

Director's Notes

President John F. Kennedy stated, "I see little of more importance to the future of our country and of civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist. If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his/her vision wherever it takes him/her."

The Durango Arts Center is flourishing in part because our community recognizes the value of the arts. A resounding thank-you goes out to **Mercury Payment Systems** for its generous support of the DAC visual arts education program. Mercury CEO Matt Taylor and vice president Carrie Betts worked closely with me to learn about the Durango Arts Center, and they made a wonderful donation to support our education programs. If you see them or any other employee from Mercury Payment Systems, please thank them for their vision.

The DAC said farewell to DiscoveryKids that had been located upstairs in the DAC building. A reception to pay tribute to all those involved in the founding of DiscoveryKids was held at the DAC on Thursday, August 19. Special recognition was paid to Paul Wilbert who was instrumental in fundraising and the creative force in the early years of the DiscoveryKids' program. The Discovery Museum and a revamped kids' program launches in October. The DAC is proud of the Discovery Museum and all it has accomplished, and we look forward to future collaboration.

Speaking of vision, Heather Leavitt Martinez and Stew Mosberg e-mailed me about a program called *Arts Centers in Crisis* offered by the **Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.** Not that I believe the DAC is in crisis, but I thought perhaps it might behoove me to investigate the services provided by the Kennedy Center. I submitted an application and was soon accepted. My first phone call came from Brett Egan, who became the first-ever director of the **Kennedy Center's Institute for Arts Management**. He began his position in early 2010, and his job description is essentially to rescue artistic organizations in the face of budget and economic peril.

In my many conversations with Egan, he is offering to assist the DAC with a strategic plan as well as other management issues. Egan says, "Arts managers are producers. We create events and produce community and conversation around the arts." Egan continues, "My job is to showcase their role in society and its potential as an arbiter of understanding and peace. That may sound romantic, even green, but I believe it." I'm learning a great deal from Egan, and we both remain optimistic that he will visit Durango some time in 2011.

Lastly, I've been busy working with a community group including leadership from the Discovery Museum, Community Concert Hall and Animas Museum to do research on establishing a Scientific and Cultural Arts District in our region similar to one established in Metro Denver. We are also involving other arts groups such as Music in the Mountains, San Juan Symphony, Durango Independent Film Festival to name but a few. Those groups that have facilities are also talking with Jack Llewellyn of the Durango Chamber of Commerce and LEAD to focus on becoming members and having a vote and seat at the table at economic development meetings.

The DAC board of directors is working non-stop under the leadership of president Terry Swan. I believe with the support of the community we can continue to offer the arts a center that believes that artists must thrive and be nurtured. In closing, the writer Henry James expresses so eloquently the value to the arts when he wrote, "*It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance, and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process.*"

Sheri Rochford Figgs, Executive Director

A Note from the Board President

The aspen trees outside my bedroom window have begun to change. The fresh lime green leaves are turning red, brown and gold signifying the change in seasons. Change can be unsettling or it can bring new rewards and greater satisfaction. I am excited by the changes going on at your Durango Art Center.

We changed our business hours this summer and kept our gallery and gift shop open until 8 p.m. on weekends. Over 7000 folks attended performances of *Always... Patsy Cline*, and many of those joined tourists and restaurant patrons visiting our gallery and pausing in our gift shop to view or purchase the work of local Durango artists. As a result, we are having the most commercially successful year in our history. Last year we paid local artists over \$50,000 in commissions on the sale of their works; this year we will break that record. What a nice change.

We looked on sadly as DiscoveryKids left DAC for their wonderful new digs on Camino del Rio, but change brings progress, too. We have remodeled the space they left behind to support visual arts instruction for children and adults. We have needed dedicated space for these programs, and Sandra Butler, our new visual arts education specialist, has ambitious plans to expand these offerings.

October brings a wonderful change. New Face Productions presents a juried garment design exhibition and fundraiser for the Durango Arts Center. Cocktails, tapas, a fashion show and silent auction plus a special display of the Morley Ballantine Collection highlight this unique new event.

We also have a wonderful family musical planned to entertain you this holiday season. *Christmas Presence* will open in December and play weekends until Christmas. DAC will also provide a fun-filled new way to change into the new year. Plan to spend New Year's Eve at DAC at our 60's themed dance party with live entertainment, food, drinks and all the New Year's trimmings. Join us for this fundraiser and beat the tax man for a change. Don't forget our gallery changes every month. New exhibits highlight DAC each month.

Change has brought many rewards to DAC and our members and patrons this year, but we are never satisfied. Before the leaves turn green again, visit us and say what changes you want to see from your Durango Arts Center.

Terry Swan, DAC Board President

DAC to the Future

DAC to the Future, a fundraising event, takes place at the Durango Arts Center on Thursday, November 11. We will host 100 guests at a light breakfast from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and another 100 guests for a light lunch from noon to 1 p.m. This free one-hour event follows a well-designed formula intended to inspire guests to contribute to the Arts Center. The Durango Arts Center's board of directors will also share their vision and strategy. If you are interested in attending and have not received an invitation, you can be added to the guest list by e-mailing allison.andersen@kornferry.com.

Thanks to the table captains who are the most essential element in ensuring the success of the event: Kathleen Adams, Allison Andersen, Mary Lyn Ballantine, Amy Buchanan, Maryellen Cerroni, Bob and Nancy Conrad, Bobby Duthie, Sheri Rochford Figgs, Ann Flatten, Tara Homburg, Linda Mack, Rochelle Mann, Meredith Mapel, Sandra Mapel, Allison Morrissey, Mary Nowotny, Diane Panelli, Bette Serzen, Diane Welle and Diane Wildfang, and thanks to the many sponsors, donors and participants who will be giving so generously to this event.

Durango Arts Center
DAC
to the future

Upcoming Events—Save the Dates!

Mozart & Merlot, Saturday, October 30, 7 p.m. The Durango Arts Center will host *Mozart & Merlot*, a wine-tasting in the Barbara Conrad Gallery followed by a performance in the theater by the FLC Chamber Choir under the direction of Andrew Homburg of some of Mozart's best-known and most-loved opera pieces. From *Don Giovanni* to *The Magic Flute*, all your favorites will be featured. Professional opera singer Rebecca Copley will also take part in the evening. \$50 per person.

Christmas Presence, Fridays & Saturdays, December 3–18, 7 p.m.; Saturday, December 4 & 11, 2 p.m.

Christmas Presence, written by Durango playwright Dinah Swan, is a family Christmas comedy with music set in Durango, Colorado. A week before Christmas, a typical American family is free-falling into holiday madness when they grudgingly agree to host a family of immigrants for a few days. In scenes touching and hilarious, the foreigners show their hosts the deeper meaning of Christmas. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for age 12 and under.

Revisit the 60's, DAC's New Year's Eve Fundraiser, Friday, December 31, 8 p.m.-1 a.m.

Welcome 2011 at the Durango Arts Center and celebrate with appetizers, cash bar, dancing, live entertainment and champagne at midnight. Enjoy all the fun as we *Revisit the 60's*. You're encouraged to dress in your best 60's style! \$50 per person. Child care with kid-friendly activities will be available on site (\$10 per hour, \$8 per hour for DAC members).