a legacy of community support!



Documenting the life
and times of the North
Fork Valley since 1996



Ads: Dana 921-5683 or
MerchantHerald@aol.com
News: Tom 872-2664 or
Hotchkiss@aol.com

Spring Classes/Activities

Tai Chi with Bob

Sunday and Thursday 6:30-8:00pm

Laughter Yoga with Bernie

Monday 5:30-6:00pm

Ping Pong with Bernie

Monday 6:30-8:30pm

African Dance with Lea

Tuesday 6:00-7:30pm

Creative Movement with Sharon Age 3-5

Wednesday 10:00-11:00am

Drumming with David

Wednesday 7:00-8:30am (May 6-June 17)

Yoga with Phyllis

Thursday 8:30-9:45am

Board of Directors:

- President - Carol Kwiatkowski
- Vice President - Lori Porter
- Secretary - Leah Morris
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- Annette Choszcyk
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