

W Y O M I N G

ARTSCAPES

WYOMING ARTS COUNCIL NEWS • FALL 2012



COVER STORY

Wyoming Is a Place That Inspires Creativity

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ARTS
COUNCIL

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T W O T H O U S A N D T W E L V E GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARDS

SUBMISSION DEADLINE OCTOBER 5, 2012

MATTHEW H. MEAD
GOVERNOR

THE STATE OF WYOMING



STATE CAPITOL
CHEYENNE, WY 82002

Office of the Governor

August 1, 2012

Dear Friends,

This year is the 31st anniversary of the Governor's Arts Awards. For over three decades these awards have been given annually to honor individuals, communities and organizations that represent Wyoming's best in the arts, and we still have many more deserving of this recognition.

The awards distinguish those that honor us with their artistic talents, those who dedicate themselves to promoting and supporting the arts in our state, those exemplary organizations that provide arts programs and activities in our Wyoming communities and schools, and those towns that have included the arts in their planning and are making art available to their residents and visitors. We owe these talented and dedicated individuals and wonderful organizations a debt of gratitude for enriching our lives, and plan to honor several of them at this year's dinner and awards ceremony in Cheyenne on February 8, 2013.

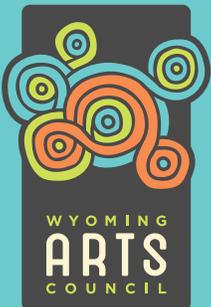
Please take a moment to consider those you believe should receive a Governor's Arts Award for their contributions to the arts in Wyoming. I encourage you to take the time to nominate them before October 5th. Nominees can be cities or towns, arts organizations, or individual artists, arts educators, administrators or patrons. The details of the nomination process are available at wyomingartscouncil.org

Please help to continue the rich tradition of honoring Wyoming's best in the arts through this nomination process.

I hope to see you at the Governor's Arts Awards event in February.

Sincerely,

Matthew H. Mead
Governor



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Join us for the Governor's Arts Awards celebration and awards on the evening of February 8, 2013 in Cheyenne!

For more information, visit wyomingartscouncil.org or call 307-777-7742



OUR MISSION

The Wyoming Arts Council (WAC) provides leadership and invests resources to sustain, promote and cultivate excellence in the arts.

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NEWSLETTER

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ON THE COVER: Wyoming First Lady Carol Mead holds “Zoxy Red,” a fiber and clay sculpture by Devon Lang, a student at Twin Spruce Junior High School in Gillette. It’s part of the First Lady’s Young Artist Showcase at the Governor’s Residence. *Photo by Richard Collier.*



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State Parks & Cultural Resources



WYOMING ARTS COUNCIL

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wyomingartscouncil.org

CHANGES AND MORE CHANGES AT THE WAC

by Rita Basom



I hope you like the new newsletter format!

One of the challenges of managing the Wyoming Arts Council is hiring new staff members when anyone leaves for another job, retirement, etc. I grieved over the resignation of Randy Oestman and the retirement of Marirose Morris, but we are still in close contact with them, and I love meeting and learning about some of the fantastic people who would like to work at the WAC. We have filled one of those vacancies, and are working on filling the second.

Please welcome Michael Lange to the Wyoming Arts Council staff. Michael has taken the position of Community Development and the Arts Specialist as of September 12, and is available to help strengthen non-profit arts organizations, and to assist Wyoming arts organizations, towns and communities in making the arts an important part of community planning and development. He is also overseeing the WAC's grant programs for non-profit and gov-

ernmental organizations – Community Arts Partners (CAP), Operating Support, Grants to Organizations and the new Arts Projects category. Don't be shy about calling him with questions you have about any of these programs. Just dial our main line at 307-777-7742 and ask for Michael Lange (see the article about Michael in this newsletter).

Other changes in our staffing at the WAC include:

- We have started the process to hire a full-time Arts Education Specialist to work with Wyoming communities, colleges, public schools and the Department of Education to strengthen and support life-long arts education in our state.
- Camellia El-Antably will no longer be overseeing Arts Education, but will be coordinating Special Events for the WAC and serving as the Visual Arts Specialist in addition to her many duties as the Deputy Manager.
- Mike Shay is now our Communications and Marketing Specialist, will continue to serve as Literature Specialist and will assist with the Performing Arts programs.

- Folk & Traditional Arts Specialist Annie Hatch is also now serving as the Underserved Programs Specialist.
- I will work with some of the Performing Arts programs, and will continue to work with the State Museum's Arts Curator David Newell to coordinate the Art in Public Buildings Projects in addition to my duties as the Arts Council Manager.
- Karen Merklin remains as our very capable Grants Manager, and Evangeline Bratton continues to try and keep track of all of us, our supplies, inventory and mailing lists in her role as Office Manager.
- We are also requesting permission to have a part-time contract employee who will assist all of the specialists with the needs of their programs.

The changes in staff assignments have been made to enable the WAC staff to better serve all of our constituents, and at the same time, better manage our own communications, special events and projects.

New Wyoming Arts Council logo banners have been mailed out to arts organizations receiving Operating

Support grants, and to many GTO and Arts Education grant recipients. The WAC also has large banners available to loan out for events, and would love for them to be used! If your organization wants to borrow a large banner, please contact the WAC office at least two weeks before your event to allow time for it to be mailed to you. You should return the banner to the WAC within the week following the end of your event.

The new WAC web site is coming soon! And, if you haven't yet liked us on Facebook, please go in and check out that new page. With the help of Warehouse Twenty One and the work of Mike Shay, our summer intern, Michaela Rife, and the rest of the hard-working WAC staff, we're "movin' and groovin'" on our new Communications Plan. We all hope you'll be seeing more of the WAC online, in print, and in person over this next year.

Rita Basom
Wyoming Arts Council Manager

GROW
CONNECT
THRIVE





Wyoming Governor Matt Mead and First Lady Carol Mead

WYOMING IS A PLACE THAT INSPIRES CREATIVITY

An Interview with First Lady Carol Mead

Carol Mead had a personal reason for choosing literacy as the focus of her time as First Lady of the State of Wyoming.

“My daughter Mary became a very avid reader by the third grade, which is a contrast to my own life,” Mead said. “I struggled with reading through elementary school.”

She noted that she was labeled a buzzard but yearned to be a bluebird in reading class, referring to the elementary school reading groups.

“My personal struggle as a child is the basis on which I say what a difference it makes to have children reading at grade level. It’s tougher to catch up in the later grades.”

Her goal is to get Wyoming children reading at their appropriate level by third grade. It’s a tall order.

“There are a lot of kids who have never seen a book by the time they get to kindergarten,” she said.

The data is strong that shows reading levels in third grade as a prediction of future educational success. In fact, some larger states, such as California, Texas, Indiana, and Arizona use third-grade reading scores

as a prediction for their future prison populations.

“If you cannot read, your ability to educate yourself is limited,” Mead said. “Literacy is the key.”

It wasn’t easy for the First Lady to choose among all the issues that cry out for attention. “Depression, suicide, bullying, teen pregnancy, drugs and alcohol use — there are so many issues for children. Education is a way to address a whole host of social issues that affect kids and reading is absolutely fundamental. Reading sets them on the right foot.”

She considers the written and spoken word as art forms crucial to a child’s development.

She’s allied herself with Wyoming Reads, We Read, Read Across America and the Scholastic Books Reading Ambassadors. She has partnered with the University of Wyoming to establish a statewide literacy clinic and research center. These are just a few of the arts-oriented education efforts that she is involved with.

In April 2011, Mead attended the annual High School Arts Symposium in Casper. She said that

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she walked into the Casper Events Center and saw a sea of artwork created by Wyoming teens. “It was just amazing,” she said.

As she surveyed the work, she realized that the Governor’s Residence would be an ideal place to display it. “Here we are at the Residence and inside we display art from all over the state, but we did not have a single piece by a youth.”

She selected one piece that first year. It was a small bronze of a child doing a handstand. It sat on the Residence’s piano for a year and was routinely admired by visitors. So, this past April, the First Lady returned to the High School Arts Symposium and picked out a variety of work to display for a year in the Residence hallway. Each of the selected works becomes part of the Wyoming First Lady’s Young Artist Showcase. She plans on bringing the young artists to the Governor’s Residence during the upcoming holiday season for a reception, and to give each of them a certificate and ribbon. She hopes to make this an annual event.

“The art adds a fresh young vibe to the place, which we want,” she said. “We have a lot of kids in the Residence for various events. The art is a good reflection of what is important to us.”

Mead grew up in what she describes as a “fairly artistic family.” Her father was “a good singer with perfect pitch — he loved jazz.” Her mother was always “painting, writing poetry, doing macramé, gardening and other creative endeavors.”

Her parents were a little older — in their forties — when Carol was born. “They were Depression-era

kids,” she said. “We always had Glenn Miller playing in the house. I grew up to appreciate music and art. We went to a lot of museums and art shows.”

Mead was born in New York, but the family moved to Littleton, Colorado, when Carol was 7. “I grew up taking ballet and I played saxophone in the marching band and was a flag twirler.”

She attended a small private college in Kansas and was a pre-veterinary major. She decided the school was too small for what she needed, so transferred to the University of Wyoming, where she majored in biology and exercise physiology. She taught aerobics at the Laramie Athletic Club, and was involved in music and dance throughout her college years.

She also met her future husband, Matt, at UW. They were married after graduation. They discovered that they shared an interest in history and historic preservation. In 2001, they bought a ranch southwest of Laramie. It was the 1878 homestead of Nathaniel Boswell. While it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it also was falling apart. They decided to do something about that.

“We took the structure right down to the logs, saved the original timbers, sanded them, and replaced the old chinking. We had the old photos from its early days. It was a lot of work and a lot of heartache. But it is so important to keep these places alive. If we had not preserved it, it would not be standing now.”

The Boswell Homestead isn’t the only historic structure that Mead took an interest in.

“I had always admired the Tivoli Building in down-

THE ART ADDS A FRESH YOUNG VIBE TO THE PLACE, WHICH WE WANT... WE HAVE A LOT OF KIDS IN THE RESIDENCE FOR VARIOUS EVENTS. THE ART IS A GOOD REFLECTION OF WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO US.

~ First Lady Carol Mead

town Cheyenne,” she said. “We purchased it soon after there had been a big flood. A pipe broke. Something had to be done.”

She and her husband were having lunch at the Albany Restaurant and saw a photo of the Tivoli dating back to the early 1900s. The interior was a saloon paneled with carved cherry wood. “We decided to bring it back — bring some of its history back, anyway.” She paused for a laugh. “It was a saloon and a bordello.”

Working with Cheyenne architect Glen Garrett, Mead set to work on the renovation of the Tivoli interior. Lots of repairs had to be made. She found a restaurant in Denver that had woodwork similar to that in the original Tivoli. “I was fussy in the details,” she said. “I’m sure I drove some of the contractors crazy.”

“We are all pleased with the end result. I was excited to do something on the main street of downtown Cheyenne.”

Mead said that it took a year to lease the finished building. “Most of the offers were not right for what we had in mind,” she said. The Freedom’s Edge Brewing Company came along and that was the right fit, even adding a sense of history as the interior returned to its origins (one of them, anyway) as a bar.

Since becoming First Lady, Mead has attended arts exhibits and performances all over the state. She’s accompanied her husband twice to the annual Governor’s Arts Awards gala and was “pleased to see the variety of artistic endeavors” being pursued in the state.

“It’s great to see work done by Western artists and contemporary artists — a variety of different mediums. I was pleased to see a foundry get an award,” she said, referring to Lander’s Eagle Bronze Foundry.

“The arts just take on a special aura when you see them live.”

She makes sure that her two children, Mary and Pete, have plenty of exposure to the arts. And she’s pleased that they are having a variety of art experiences at their Cheyenne public schools. “They are encouraged to try all sorts of things — molding clay, painting, playing an instrument,” she said. “Art engages our creativity and provides inspiration and beauty.”

She concluded by saying that she and her husband have a simple message about the state of the arts in Wyoming. “We want people to know that Wyoming is a place that inspires creativity, one that welcomes, supports and sustains the arts. We are proud of that.”



Pete, Carol, Matt and Mary Mead

TRADITIONAL ARTS OF SOUTHWESTERN WYOMING

By Elaine Thatcher

In the winter of 1982-83, Evanston ranchers Don and Claudia Proffit joined with some other ranchers and ran cattle on Antelope Island in the Great Salt Lake. Unfortunately, that winter was a year of

heavy precipitation that resulted in the one road to the island being under water. To make matters worse, snow and ice piled up on the island, burying and freezing the grass that the cattle needed to stay alive.

The ranchers needed to get feed to their animals somehow. They rented a World War II bomber so they could drop hay to the cattle. Complicating the effort was the fact that the Salt Lake Valley was having one of its famous inversions, so the pilot had to fly by instruments to find the island. As Claudia said, “He would figure by instrument when he was over the island itself, and he would holler to us to kick hay out, and then as he passed the island and climbed for another turn, the men would all throw up, and then he’d tell us again when to kick hay, when to stop and when to start.” Harrowing stories like this are part of the oral literature of Southwestern Wyoming.

Southwestern Wyoming is rich with traditional arts. It has everything from highly accomplished quilters, to ranchers and hunters with hair-raising stories, to people who practice old-time mountain man skills. Some art forms are related to people’s livelihoods, as in the case of the Proffits. Others are practiced purely for their beauty and as gifts for loved ones.



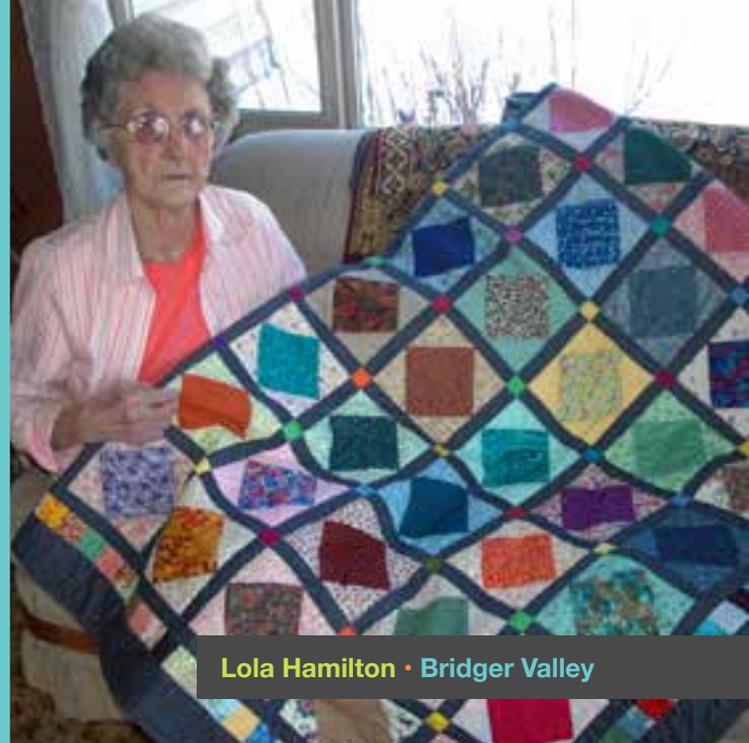
Don & Claudia Proffit • Evanston

Take 93-year-old Lola Hamilton. Mrs. Hamilton has lived in the Bridger Valley area for many decades. She is lively and active. She has perfected the arts of quilting and crochet, producing dozens of gifts for family and friends. She has a particular star-shaped crochet design that is unique to her, and she makes a doily of it for each of her family members. Even though failing eyesight has curtailed her quilting, she still crochets, and she recently tried her hand at making ribbon necklaces for her granddaughters.

Latino culture is thriving in southwestern Wyoming. Amy Velasquez is a middle school teacher in Evanston. Her family was one of the first Hispanic families to settle in Evanston, back in the 1950s. Amy teaches Spanish, and as part of her work, she teaches her students to make traditional Mexican crafts like paper flowers and papel picado (cut paper work). But she doesn't stop there. A number of years ago, she started a Cinco de Mayo celebration at her school (May 5 commemorates the victory of the Mexican militia over the French army at the Battle of Puebla in 1862). Over time, the project has turned into a citywide celebration. Amy's students are still involved. They plan the event, set everything up, operate concessions, and take everything down after it's over. There is music, dancing, crafts, food, and lots of fun, and the whole town turns out for it.

The Cinco de Mayo celebration is held in the old machine shop, a feature of Evanston that celebrates its railroading past. The city's Roundhouse Railyards consist of restored old railroad buildings: the machine shop, a visitors' center and the old roundhouse. They have been turned into beautiful public spaces that honor the past.

Public events that feature local culture are plentiful. Mountain man rendezvous commemorations draw early history aficionados from all over the country. A large one is held at Fort Bridger State Historic Site, and another at Bear River State Park. Many people in the region practice mountain man skills such as beadwork, leatherwork, knife throwing, and black powder shooting. Evanston has the Railroad



Lola Hamilton • Bridger Valley

Festival, an all-class reunion, and a rodeo series, as well as the Catholic Church's spaghetti dinner and the Rotary Club's pancake breakfast, where locals gather to support their favorite causes. Kemmerer has the Little Buckaroo Rodeo, Fossil Fest, the Kemmerer Lions Club Ice Fishing Derby, the Oyster Ridge Music Festival, and the Search & Rescue Barbecue.

There is much still to be discovered about traditional arts in southwestern Wyoming. Rock hounding and fossil hunting are popular in the region, especially around Kemmerer. Rock hounds search for interesting specimens, then they often cut and polish them into useful items such as bookends or jewelry. Fishermen sometimes make their own equipment, such as fishing rods and flies. Cowboys may make saddles or chaps in their spare hours. Women employ a variety of needlework skills.

A world of traditional arts awaits discovery in the high desert.

Folklorist Elaine Thatcher of Logan, Utah, is documenting the cultural traditions of Western Wyoming as part of a three-year statewide cultural survey and needs assessment for Wyoming's folk and traditional arts and artists.

MIYAMOTOS FOSTER COMMUNITY IN CHEYENNE

By Georgia Wier

Creativity takes many forms. One form recognized particularly by the Wyoming Arts Council's Folk and Traditional Arts Program is "foodways," or the producing, preparing, serving, and eating of food.

William and Margaret Miyamoto of Cheyenne, assisted by their daughter Linda Salas, have for many years hosted a New Year's feast that exemplifies their commitment to maintaining special Japanese foodways traditions. The yearly feast also demonstrates the family's longstanding practice of fostering a sense of community among Cheyenne's early Japanese-American families together with other friends and family members.

William Miyamoto's parents, Bill and Hatsuye Miyamoto, established the family's practice of supplying food to Japanese-Americans in the area. In the basement of their candy store in Denver they produced mochi, a Japanese cake they made by pounding steamed rice in a heavy granite bowl called a "usu" then forming it into shapes. Japanese-American farm families traveled to Denver from different areas in Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska to purchase mochi for their use at home.

Japanese-style environment that William Miyamoto created for backyard of his and Margaret's home.

Bill and Hatsuye developed strong connections with Cheyenne residents early in their lives. In 1936, they decided to take advantage of a business opportunity and moved with their children to Cheyenne. They joined entrepreneur Johnny Baker in operating a bar on Cheyenne's west side. Johnny Baker was of African-American descent, and at that time, "Johnny Baker's Place" was the only establishment serving alcohol that welcomed people of all minorities, many of whom came from the army base.

Once a month, the Miyamotos assisted in organizing a service for Cheyenne's Japanese-Americans who had retained the Buddhist faith of their ancestors. A minister came to Cheyenne from the Tri-State Buddhist Temple headquartered in Denver. For the services, worshipers carried an ornate altar called a "Butsudan" to a pool hall located close to Johnny Baker's Place. During World War II, when prejudice against Japanese-Americans led many to fear possessing any item connected with Japanese cultural traditions, Hatsuye declared that she would keep the Butsudan no matter what happened. The altar has remained in the Miyamoto family since that time.

While living in their apartment above the bar, Bill and Hatsuye established the family's Cheyenne tradition of holding elaborate New Year's feasts. But cooking was not Hatsuye's only creative pursuit; she also was accomplished at performing and teaching Japanese traditional dance. The *Wyoming State Tribune* published at least one photograph of Hatsuye's group of students performing for the public.

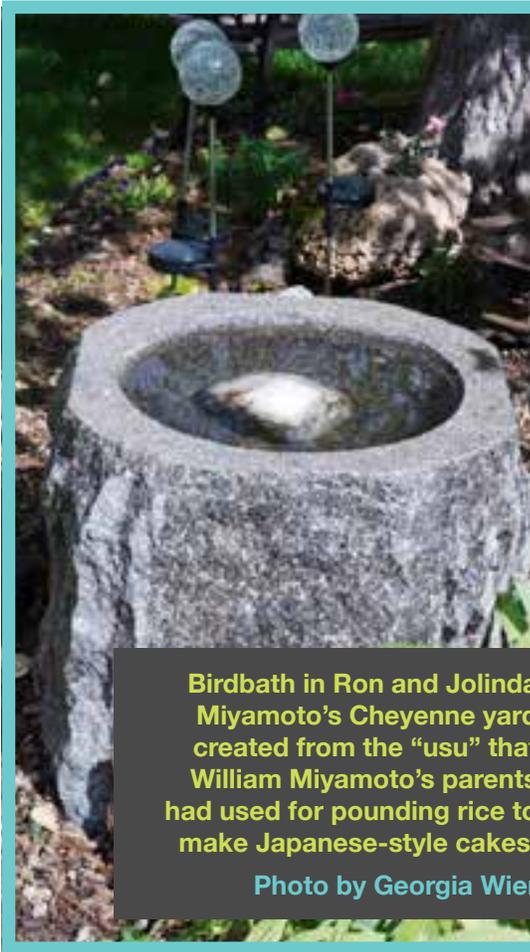
For the New Year's feast held annually at William and Margaret's home, dishes including teriyaki chicken, tempura shrimp, chashu pork, and maki sushi fill every space on the buffet tables. William is known for the fried fish that he poses to look as if it's leaping up from water, a feat that he accomplishes using a process learned from his father. Besides hosting the

New Year's feast, William and Margaret have demonstrated their commitment to Japanese traditions by transforming parts of their indoor and outdoor spaces to create the look and feel of a Japanese home. Their backyard features a bamboo fence, Japanese lantern, and decorative bridge spanning a boulder-lined streambed.

William is locally known as "Doc" Miyamoto, having practiced optometry in Cheyenne for many years. Along with his two brothers, one of whom was recently posthumously awarded a Congressional Gold Medal, William served in the armed services during World War II.

Margaret was born in California and like many Japanese Americans from the West Coast, spent the war years in internment camps. She attended a secretarial college in Chicago and later used this training for her work for two state agencies in Cheyenne. Margaret and William met in Chicago, but both felt determined to leave the big city and return to Cheyenne to raise their daughter.

Margaret and William Miyamoto have contributed greatly to the general business and professional life



Birdbath in Ron and Jolinda Miyamoto's Cheyenne yard created from the "usu" that William Miyamoto's parents had used for pounding rice to make Japanese-style cakes.
Photo by Georgia Wier

continued on page 14

of Cheyenne, but the functions they've performed within Cheyenne's Japanese-American community have also been important. As their daughter Linda explains, "My mom and dad have kind of been the keepers of the community."

There is a concrete reminder of the Miyamoto family's early contributions to Japanese-American foodways in the Rocky Mountain region. After closing their candy store and a subsequent restaurant in Denver, the Miyamotos loaned their custom-made granite usu to rural Japanese-American families who passed it from farm to farm. The usu has

returned to the family and serves a new purpose as a decorative birdbath in Ron and Jolinda Miyamoto's Cheyenne backyard.

FOR THE NEW YEAR'S FEAST HELD ANNUALLY AT WILLIAM AND MARGARET'S HOME, DISHES INCLUDING TERIYAKI CHICKEN, TEMPURA SHRIMP, CHASHU PORK, AND MAKI SUSHI FILL EVERY SPACE ON THE BUFFET TABLES.

WAC folklore fieldworker Georgia Wier wrote this article using an oral history interview conducted with William and Margaret Miyamoto and Linda Salas in 2008, contributions written by Tom and Connie Miyamoto and Margaret Miyamoto for the "History of Cheyenne, Wyoming, Larimer County, Volume 2" (edited by Sharon Las Field, 1989), and informal conversations with Miyamoto family members.



From a page in the Miyamotos' family album: Linda (Miyamoto) Salas at the dining room table before her family's New Year's feast began (late 1950s).

THE ARTIST IMAGE REGISTRY: A WYOMING RESOURCE

by Michaela Rife

From the moment of its introduction, the Internet has had a complex relationship with the art world. Some heralded its democratic potential, while others worried that the ability to reproduce endlessly and without impunity would decrease art's value.

Skip to the present, and many are still unsure what exactly the Internet means for the arts. The utopian dreamers of an egalitarian art market found the inherent flaws, new media artists exploited them and cultural critics continued to bemoan the effects of the digital. Yet for all of its potential shortcomings, the Internet has continued to widen its reach, and areas of our state that, even five years ago, were disconnected from the worldwide web, can now jump on to art forums in L.A. and comment on exhibitions in New York. Still, the spaces that separate Jackson and Cheyenne, Sheridan and Rock Springs, remain relevant in the digital age, especially for artists. Just as difficult are the distances that separate Wyoming

artists from art centers.

Enter the online Artist Image Registry, which will debut this fall on the Wyoming Arts Council's new web site. As is true with the internet, the AIR will certainly not solve all of our problems, but the potential for a Lander artist's work to be seen by their regional neighbors has skyrocketed, and with that the potential for a New York gallerist or a Chicago critic to discover the often untapped potential of our state.

I THINK MY WORK LOOKS LIKE IT COULD HAVE GROWN... AND IT'S KIND OF WILD AND KIND OF CULTIVATED TOO, BECAUSE I SHAPE IT BUT I ALSO LET IT TAKE THE FORM THAT SEEMS THE MOST NATURAL AT THE MOMENT.

~ Cristy Anspach

est in one of our most popular resources, land, and in one of our most inexhaustible — the imagination.

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I selected four AIR-participating artists to interview, each has a strong AIR presence and represents a unique facet of the state's art scene. As a group, they demonstrate how varied Wyoming artists are in style, medium and location, yet they are united by a passion for the place that connects them and a belief in the potential of the AIR.

CRISTY ANSPACH

When asked how she feels about identifying as a Wyoming artist, Pinedale-based artist Cristy Anspach replied, "proud". This feeling of pride in her adoptive state permeates Anspach's art and her interview responses; after all, Wyoming is a place where "nobody thinks twice about seeing bloody elk legs sticking out of a truck bed." Anspach brings this comfortable relationship with her surroundings to the creation of abstract fiber sculptures, sourced from her home. Twisted into beautiful, linear designs,



"Flirt," Cristy Anspach

Anspach's pieces display a fluent understanding of the uneasy divide between the domestic and the wild, a divide that is especially blurred in the West.

That Anspach can collect hay, sheep's wool, feathers and other assorted materials of farm life, and subsequently combine them with her interest in traditional handcrafts, is one of the strongest features of her work. In fact she notes an interest in this divide, citing that things like hay and cattle can seem to fit into both worlds. In terms of her own work, she writes: "I think my work looks like it could have grown...and it's kind of wild and kind of cultivated too, because I shape it but I also let it take the form that seems the most natural at the moment."

Despite her participation in abstract forms, Anspach also understands one of the more sizeable categories of the AIR, plein air painting. She passionately describes the challenge of racing to capture the sun and the quickly changing colors of nature. Yet as she began to sell her work, she found herself pandering to the crowd, and losing the fun of painting. She writes: "I decided I was no longer going to worry about anybody's thoughts or ideas but mine, and took a track I'd always thought about but had never been brave enough to pursue. That's where these hay sculptures came about."

Even as Anspach pursues a new route, she taps into something that seems to be fundamentally "Wyoming," making sense of your geographic surroundings through art.

JIM KOPP

For Casper-based artist Jim Kopp, it is important to identify as a "Wyoming artist." In fact, he notes, it is the slower lifestyle of the state (as opposed to Florida where he previously resided) that enables him to create art. Kopp's identification with the state is not simply a label, but a way to repay the Casper community that has been so supportive of his work. This support must have been especially important



"Three Sisters," Jim Kopp

to Kopp when he began painting twelve years ago, as he is a self-taught artist, inspired to create by the permanent collection of Reverend Howard Finster's work held in Atlanta's High Museum.

To look at Kopp's work is to enter a world of stories. At times the imagination must create their own narrative, as in the case of *Three Sisters*. Who are these creatures, with their wings and crowns? They gaze out at the viewer as though defying us to invent their histories. Kopp writes that he tends "to keep the paintings simple and straight ahead like a haiku. The viewer usually creates the past and the future of what they are seeing."

One of Kopp's most charming paintings in the AIR is titled *Neapolitan Napoleon*. In describing its derivation he writes: "I was helping my son get a carton of Neapolitan ice cream out of the freezer and the wordplay just clicked in my head. I love doing strange, Fauvist-style portraits of imaginary people, or goofy portraits of famous people in history."

Much of Kopp's work seems to draw on this strategy; one can imagine any of his AIR works arising from an overheard comment in daily life or an off-hand visual association. It is this interest in exploring his everyday surroundings that connects Jim Kopp to fellow AIR artists, and to a particularly Wyoming interest in one's environment.

CHRISTINE MEYTRAS

Jackson-based Christine Meytras made the longest journey to call herself a "Wyoming artist." Originally from France, Meytras writes that living in Wyoming allows her to be inspired on a daily basis, and this inspiration is evident in her work. After arriving in Wyoming, Meytras wanted to engage with her new home and selected the ubiquitous Stud Farlow and Steamboat. The result was a brilliantly colored grid of nine horse and riders, repeated in each box with a slight variation.

Meytras' longstanding interest in the cultures and histories of the American West is evident, as is her interest in California pop artist Wayne Thiebaud. And yet, she retains an immense respect for the Wyoming tradition of realist painting. On that topic she writes: "I believe my art can fit in this tradition, even though it is not 'traditional' in the pure sense of

continued on page 18



"Land 4," Christine Meytras

the term. My subjects have been ‘traditional’. Right now they are not, (but I feel that I will always go back to those subjects because of my connection to the land and will paint them differently again.)” Her connection to the environment is undeniable in her AIR pieces *Land 3* and *Land 4*, which offer abstracted, boldly colored aerial views of the West, as seen from a plane. Closer inspection, and discussion with Meytras reveals that these are landscapes indelibly shaped by water, and the Land paintings tell this story.

Meytras has an enviable ability to engage the stories and the mythologies of the West, while never allowing them to overwhelm her. She cogently discusses the potential to romanticize the West, saying: “For me romanticizing is using a context -- in the case of Western art it is the background, the landscape -- and adding a subject that has been redefined with a notion that was not the original notion of the time.”

Meytras avoids this trap by isolating her subjects, “like icons.” She denies them the opportunity to be defined by their all too familiar surroundings (landscapes, rodeos), instead offering them in isolation. In so doing she allows us to consider the scope of these figures, to really question their place in our visual environment.

JOSHUA RAY SMITH

Wyoming-native Joshua Ray Smith has a complex view on the label “Wyoming artist.” To a degree, he feels uncomfortable with the designation as a mere label, which is understandable when you realize the depth to which Smith’s work is connected to his home state.

After receiving an MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art and working as a professor in Michigan, Smith has returned to a ranch north of Rawlins to: “unpack several places and experiences that shaped [his] spacial perception.” He writes: “In my studio development and graduate work, the literal



Joshua Ray Smith with “Spring Equinox”

space and place of Wyoming’s geography, geology, and topography were central to my interests and artistic research.”

Wyoming’s influence is unmistakable when one considers Smith’s AIR pieces, and his interest in the way that spaces define our perceptual experience. He writes: “The influence a space has on our sensation is directly correlated to how that space is enclosed, or revealed, or in the case of the Rocky Mountain West, how open it is. And Wyoming in particular is defined and at heart, a place of vast wide open spaces.”

These spaces are the feature that prompts Smith to reconsider the label of “Wyoming artist.” He notes



that to say someone is a Wyoming artist is parallel to saying that someone is a New York artist; the artist resides in that location.

Yet, it is undeniable that, as Smith says, “there is quite a difference in terms of dialogue, networks, galleries, and audience exposure between urban centers and the geographical isolation of Wyoming, which has to shape the conceptual practice and working methods of any artist working in Wyoming.”

But within this difference, Smith finds possibility, perhaps even the latent potential for Wyoming to play host to the next “creative community” such as Marfa, Texas. He writes that Wyoming has the ability to field alternative exhibition spaces and opportu-

nities, specific to “the amazing and diverse terrain that Wyoming offers.”

In his own work Smith responds to the uniqueness of a place, as in his AIR piece, *Time and Place Collectors*, in which he sets rolled steel in a variety of locations around the United States and leaves them exposed to the elements before bringing them back together. In some ways, this is the ideal AIR piece, as (like the AIR) it engages disparate places, existing in unison, separate and yet somehow in dialogue.

The four artists featured here have more in common than their Wyoming location; they all have significant online presence. As Joshua Ray Smith perceptively states: “In a region where it is most likely hard to swing by the studio, or gallery exhibitions are far between, reference to a website which can be accessed by anyone’s phone is a very powerful tool.”

Yet even in the face of such geographic distances and separations, many Wyoming artists find community in their immediate vicinity. Meytras for one, praises her local art scene, but is not as familiar with the state scene. The exception to this is the work that she has seen attending the Governor’s Capitol Art Exhibition in Cheyenne, which has artists from across the state gathering in one physical location. The hope for the AIR is that it can enable this virtual gathering, at any time of year, at any time of day, at any location; serving as a resource for Wyoming’s best resource, its arts community.

Michaela Rife is from Cheyenne. The University of Oregon graduate spent the summer as an intern at the Wyoming Arts Council. One of her projects was the WAC’s Artist Image Registry. She now is pursuing a graduate degree in critical and curatorial studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Find the AIR test site at wyomingartscouncil.org/artists/airsearch.aspx. The AIR will go live when the WAC’s new web site debuts later this year.

SAGEBRUSH AND CEDARS

Tina Willis ©April 26, 2012

The ancients were chief, natives born first in this west
Miners, trappers and cowboys stood tall to the test
The wagons and railroads joined the rush of progress
All knew the promise: Wyoming... best of the best

Could these pioneers survive here and thrive here unafraid?
In the sagebrush and cedars? Mountains of granite and jade?
Yes, they carved out their homesteads...Here they suffered and prayed
They seized her wild spirit...they were gritty and stayed

They laid claim to the landscape and made it their own
They fought drought, cold and lonesome with resolve turned to stone
They loved the red Russell sunsets and the spring grass cologne
They found faith while they pursued solace and courage ...often alone

They laid rail lines and dug gold mines in high aspen stands
They plowed and raised livestock with strong weathered hands
Snow melt filled their dikes where the Canada goose lands
And it was pioneer families who said the Tetons were grand

The pioneers learned to live on hopes, try and will
Working each day with Mother Nature until
They knew every song of the meadow lark's trill
And rested by the streams in the quiet evening still

They spent days waiting for rain, worked for no pay or wage
Independence and courage were born here in the sage
They wrote history each night on an oil lamp-lit page
Their children's children grew up strong on her range

The pioneers held the promise to become part of this west
And Wyoming kept her promiseShe's still the best of best

TINA WILLIS • LITERARY ARTS

When Tina Willis read her poem “Sagebrush and Cedars” in August at the state fair in Douglas, she was happy to be with her friends in the Wyoming Pioneer Association. In fact, she was happy to be anywhere. In 2003, Willis slipped into a coma caused by West Nile Virus. When she awoke, she was paralyzed on one side. The doctors diagnosed her with meningitis, encephalitis and West Nile Virus-induced polio. It took the Wheatland rancher years before she could walk again and to write her poetry, which is her passion.

“It was an amazing day,” she said, referring to the Aug. 16 event at the Pioneer Museum. “Amazing that I was able to write the poem and walk forward and read it.”

The Pioneer Association is a Friends-type organization for the Pioneer Museum, according to Division of State Parks and Cultural Resources Director Milward Simpson. It is the only historic site in the state that is a fully functioning museum. The association gathered at the museum Aug. 16 to mark the fair's 100th anniversary.

Willis is a past recipient of a Blanchan/Doubleday writing award from the Wyoming Arts Council. Here is her poem (to the left) that she read at the state fair.

AMY GORBEBY • PERFORMING ARTS

Amy Gorbey of Cheyenne is a new addition to the Wyoming Arts Council's artist roster.

She is an actress, director, playwright, and producer with an MFA in Acting from Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A member of Actors Equity, AFTRA, and SAG, she has worked as a professional actress and co-written three plays which were produced and premiered in Philadelphia, including *Extinction: A Play*, which received a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Gorbey has taught adults and elementary and middle school students, and has directed several summer theater camps, where her students explored subjects ranging from Greek mythology to silent film.



Amy Gorbey

Contact information: 307-634-6235; 267-546-7919; agorbey@q.com

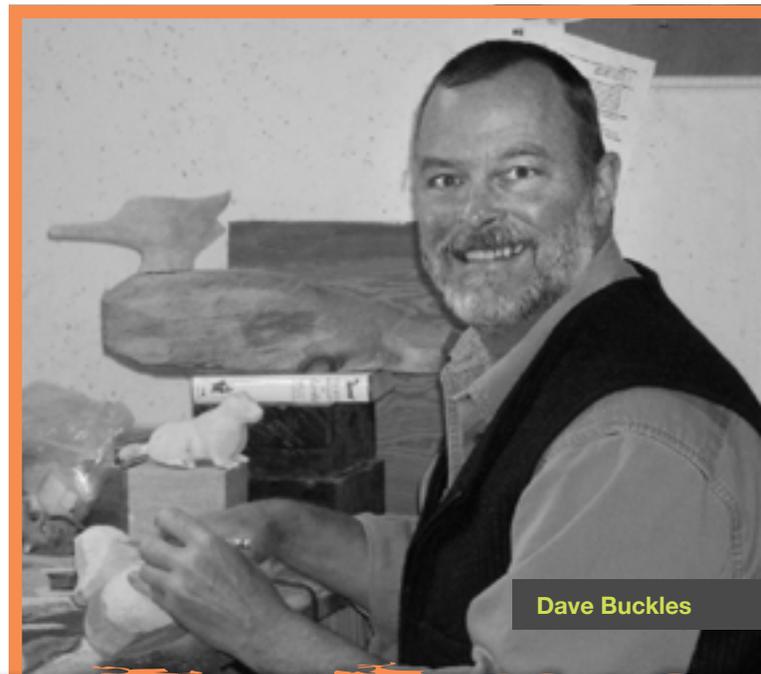
DAVE BUCKLES • VISUAL ARTS

Dave Buckles of Cody gets double-billing on the Wyoming Arts Council artist roster. As a woodcarver who learned his craft via traditional means, he is listed as both a folk artist and visual artist.

A wildlife woodcarver with knowledge of antique duck decoy carving, Buckles also specializes in other wildfowl, horses, fish, and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone region. Fascinated by wildlife postures and behaviors, Dave strives to capture those personalities in his carvings and to help people notice those unique wildlife habits. He carves both the familiar and the extraordinary, whether it is a backyard American Robin or an exotic Sulfur-crested Cockatoo.

As a self-taught wood carver, Dave knows that there is much that he can teach others, inspiring them to explore the art of carving.

You can contact Buckles at 307-250-3131 or through his web site at <http://www.casualcarver.com>. He also displays his work at www.etsy.com/shop/casualcarver



Dave Buckles

GOVERNOR MATT MEAD ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENTS TO WYOMING ARTS COUNCIL BOARD



Governor Matt Mead has appointed two new board members and two returning members to the Wyoming Arts Council Board.

New board members are Erin Taylor of Cheyenne, Executive Director of the Wyoming Taxpayers Association, and Casper's Holly Turner, Executive Director of the Trails Center Foundation and past Executive Director of both the Nicolaysen Art Museum and the Wyoming Symphony Orchestra.

Reappointed board members are Janelle Fletcher-Kilmer of Laramie and Neil Hansen of Powell. Fletcher-Kilmer is Director of Fine Arts Outreach at the University of Wyoming. Hansen is Chairman of the Music Department at Northwest College. Stepping down from the board are artist and retired arts educator Ila Miller of Aladdin and David Neary, Lander, Technical Director of the Wyoming Shakespeare Festival Company.

"I thank Ila and David for their service and dedication to the arts in Wyoming," Governor Mead said. "The arts enrich the lives of everyone and this Board

has an important role in fostering both the arts and artists in Wyoming. I am pleased to have Erin and Holly join the board and that Janelle and Neil are willing to stay on. They are all contributing time, talent and energy to promote arts in Wyoming."

THE ARTS ENRICH THE LIVES OF EVERYONE AND THIS BOARD HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN FOSTERING BOTH THE ARTS AND ARTISTS IN WYOMING.

~ Governor Matt Mead

The Wyoming Arts Council Board is made up of 10 members who are appointed by the Governor for three-year terms. The board serves in an advisory capacity to the Wyoming Arts Council, and makes determinations on grants awards.

Other board members are: Karen Stewart, Board Chair from Jackson; Duane Evenson, Gillette; Bruce Richardson, Casper; Chessney Sevier, Buffalo; Leslie Shinaver, Afton; and Tara Taylor, Mountain View.



MICHAEL LANGE JOINS WAC STAFF

Michael Lange, a native of Riverton, joined the Wyoming Arts Council staff on Sept. 12. He is the WAC's new Community Development and the Arts Specialist.

Lange began his love for the arts while playing bass with his high school jazz band. After high school, Lange attended Northwest College in Powell and then the University of Wyoming, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Music with an emphasis in bass performance. While an undergraduate, Lange produced two concerts, *Need Culture*, *1 Night of Photo, Art, and Jazz*, and *Jazz From the Archives*. Both concerts included original arrangements and music as well as music performed from the archives of the American Heritage Center. Additionally, Lange co-arranged a piece of cartoon music entitled *Flip the Frog* that was performed during the 2003 concert series by the Cheyenne Symphony and the Oregon-based Modern Music Ensemble 3rd Angle. In 2004, Lange traveled to Slovakia with the Maxwell Quartet to perform at the *Academická of Nitra* traditional music festival.

Toward the end of his undergraduate years, Lange found his passion for working in art administration after interning with the University of Wyoming Cultural Programs and Outreach Department. While there, Lange was accepted into UW's Master of Public Administration program through the political science department. He completed his master's degree in 2008, focusing his studies on public policy, non-profit man-

agement, and art administration.

For the past six years, Lange has been working in the Campus Activities Center in the Wyoming Union at UW, overseeing the programs and services offered out of that office. Some highlighted responsibilities included oversight of the three volunteer programming boards that plan approximately 100 events per year, including large-scale concerts such as The Frey, Dierks Bentley, and Lynyrd Skynyrd, as well as comedians Ron White and Lewis Black.

An avid presenter and committee member, Michael has served as the ACUI Region 13 Education Council Coordinator; on the UW Student Affairs Professional Development Committee; UW Homecoming Committee; MLK Jr. Days of Dialogue Committee and WAC Grants to Organizations panels, among others.

Lange's research interests are centered on exploring and creating structures and atmospheres that promote creativity and collaboration. He has presented this topic at different regional and national conferences. Classes taught include a master's seminar on art administration and an undergraduate class on leadership in social entrepreneurialism.

When not at work, Michael enjoys spending time with his wife and 2½-year-old daughter. Other activities include catching a great concert, cheering for the underdog in any sport, and rooting for the Wyoming Cowboys. Highly recommended by his administrators and peers at UW because of his "unique collaborative manner and engaging personality" in addition to his attention to detail and passion for his work, Michael is a welcome addition to the Wyoming Arts Council staff.

Wyoming arts organization staff should contact Michael with questions, or just to introduce yourself and your arts organization. He can be reached by e-mail at michael.lange@wyo.gov or by calling 307-777-7723.



From the 2012 Equality State Book Festival at Casper College (from left): Michael Shay, Wyoming Arts Council; fellowship recipients W. Dale Nelson (Laramie), Matt Daly (Jackson), Claudia Mauro (Jackson), and fellowship judge and poet Brian Turner. Nelson, Daly and Mauro read their award-winning work with Turner on Sept. 14 at the bookfest. Shay served as emcee.

KAREN STEWART NEW WAC BOARD CHAIR



Karen Stewart of Jackson became Wyoming Arts Council's (WAC) Board Chair, effective July 1. She replaced David Neary, whose term on the WAC board ended June 30. Neary served for six years on the board, two as chairman.

tenure, she guided the organization through dramatic growth, more than tripling its educational scope, and its relocation to the Center for the Arts, which opened in 2005. She is a founding board member for the Center for the Arts and helped develop and guide the collaborative community arts center.

Stewart has also served on the Cultural Council of Jackson Hole, the Art Center Task Force, and on committees for the Hispanic Cultural Festival, Day of the Dead Gallery Walk, Gallery Association and the Fall Arts Festival.

Stewart takes over as the WAC's new communication plan is being implemented. After two years of planning, and much input from the arts community and others across the state, changes are being made to the WAC "brand" which includes grant programs, web site, Artscapes newsletter, new logo and more.

Her leadership in the arts has been acknowledged with two awards: the 2003 Governor's Art Award and the 2004 Cultural Council of Jackson Hole Award for Creativity. Karen currently serves as a board member of both the Wyoming Arts Council and St. John's Hospital Foundation.

Stewart was the executive director of the Art Association of Jackson Hole from 1994 to 2011. During her

A Wyoming native, Stewart has lived in Jackson Hole for 37 years with her husband, Dick Stewart, and together they raised three daughters.

KATHARINE COLES NAMED JUDGE FOR BLANCHAN AND DOUBLEDAY WRITING AWARDS



Postmark deadline for the Wyoming Arts Council's Blanchan and Doubleday writing awards is Nov. 2.

The Neltje Blanchan Award, \$1,000, is given for the best poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, or script that is informed by a relationship with the natural world.

The Frank Nelson Doubleday Award, \$1,000, is given for the best poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, or script written by a woman author.

To enter, you must be at least 18 years old and a legal resident of Wyoming, living in the state for at least ten months of the year, since July 1, 2011. You must not be a full-time college student or full-time college faculty.

Judging this year's competition is Katharine Coles. Coles' fifth and sixth collections of poems, *The Earth Is Not Flat* and *Flight*, are forthcoming in 2013 and

2015 from Red Hen Press. Her poems, essays, and stories have appeared in such journals as *The Paris Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Poetry*, *Image*, *Seneca Review*, *North American Review*, *Southwest Review*, *DIAGRAM*, and *Ascent*. In 2009-10, she served as the inaugural director of the Harriet Monroe Poetry Institute for the Poetry Foundation. She is a professor at the University of Utah, where she founded and co-directs the Utah Symposium in Science and Literature. She is a 2012 Guggenheim Foundation Fellow.

In 2010, she traveled to Antarctica to write poems under the auspices of the National Science Foundation's Antarctic Artists and Writers Program.

Coles will travel to Wyoming in 2013 to participate in a reading featuring the award winners. Detailed information will be included in the next newsletter and on the WAC blog.

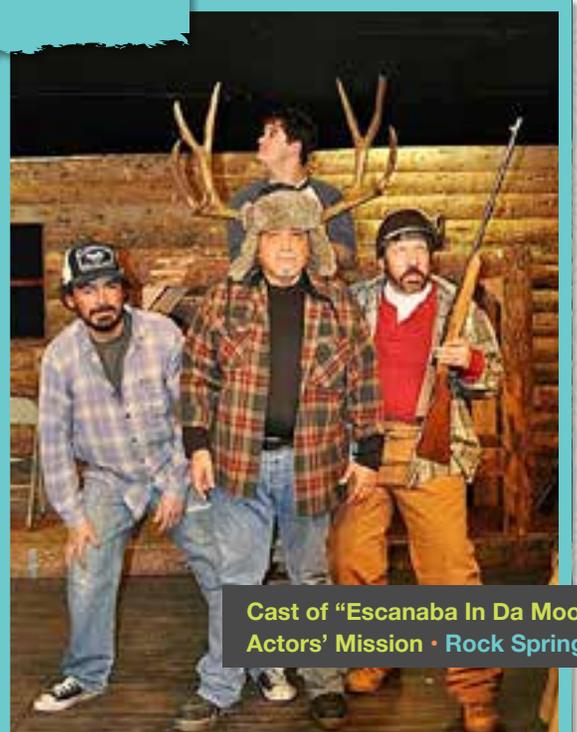
Applications have been mailed to those on the WAC literary arts mailing list. Find a printable form on the WAC web site at www.wyomingartscouncil.org.

For more information, contact Mike Shay at 307-777-5234 or mike.shay@wyo.gov.

WAC GRANTS



Kinser Jazz Festival
trombone student • Casper



Cast of "Escanaba In Da Moonlight,"
Actors' Mission • Rock Springs



Alvin Hong CAM-PLEX residency • Gillette



Screen printing at print-making camp
• Greybull Recreation District



Artist Mark Wood at a South High
School orchestra class • Cheyenne

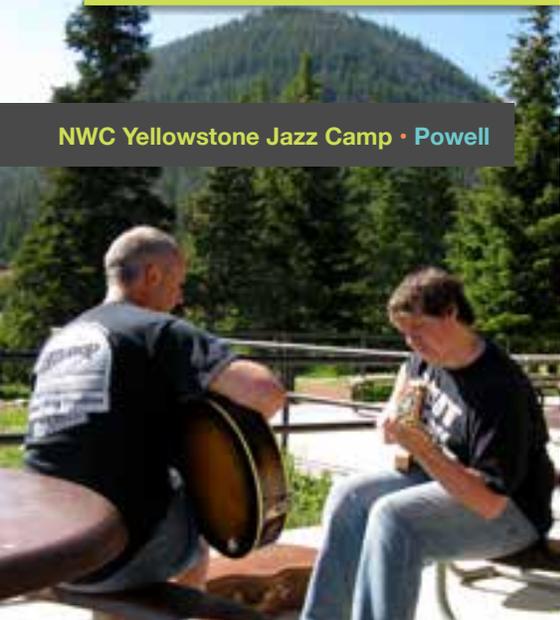


Artist Maura Jacobsen
• Saratoga Elementary School

WAC GRANTS



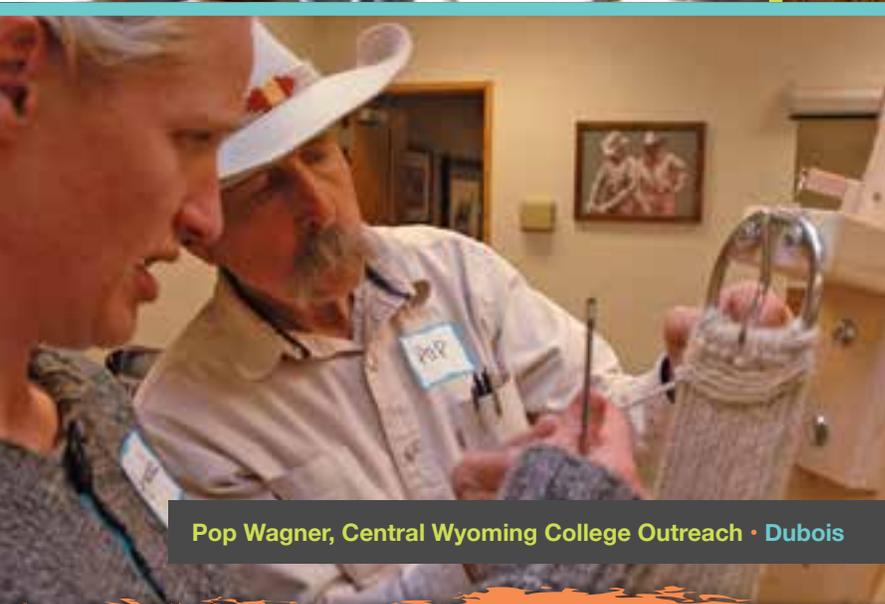
Kindergarten students doing the ABC Lunge, pARTners • Jackson



NWC Yellowstone Jazz Camp • Powell



Audience participation with the Little Sun Drum and Dance Group at Cheyenne Frontier Days • Cheyenne



Pop Wagner, Central Wyoming College Outreach • Dubois



Snowy Range Summer Dance Festival • Laramie

The Piatigorsky Foundation and the Wyoming Arts Council announce the fall 2012 Wyoming tour. It will feature tenor Rodrigo Garciarroyo and pianist Mario Alberto Hernández. At press time, some of the details for times and venues are incomplete. Please see updates on the WAC blog at <http://wyomingarts.blogspot.com> or the web site at www.wyomingartscouncil.org.

Here's the schedule:

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 10 • GREYBULL

7 p.m., Greybull High School Auditorium, 600 North 6th Street, Greybull. Contact: Darla Haller, dhaller@bgh3.k12.wy.us

THURSDAY, OCT. 11 • WORLAND

7 p.m., Worland Community Center, 1200 Culbertson Avenue Worland. Contact: Sheryl Ley, sherylwccc@yahoo.com, 307-347-8616, Fax 307-347-3445

FRIDAY, OCT. 12 • DUBOIS

6 p.m., Headwaters Arts & Conference Center, 20 Stalnaker Street, Dubois. Contact: Tammy Lucas, headwaters@wyoming.com, 307-455-2687

SATURDAY, OCT. 13 • RAWLINS

(details TBA)

SUNDAY, OCT. 14 • GREEN RIVER

(details TBA)

TUESDAY, OCT. 16 • ROCK SPRINGS

7 p.m., Western Wyoming Community College Theater. Contact: Debora Soule, dsoule@sweetwaterlibraries.com, 307-362-6212

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 17 • KEMMERER

7 p.m., South Lincoln County Events & Training Center. Contact: Jennifer Lasik at 307-828-4083.

THURSDAY, OCT. 18 • LANDER

7 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church. Contact: Marvin Brown, marvjobrown@wyoming.com



MARIO ALBERTO HERNÁNDEZ

Born in León, Guanajuato, pianist Mario Alberto Hernández began his studies with Ma. Eugenia Arvizu and later continued with Ma. Teresa Rodríguez. At the same time, he also studied violin with José Homero Melgar and attended law school at the University of Guanajuato.

As a piano accompanist and internal conductor, he has performed at festivals such as the Cervantino, the Sinaloa Festival and the Ciudad de México, and with the concert opera of the orchestras Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México, the OFUNAM and the Sinfónica de Minería. He studied conducting at Southern Mississippi University and made his debut as a conductor in 1993 with an orchestra formed by musicians of the Sinfónica del Estado de México and the Sinfónica de la Universidad de Guanajuato orchestras.

Hernández was the piano coach for Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, collaborating with the renowned conductor Sir Neville Marriner at the Bellas Artes

Palace. In 1995, he conducted Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Puccini's *La Bohème* and *Suor Angelica*. In 1999 and 2005, he conducted Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Escuela Superior de Música. He has performed with prestigious singers such as Leona Mitchell, Francisco Araiza, Ramón Vargas, Fernando de la Mora, María Luisa Tamez, among others.

Mario Alberto has collaborated with the OFUNAM, the Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México, with the Coordinación Nacional de Música del INBA and several embassies. Because of his pedagogical labor, he has become one of the most enthusiastic promoters of young Mexican musicians.



RODRIGO GARCJARROYO

Born in Mexico, tenor Rodrigo Garcjarroyo has been involved with music and stage since he was a child, learning about architecture, theatre and music at a very young age. He began singing under the teaching of Jorge González Ávila, and later studied at both the Escuela Nacional de Música and the Es-

cuela Superior de Música in Mexico City. There he met pianist Mario Alberto Hernández, who has been his tutor, coach and friend ever since.

Between 2003 and 2006 he received the Plácido Domingo Scholarship to study at the Sociedad Internacional de Valores de Arte Mexicano (SIVAM).

Since 2006, he has been awarded scholarships from the International Vocal Arts Institute (IVAI), the Martina Arroyo Foundation and the Olga Forrai Foundation to pursue his vocal studies in Puerto Rico, Israel and New York, training under artists such as Joan Dornemann, Lucy Arner, César Ulloa, Mignon Dunn, Martina Arroyo, Sherill Milnes, Ira Siff, Anthony Lacitura, Joan Patenaude-Yarnell and Enrique Patrón de Rueda.

Garcjarroyo has sung in the US, Europe and Asia, and in Mexico on stages all around the country. His repertoire includes songs from around the world, opera, chamber and symphonic music, including *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Don Giovanni*, *Tosca*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *La Traviata*, *Zaide*, *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Il Tabarro*, Beethoven's *9th Symphony*, *The Verdi Requiem*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Carmen* and *Massenet's Manon*.

Rodrigo made his debut at the Palacio de Bellas Artes with the Compañía Nacional de Ópera as *Cavalleria Rusticana's* Turiddu in 2011 under the tutelage of Maestro Niksa Bareza. He made his Lincoln Center debut with the *Verdi Requiem* conducted by Maestro Patrick Gardner in 2009.

"The stage is the mirror in which society sees itself. It is where we lay a finger in our most sublime and horrifying possibilities as human beings. That's the job and responsibility of a dramatic artist; that's his contribution to society. The audience bravely seeks to find itself in the mystic reflection of fiction. This is not only what I do, it is what I am."

WHAT MOTIVATES THE IMPULSE TO COLLECT ART?

The exhibit “Passion & Discovery: The Impulse to Collect Art” opened Sept. 28 at the Nicolaysen Art Museum in Casper and continues through Jan. 6. In it, the NIC features work from four art collectors around Casper, as well as pieces from its permanent collection. It attempts to explore the motives behind creating and building an art collection from both institutional and personal perspectives.

One of the collections featured comes from Bruce Richardson, Ph.D., and Susan Stanton. Nicolaysen Curator Lisa Hatchadoorian sat down with Bruce, Senior Lecturer of English at UW/CC and Wyoming Arts Council board member, for a Q&A about his collection.

LISA HATCHADOORIAN: WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO START COLLECTING ART? WHAT WAS THE FIRST SPARK OF

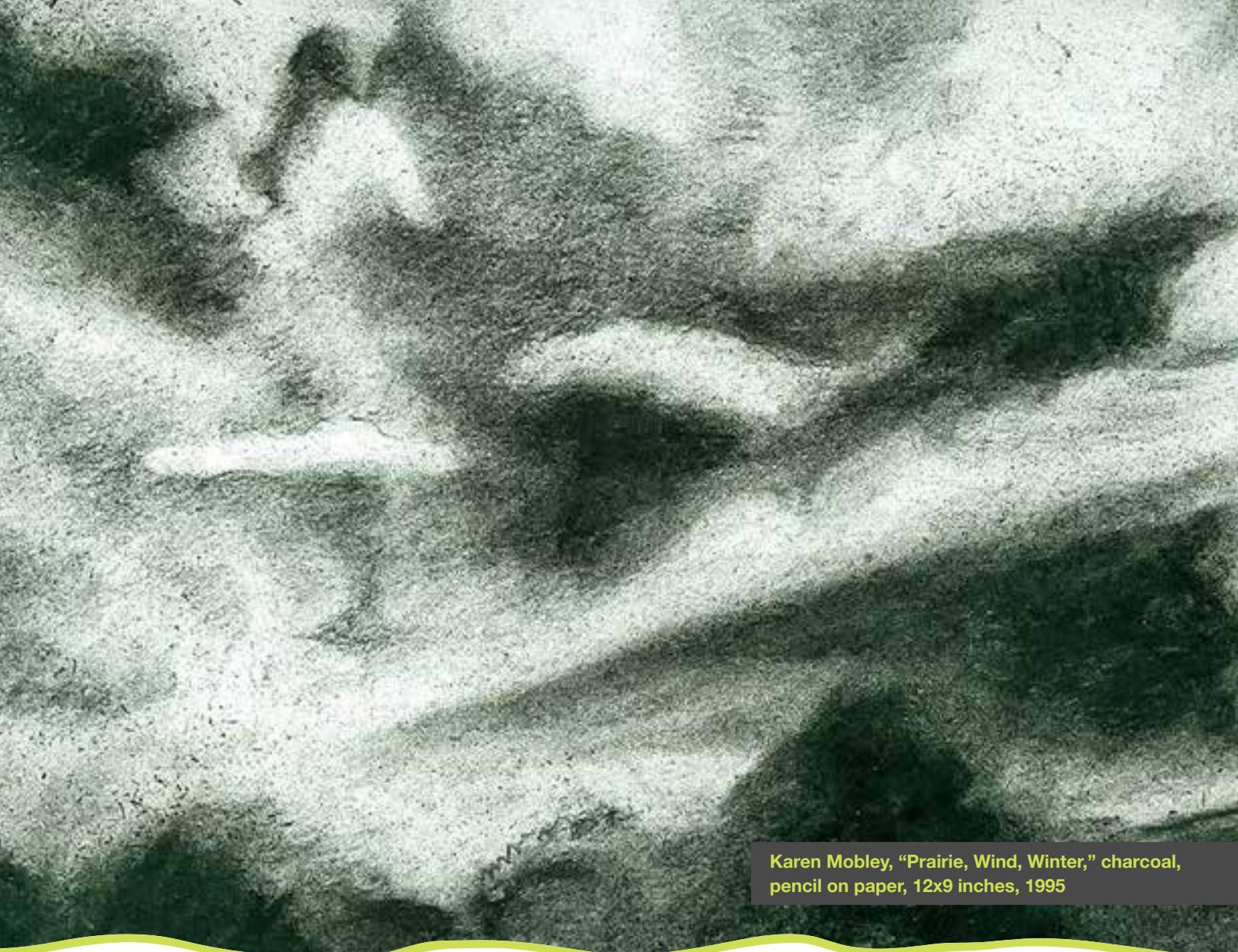
PASSION THAT MADE YOU WANT TO SPEND MONEY AND LIVE WITH IT?

BRUCE RICHARDSON: There is a barrier to cross. Am I the sort of person allowed to own art? How much money you have does not determine this. I know people of great means who like art, but cannot conceive of owning it. It has something to do with self-confidence about yourself and your judgment (am I qualified, worthy to select what to buy?) and self-confidence about the future — that you will have a good future and that it should include art.

AM I THE SORT OF PERSON ALLOWED TO OWN ART? HOW MUCH MONEY YOU HAVE DOES NOT DETERMINE THIS. I KNOW PEOPLE OF GREAT MEANS WHO LIKE ART, BUT CANNOT CONCEIVE OF OWNING IT.

~ Bruce Richardson

It took me awhile to get to that point. As a kid, I loved museum visits and paintings. I took an art history class in college — to impress a woman I liked — and liked it. Later I became a kind of expert — Ph.D. in English with a focus on William Blake and British art and an art history fellowship to pay the bills. I



Karen Mobley, "Prairie, Wind, Winter," charcoal, pencil on paper, 12x9 inches, 1995

was blown away by a summer looking at the drawings of George Romney — the verve and expressive energy -- and was forever turned off reproductions.

For my job at UW/CC, I developed a class on landscape in art and literature, really studied Hudson River painting on site in an NEH seminar and Western landscape in Cody seminars, published essays on landscape and culture, did talks on Moran and others, did lots of art reviews, helped with some NIC shows, did some catalogue essays, was chair of the NIC board, hung out with and corresponded with painters and so on.

As I became a bit of an expert on British art, landscape painting and Western art, I bought thousands of expensive books, but no art. Until a NIC auction. I knew Linda Lillegraven and her husband, and had lived with many of her paintings that she stored for a time with two of my Laramie friends. I really admired her dedication to the big, flat spaces of this place. I wanted to have this small painting and bid, for me, a lot in a very spirited auction and got the piece in this exhibition.

[continued on page 32](#)



Aaron Wuerker, "Horizon" (2010),
oil on canvas, 24x36 inches

That was the start. The real conversion into a collector happened one evening in Karen Mobley's small house filled with her recent *Prairie* series. After a few drinks, I grandly turned to her and said I want to buy the whole wall, some eighteen pictures, and I did.

In one swoop I owned more works by Karen than anyone else. Why did I do it? I had a strong, confident vision, like a burst of love, that this was important, powerful art and I wanted to live with it. It was a great, great thing to do and changed me substantially into a person who would seek out and buy art.

LH: HOW DO YOU COLLECT?

BR: I focus on landscape and other interesting paintings by contemporary Rocky Mountain artists, especially those in Wyoming. I go to lots of exhibits

and shows and do some studio visits and develop some targets and desires.

I had been looking with desire at Aaron Wuerker's landscapes with the stuff of the energy industry for a while. I now have two of his paintings. I have some unrequited desires and hope to fulfill them. It's a joint project. I do most of the buying and hunting, but Susan has to want it too. Sometimes we buy together; sometimes she buys.

LH: HOW DOES THE ARTWORK ENRICH YOUR DAILY LIFE?

BR: It's nice to have work from an individual hand and brain and soul around you. The prefab stuff around us lacks the kind of deep meaning and expressiveness of these works. They are emblems

that encode the creative spark and something powerful, perhaps the meaning of life.

We also enjoy reading the world through our paintings: Hey, there's a Karen Mobley sky! Hey, that's Wuerker's Wyoming. Fun moments. Art makes you notice things around you. We have some funny and odd things; they give me little bursts of amusement and pleasure.

LH: HOW DOES DAY-TO-DAY LIVING WITH ART CHANGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH IT OR THE ARTIST?

BR: The art is just sucked in, becomes part of your DNA, shapes how you see things in ways unnoticed. I know many of the artists and owning their work does create an attachment. They like you a bit, you like them.

And I certainly think of generous, observant Ginnie Madsen when I see her stock car painting and the intense, fiery Richard Jacobi when I look at this explosive, big Yellowstone picture. I kind of feel that the artists are there and I sometimes see them creating the picture.

LH: WHY COLLECT CONTEMPORARY ART?

BR: It's the voice of now and it's a way to promote a world where people can live making art. My perfect world is filled with artists, writers, musicians creating away — that is the good, significant, fulfilled society that has art-making everywhere. I can help a little bit by buying books and art, going to plays and concerts and advocating for art and artists at the Arts Council and elsewhere.

LH: WHAT'S THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LANDSCAPE ART HISTORICALLY? ARE THEY RELEVANT TODAY?

BR: Big topic for me with no short answer, but here's the main thing. In Euro-American art landscapes generally encode seen objects as possessions or commodities that fulfill human fantasies.

These paintings show us delicious, sexy real estate to be owned, subdivided and used. You see a lot of male erotic fantasy in this art and a lot of imperial energy as well — to colonize, shape and tame while enjoying to the fullest.

...THIS WAS IMPORTANT, POWERFUL ART AND I WANTED TO LIVE WITH IT. IT WAS A GREAT, GREAT THING TO DO AND CHANGED ME SUBSTANTIALLY INTO A PERSON WHO WOULD SEEK OUT AND BUY ART.

~ Bruce Richardson

There is plenty of this sort of thing around today and it can be very popular. While I like this art, my preference in my writing and collecting is for alternative visions. I note Aaron Wuerker's deconstruction of the prospect view and foregrounding of the act of possession, all in a deliciously traditional formula.

Jon Madsen focuses on how people frame scenes and how that interacts with the land's inner grid. Karen Mobley's skies have their own sublime otherness, but are infused with the passionate, sensual melancholy of our inner life and its tragic realities.

Linda Lillegraven's little luminist painting skips the framing gestures of possession in favor of the hush and light of spiritual meditation. I see here and elsewhere (say, in the rural and suburban work of California artists Richard Diebenkorn or Wayne Thiebaud) that landscape art has some zip and liveliness and is not all warm baths.



ART CAN TAKE MANY
FORMS



ART INCLUDES ALL
ABILITIES



ART TOUCHES ALL
AGES



ART REACHES ALL
LOCATIONS



WYOMING
ARTS
COUNCIL

IMPORTANT DATES ON THE WAC CALENDAR

OCTOBER

5 Governor's Arts Awards
Nomination Deadline

5-7 Wyoming Arts Alliance (WyAA)
Annual Conference,
Kemmerer, SLTEC

10-18 Piatigorsky Foundation
Fall 2012 Tour of Wyoming

NOVEMBER

2 Deadline for Blanchan/Doubleday
Writing Awards Application

8-9 WAC Quarterly Board
Meeting, Riverton

^{DEC.}
29-1 State Drama Competition, Central
Wyoming College, Riverton

30 Application Deadline for Curt
Gowdy State Park Visitor Center
and CWC Health & Science
Center Public Art Projects

DECEMBER

1 WAC Online Granting System
Opens for FY 14 Annual Grants

1 WAC Folk & Traditional Arts
Mentorship Grants Announced

December – Deadline for applications to the
WAC Artist Roster (date to be
announced – refer to WAC web site)

JANUARY • 2013

15 Next CAP Grant Deadline

21-22 Wyoming All-State Music, Camp-
bell County High School, Gillette

FEBRUARY • 2013

8 Governor's Arts Awards
Gala, Cheyenne

For more information, contact the
WAC at **307-777-7742** or go to the
web site **www.wyomingartscouncil.org**



WHY THE WYOMING ARTS COUNCIL?

When creative activity is happening in Wyoming, it creates a significant ripple effect. The economic vitality of an area is stimulated. Galleries, concerts and arts events mean more energy in a community, more tourists, more renovated buildings, and more new businesses. Through music, storytelling and visual art gatherings, people share experiences and ideas. They begin to understand each other in new ways. The arts have a profound effect on Wyoming communities and our state as a whole.

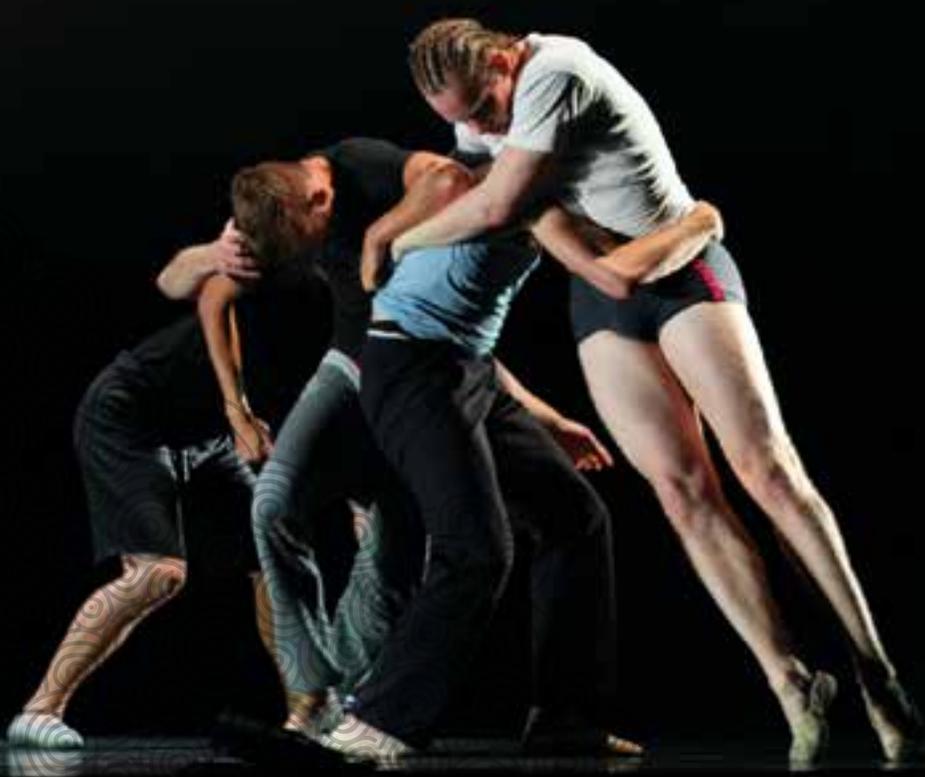


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The Wyoming Arts Council provides
resources & leadership to help Wyoming
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thrive through the arts.