

LOCAL/REGIONAL

Who wants chocolate?

ALEISHA HENDRY
Staff Writer

Chocolate lovers of Fort St. John will be in their sugary-sweet glory this coming weekend.

The 11th Annual Chocolate Festival will have chocolate as far as the eye can see at the North Peace Cultural Centre.

Peace Gallery North Coordinator, Shar Coultry, is glad to see the event continue to flourish in the community.

"It's a great event, everyone comes out, families, singles ladies, singles guys, everyone," she said.

The Chocolate Festival is a fundraiser for the Peace Arts Gallery Society's Free Kids Art Camp that will run during the summer months.

Coultry said she couldn't express just how important the Kids Art Camp was to the community.

"It's so important – anything for the children is important," she said. "And they do art at this camp, not crafts, real art. They learn techniques."

Last year's festival brought in around \$6,000, according to Coultry.

"It's completely free for the kids, we pay for everything," she said.

However, in order for the Chocolate Festival to happen, bakers are needed to make the treats.

Those who want to put their best chocolate goodies forward need to make two batches – one for the tasters to sample, and one to go up for auction.

She emphasized that bakers need to pre-register their entry and should let organizers know if there will be nuts in their baking, in order to prevent anyone with allergies from ingesting them.

Bakers should register by Feb. 11, but Coultry said they will still accept registrants and entries the morning of the festival.

Categories for the bakers include Cakes, Candy, Cookies, Squares and Miscellaneous. Little bakers out there can show off their favourite treats in the Kids category as well.

The Chocolate Festival is happening on Feb. 12, with tasting starting at 6 p.m. For more information on the festival or to register to be a baker, call Peace Gallery North at 250-787-0993.



AHN FILE PHOTO

All sorts of chocolate goodies will be on hand for tasting at the 11th Annual Chocolate Festival on Feb. 12.

GUY DAVIS!

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Whether Guy Davis is appearing on Letterman, the Conan O'Brien show" or acting on Broadway, in radio programs such as "World Café", in concert in front of 15,000 people or 100, or teaching an intimate gathering in a workshop, Guy feels the instinctive desire to give each listener his 'all'. His 'all' is the Blues.

The routes, and roots, of his blues are as diverse as the music form itself. It can be soulful, moaning out a people's cry, or playful and bouncy as a hay-ride.

Throughout his career, he has dedicated himself to reviving the traditions of acoustic blues and bringing them to as many ears as possible through the material of the great blues masters, African American stories passed down by people like Zora Neale Hurston, Garrison Keillor, and by the late Laura Davis (his one hundred and five year-old grandmother). Though raised in the New York City area, he grew up hearing accounts of life in the rural south from his parents and especially his grandparents, and they made their way into his own stories and songs. "Davis reminds you that the blues started as dance music. This is blues made for humming along, stomping your foot, feeling righteous in the face of oppression and expressing gratitude to your baby for greasing your skillet." (Playboy Magazine)

Throughout his life, Davis has had overlapping interests in music and acting, and the opportunity to combine music and acting on the stage was realized in his Broadway musical debut in 1991 in the Zora Neale Hurston/Langston Hughes collaboration "Mulebone", which featured the music of Taj Mahal. Rolling Stone Magazine tagged yet another Guy Davis performance of "Payday" a "standout musical moment"!



Guy Davis Workshop



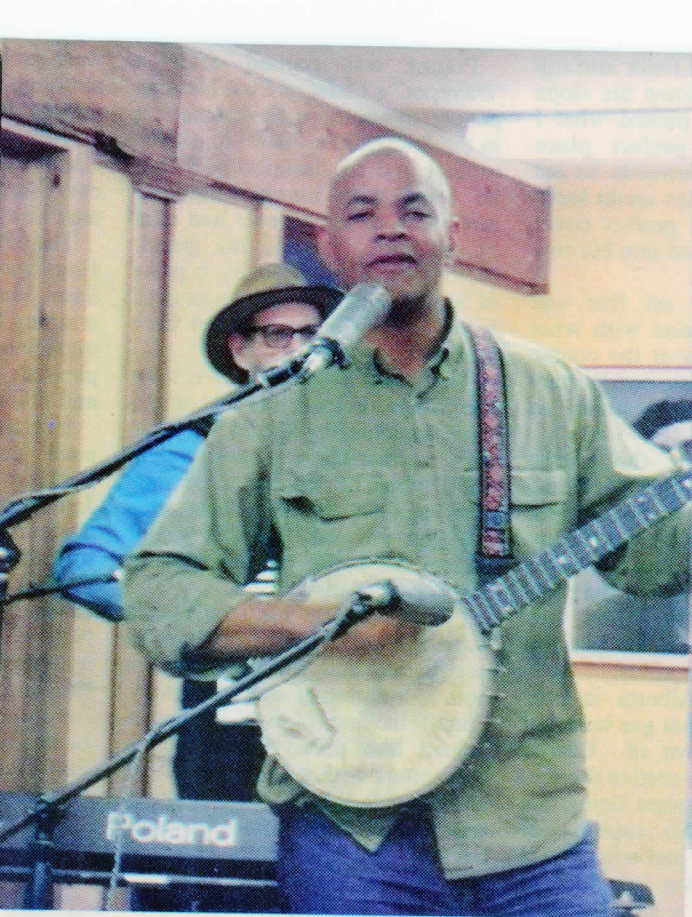
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Kids express themselves with annual art show

RYAN LUX
Staff Writer

Although work by amateur artists is nothing new to Peace Gallery North, curator Shar Coultry said the art featured in this year's 18th Annual Kids Fun For All Children's Art Exhibition was anything but amateur in quality.

"I thought the art was incredible this year, and I know I say that every year, but the quality of the work submitted this year is far higher than I anticipated – and that's not just with the high school students," said Coultry.

The gallery walls are plastered with art by local children from under five-years-old right up to 15 years of age. Far removed from just finger-painting and crayon doodles, the work featured in the exhibition ranges from found-art sculptures – including a time machine fashioned by a toddler – all the way to textile art.

"The work impressed me immensely. It was so creative," said Coultry, "Obviously they had someone who

assigned them projects, but so many of the students made the pieces their own."

One class project featured in the exhibition had students create pencil drawings, using shading to produce x-ray type illustrations. While all the projects possessed the same x-ray elements, students tweaked their work, placing objects in their drawing – such as scissors lodged in an esophagus.

"It's difficult to judge these kinds of class projects because all of the elements are covered. They're all really good, but some of them stick out from the rest of the group in terms of veering off the path, demonstrating originality," Coultry explained.

Exhibiting artwork by children is vital for the gallery in fulfilling its mandate to comprehensively reflect community arts, said Coultry. "They belong to the community, too, and it's important for us to foster youth to participate in art in all its forms. Raising our children with an art environment is so crucial to the development of their social skills."

The quality of this year's submissions reflects a vibrant and thriving arts community in Fort St. John, according to Coultry.

"This is just such a good sign. Such an improvement reflects the quality of instruction the kids receive all the way through the school system," she said.

Deciding the winners was tough work for Coultry, but she said she was looking for colour, form and originality in the pieces. After significant evaluation of all the submissions, Coultry awarded the exhibition's top prize, the Curator Award, to Grade 9 student Summer-Raye Gardipee.

Gardipee submitted a penciled portrait of the iconic Jim Morrison.

"It was odd to me that this young woman could actually do this. The quality speaks to her environment where she goes to school because she has an incredible teacher," said Coultry, referring to Sherri Petryshyn, the art teacher at Dr. Kearney Middle School.

•SEE ART ON A5



RYAN LUX PHOTO

Artwork by children from under 5 to 15 is currently on display at Peace Gallery North during the 18th Annual Kids Fun For All Children's Exhibition.

Show encourages young artists' talent

•CONT. FROM A1

Gardipee said she chose to draw Morrison because she likes his music and decided to use pencil because it's her favourite medium.

"I really like sketching, because everything seems to flow more easily," said Gardipee who explained that her grandfather taught her to draw when she was little.

"I've been drawing for as long

as I can remember and my parents have always supported it," she said, "It just makes me happy."

What Gardipee loves most about drawing is the freedom it gives her to express her take on the world.

"I like that I can put my own creative spin on everything and it makes most of what I do unique," Gardipee said.

She said she never expected to

win, but the fact she did is encouraging, given Gardipee plans to pursue a career in the arts, either in drawing or photography.

Coultrey said it was Gardipee's attention to detail that made her piece stand out from the rest of the pack.

The event was sponsored by the Fort St. John Community Arts Council and all students' work will be on display at Peace Gallery North until June 19.

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree at Peace Gallery North

AHN Sept 9, 2011

RYAN LUX
Staff Writer

An exhibition opening Friday at Peace Gallery North illustrates that, when it comes to art, the apple often doesn't fall from the tree. Entitled "Apple Tree," the new exhibit features the work of three generations of women artists originally of the North Peace.

The array is eclectic, ranging from western landscapes to papier-mache ravens, paintings of dragons swooping through a European village to canvases inspired by backcountry ski tours.

However, a discerning eye can weave a common thread through the women's work – nature and the indelible impression it's made on all their lives.

The women believe in the artistic gene and that it has been passed down and amplified from grandmother, Ann Bergen, to her daughter Valerie Ross and on to granddaughter, Whitney Dahl.

"I think it's getting stronger as it's passed down the line," said Ross.

Bergen came to the Peace Region back in 1953, to live on remote ranches and various communities in the area. Her daughter, Ross, said living in the wilds sheltered her from the distractions of television and gave her time to develop as an artist.


"When I was 13, a family friend gave me a set of oil paints. Since then I've been painting and selling art," she said.

Her mother, Bergen, started painting much later, in 1983.

"Well I always criticized Valerie's art when I was home-schooling her," said Bergen. So, when people in the small community she was living at the time arranged for an artist to come up and teach a course, Bergen had the opportunity to put her critical eye to work as an artist.

At first, Bergen recalled, she was hesitant to join the class. "I said 'I'm no artist.'"

•SEE ARTIST ON A3



Artists Ann Bergen and Valerie Ross, a mother-daughter duo, will be exhibiting their paintings along with the work of Valerie's daughter Whitney Dahl, bringing together three generations of Peace Country Painters under the same roof. (Ryan Lux Photo)

Learning with rhythm, music and dance for preschoolers

By Kyla Corpuz

FORT ST. JOHN - The Cultural Centre is taking on a new learning approach for preschoolers: one that is proven to enhance children's learning ability.

Play Arts Preschool is the first of its kind in the North Peace region said Susan McGarvey, Arts Space and Play Arts Preschool coordinator at the Cultural Centre. Play Arts intertwines basic learning with music, dance and theatre.

Through McGarvey's research she found many children were missing out on the opportunity to participate in the arts in Fort St. John.

What sets this preschool apart from others is its objective is to engage children in a learning initiative that is focused on the arts.

"There is a bowl of amazing talent to take from in FSJ, but kids are missing out on the very basic level, which is where they need to get it the most. They're going to develop that love of art from the beginning at a young age," said McGarvey.

Multiple studies show that possessing musical abilities strengthens a child's learning aptitude and puts them on a path to success in high school and post secondary.

"A 10-year study indicates that students who study music achieve higher test scores, regardless of socioeconomic background," according to a doctor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Though it may be the first arts-based preschool in northern B.C., it's a popular concept nationally and internationally.

"There are fine arts preschools throughout the country that are very successful by immersing those little brains into this creative way of solving problems, expressing themselves and getting more self confidence," said McGarvey.

In a 2010 report compiled by Hills Strategies Research called Music Education in Canadian Schools, 83 per cent of B.C. schools ranked building students' self-esteem and confidence as the number one benefit of music education.

Bettyanne Hampton, executive director at the North Peace Cultural Centre, and McGarvey presented the Play Arts Preschool on Canada Day, and according to them the response



Kyla Corpuz photo

Bettyanne Hampton and Susan McGarvey, who worked together to create Play Arts Preschool, pose in one of the rooms that the children will be utilizing.

has been positive.

"[The community was] excited, not only to have this opportunity but by the caliber and quality of instructors and curriculum," said Hampton.

The instructors are all professional musicians and artists, and the preschool leaders are experienced and have their Early Childhood Education.

"I think the community will benefit immensely from it, I mean, we are the musical capital of the north. Here is one more measure of quality that supports that," said Hampton.

The preschool will be held in the Cultural Centre, with many rooms and spaces to utilize, like the theatre. It starts in September and runs on the same calendar as School District 60. So far the preschool is only accepting 20 kids.

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SPINNING SHOW

ANN Oct 13, 2011



ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

The North Peace Spinners and Weavers' Guild is bringing two year's worth of shawls, scarves and even shoe-laces to Peace Gallery North for the group's exhibition, It's A Wrap, which opens Friday, Oct. 7 and runs until Oct. 31.

City will now decide how grants are allocated

AN. NOV 2, 2011

•CONT. FROM A1

Councillor Lori Ackerman questioned if snowshoers or hikers were using the trail and what impact they had on the grooming.

Stanford said if they stay on the edges of the trail, it does not damage the path. But, they are finding that hikers are walking right on the groomed track and damaging it.

"This is one of the biggest reasons we have to keep grooming."

In the future, the group is hoping to increase the kilometres of trails they have at Beatton Park and create paths with greater variance in levels to accommodate beginner, intermediate and advanced skiers.

Also seeking a grant for a recreational pursuit was the Fort St. John Skateboard Park Committee.

The group lobbying for the new park said the current park, which is only a few years old, has already outgrown user demand. They have done a lot of legwork on the initial phases of development already and are asking the city to provide \$40,000 to help them complete phase one of the project.

The first stage of developing the park is to have a design plan to outline options and costs. This strategy will include the development of the park's design plan for \$25,000, the creation of marketing materials at a price tag of \$10,000 and travel expenses to the tune of \$5,000.

"That's what's going to allow us to start snowballing and get us going," said Adam Kirschner, co-chair of the committee.

The group said having a skateboard will help increase the quality of life and reduce trouble among teens.

"When we have dry ground, a lot of teens just want to start a fire and crack a beer. The easiest way to get them away from that is to make an easily accessible and fun facility for them to use," said Kirschner.

Kirschner explained that the current skateboard park pulled him away from drinking at an early age because it gave him something healthy to focus on.

Councillor Bruce Christensen asked if the group could make a commitment to ensuring the park would be kept free of offensive graffiti, and Kirschner said it's something they already do that represents a great opportunity for local graffiti artists.

"If inappropriate graffiti shows up, we have local artists who love to have it as their palate and come down and paint over it. I personally love the graffiti, and it's just about ensuring that it's clean," said Kirschner.

The group also pointed out that a skateboard park like this would be effective in attracting tourism and competitions to the area.

Carrying over the tourism theme, the Peace River Zone Theatre Festival was next up, requesting \$1000 to help with the cost of bringing a professional adjudicator to the festival.

Festival Chair Dale Hillman said the value of a professional adjudicator goes well beyond judging the winner. He pointed out that they also provide valuable feedback to participants and host a workshop.

"For anyone who's ever worked in theatre, the value they get from the adjudication and adjudicator workshops, you can't put a number on that," said Hillman.

The total cost of bringing an adjudicator in, including travel, accommodation and fees, is estimated around \$4500.

Dave Truscott, Vice-Chair for the Peace River Zone Theatre Festival, pointed out that the festival and the theatre community is an important cornerstone of the community.

"Theatre is important for the community because it keeps the young people busy, which is sometimes an issue. It's for those people who aren't interested or don't enjoy the atmosphere of sports and can't seem to find a home there, so they end up joining the community of theatre, which is pretty darn welcoming," said Truscott.

The North Peace Spinners and Weavers Guild also approached Council for funding that they believe is important for the community.

The guild has approximately 20 volunteers and has requested \$3000 to help them bring in a master teacher to instruct them in specific weaving techniques.

The grant would help offset travel costs of bringing the instructor in, to make the course more affordable for the people participating, and ultimately bringing the skills back to the community.

The Tourism Fort St. John Board was next, and they've requested the same amount as last year - \$46,000.

Moira Green, Chair of the board, said the money last year helped them to host key stakeholder meetings to determine tourism needs and develop strategies to meet those needs, host social media workshops for key tourism operators and to initiate phase one of the Fort St. John Alaska Highway Interpretative Plan.

Funds this year will go towards holding tourism stakeholder meetings twice per year, creating packages to appeal to the regional market, increasing blog content on HelloBC.com and to actively support activities related to the nomination of the Alaska Highway as a National Historic Site.

The last group to present was the North Peace Cultural Society, who has requested \$300,000 to support their operations and the development of a box office.

The \$50,000 increase in their funding request can be attributed to the rising costs of maintaining an aging building and their desire to set up a box office that will help them to be more self-sufficient in the future, according to Bettyanne Hampton, the Executive Director of the society.

Hampton pointed out that, in the past year, they've had to spend over \$30,000 in HVAC repairs for the library, \$17,000 for snow removal and maintenance and \$23,000 in plumbing repairs. She said these costs are the reality of maintaining an older building.

Peter Stringer, a member of the board of directors for the society, said an investment in the cultural centre was an investment in the future of Fort St. John.

"The cultural centre is not the sum of its components. It's much larger than that.

Anyone who walks into the cultural centre not only has an impact on the library, but they also pass by the art gallery and create a spin-off benefit to the café... This is the place where people can go and feel that they are in the centre of Fort St. John," said Robert Zuenert, a member of the board of directors.

Zuenert pointed out that next year will mark the 20th anniversary of the cultural centre and that it's an integral part of the community.

"You can't market Fort St. John without marketing the cultural centre, and you can't market the cultural centre without marketing Fort St. John. It is an integral part to the identity of this community," said Zuenert.

City Manager Dianne Hunter pointed out the grant-in-aid is only part of the funding that the city provides. Due to building costs, property tax exemptions and other municipal support for the centre, the city already makes an investment of in excess of \$600-650 thousand.

With all the presentations being made, the City will now review the grant applications and decide how to allocate available funding for this budget year.

AHN ~~PH~~. Nov 2, 2011

Base budget grants wrapped up



BRIANNE ZWAMBAG
Staff Writer

The final chance for not-for-profit groups within the community to plead their case for a base budget grant from City Council was on Oct. 31, and it brought out proposals ranging from a new skateboard park to funding for the tourism board.

First to the podium was the Whiskey Jack Nordic Ski Club, who requested \$1,500 to help offset the costs of maintaining skiing trails.

With over 600 visitors using the trails annually, the group said maintaining the trails has become even more important. The grant will go towards the grooming program; in particular, insuring and servicing the sled, fuel, and incidental repairs to or replacement of grooming attachments as needed.

"I tried grooming last year, and it's definitely something for the strong to do. It's heavy equipment and it gets

stuck easy and it's not an easy job for anyone," said Eliza Stanford, President of the Whiskey Jack Nordic Ski Club.

With funding from the city, the group said, they can keep the trails a no-cost option for recreation.

"It's just one of those community assets that people have grown to love. We think that the trails should remain free to the community at large. It would be very difficult to start charging people for these trails," said Stanford.

The group said they are working toward becoming more self-sufficient, and that they would like to perhaps consider trying to become part of the city's recreation budget in the future instead of applying for grant-in-aid. Councillor Trevor Bolin also suggested that seeking a corporate sponsor would be a good option for the grooming program.

Representatives from The Fort St. John Cultural Society request a grant-in-aid increase of \$50,000 to help combat rising costs associated with operating in an older building and to fund the creation of a self-run box office at the base budget grant hearings on Oct. 31.

BRIANNE ZWAMBAG PHOTO

•SEE CITY ON A3

THE MOST MAGICAL TIME OF THE YEAR *NOV. 24, 2011*



ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

Helena Polit-Klezli shows off some of the local items that are on display for Peace Gallery North's Magical Christmas Market. The market is on until Dec. 24, for all those last minute gift givers.

Fabric Stories

RYAN LUX
STAFF WRITER

Fort St. John quilters celebrated 25 years of stitching Friday evening at Peace Gallery North with the opening of their retrospective show, which features quilts from throughout their many years in the community.

Nadean Johnson has been threading her needle since Fort St. John Country Quilters' Guild first started patching their cozy works of art together in 1986, making her one of the group's charter members. Johnson has lived in Fort St. John since 1966 and when her friend approached her to get the organization off the ground she was all for it – even though she had never quilted before.

“Here I am 25 years later and still at it,” said Johnson.

Rose Fuhr is the President of the Guild and she said the group has now grown to include 45 members who annually produce 50 to 60 “care quilts” each year for Preemies, Children's Hospitals and women's shelters, among others. That figure is in addition to the quilts members work on individually for their families and friends.

The women gather twice a month for business meetings and workshops where they can work on collective projects or learn new techniques to broaden their quilting horizons. They learn appliqué, chenilling, crazy patch quilting, and yoga quilting.

Their breadth of technique was evident at the show where quilts of all colours, sizes and varieties covered the walls, creating a cozy and warm atmosphere in the gallery space.

Fuhr explained, for her, the best part about quilting as an artistic medium is the camaraderie of the group who share not just in fabric selection and stitch technique, but also in life's sorrows and joys. To use an apt metaphor, Fort St. John's quilters are a tightly stitched group.

The differences between a common blanket and a quilt are obvious, according to one quilter who's exhibiting a piece that she spent ten years putting together.

For quilters, making a quilt is just as much about memories as it is about assembling material. Shannon Ross has a scrap quilt in the show that is composed of tiny pieces of fabric she's accumulated over her lifetime.

“I sewed ever since I was young and people who sew hold onto their fabric,” said Ross.

Over the years she's kept scraps from curtains, maternity wear, pieces of cloth from her children's cloths, the worn-out shirts of her husband etc. Her quilt, called “Scraps of Time” is made up of tiny squares, which are in turn made up of six smaller pieces of fabric. The result is a kaleidoscope of colour and memory that pleases both the eye and soul.

Fuhr explained that quilting is a deeply personal experience that stems from the amount of time you spend on each project.

When her husband passed away last year, Fuhr noted that she found herself working mostly with black and grey fabrics, which reflected her state of mind at the time.

“Now I'm through that state and I'm onto scrap quilts which are full of memories. It really just depends on what's going on in your life at the time,” Fuhr said.

There's just something about a quilt that provides more than physical comfort.

“It's more than just the quilt's warmth, for instance whenever I'm sick I curl up in a quilt my mother made and I feel my mother's arms around me. It's the memories that the quilt brings you,” she explained.

One quilt at the show is imbued with perhaps one of the most radical quilt stories of all. Years ago, local quilters sewed a piece to mark the Alaska Highway's 50th anniversary. It hung in the cultural centre until one the day it was nabbed by a thief.

Nine years later, Fuhr received a telephone call from a man claiming he had the quilt and wanted \$1,000 for its return. She said she was taken aback and told the quilt's hostage taker that she would have to consult with the guild before she made any promises. Once she hung up, Fuhr dialed *69 and discovered that the call was placed from a pay phone at the cultural centre.

When the man called her back the next day, again from the cultural centre, police apprehended the culprit, but weren't able to arrest him because he didn't have the quilt in his possession. A few months later, Fuhr recalled, police got a tip that the quilt was in Kelowna and finally they were able to return it to Fort St. John.

It was returned unscathed except for a graffiti tag, something Fuhr wasn't too worried about since it was part of the quilt's storied history.

The quilts, including the infamous Alaska Highway Quilt, will be on display at Peace Gallery North until May 31st.



Ryan Lux Photo

Linda Babuik, runs a program called Scrap Happy University, where she shares her passion for scrap quilting with local quilters. She posed at the gallery with her latest creation, which features colourful pieces of cloth on each side.

Trio Does A Lot With Paint And Pots

RYAN LUX
STAFF WRITER

Peace Gallery North opened its latest exhibit "Paints & Pots" last week to significant fanfare as residents packed the room to check out the work of a local potter and two painters.

Peace Gallery North coordinator Shar Coultry said she thinks pottery and paintings lend themselves to being exhibited together because each medium uses space in a different way.

"The pottery fills space and adds an extra dimension to the exhibition," said Coultry, "They're really complementary mediums."

Artists exhibiting their work included Susan Jones, Kay Paynton and Tara L. Brule.

It was Brule's first formal exhibition and that she decided to take the plunge with the encouragement of Paynton.

Brule is a local art teacher who has been on a leave of absence due to illness.

Coultry explained that art has been therapeutic for her healing.

Brule was born in Fort St. John and raised in the community of Rose Prairie. She started drawing at a young age favouring pictures of smiling cats and flowers.

After graduating from the ACHOTE teaching program from NLC, Brule has been working as fine arts teacher.

Her works that feature vibrant colours and sometimes surrealist imagery that reflects her appreciation of humour and a northern take on life.

Brule writes that her idea of happiness is a riverbed where one can poke along for hours in search of treasure rocks

Paynter grew up in India and Sri Lanka within an enriched arts environment.

She was inspired by her uncle, the late David Paynter, who was a prominent Sri Lankan artist.

Paynter came to Canada for teacher training and now works as a primary teacher.

She developed her love of drawing and painting through her studies at university and the New School of Fine Art.

Paynter picked up her Florentine School technique at the Academy of Art Canada.

"No matter how well-planned, there is always a time when the work being undertaken appears to speak back, when the artist must let go and listen," writes Paynter, "It is that dialogue between the creator and the created that interests me."

On the pottery side of things,

Jones turned to pottery after many years spent drowning in the sea of office politics.

When she regained her desire to express herself as an artist, Jones pursued a bachelor of arts degree at the Alberta College of Art and Design, majoring in ceramics.

After graduating, Jones started living in rural areas, which she says influences her designs.

She writes that her current work originates in function, "Having work used as well as appreciated for its aesthetic value is important to me."

Paints & Pots will be exhibited until April 15th and makes way for the award-winning photography of Steve Milner and his exhibition called "Northern Travels: a trucker's view."



ARTIST'S NAME
ART-Paper
Title: Body-Head
Price
Phone 800

ARTIST'S NAME
ART-Paper
Title: Body-Head
Price
Phone

Ryan Lux Photo
Pottery and paintings complement one another in Peace Gallery North's latest exhibition Paints & Pots.

Grand Piano Off To Be Restored

RYAN LUX
STAFF WRITER

After more than four years of fundraising, the North Peace Cultural Centre's Board of Directors seized an opportune moment and sent their nine foot grand piano away to be restored.

While that does mean the community will be without the instrument until the fall, the cultural centre's Executive Director, Bettyanne Hampton, told the Alaska Highway News that following repairs the piano will be an even bigger source of pride for Fort St. John.

She explained that few, if any, venues in B.C. boast owning a nine foot grand, especially one with real ivory. However, after years of providing entertainment to the community, the 1952 Baldwin Concert Grand needs some work.

Hampton said the piano has cracks in the soundboard, the pin block needs to be replaced and the finish is in extremely bad shape.

Volunteers tore the piano down to its basic components Thursday to be shipped to Stony Plain, Alberta, where it will be restored and rebuilt from the ground up. The restoration was made possible through four years of fundraising efforts, where residents could donate \$600 and in turn get their name on a banner featured in the cultural centre and receive one of the piano's original hammers.

Hampton said she'll be posting a link to the piano factory in Alberta on the cultural centre's website, where residents can take a virtual tour online.

The restoration will cost roughly \$30,000, half of which the board has already raised. Board member Linda Sewell said it made both cultural and financial sense to go ahead with the repairs now.

"The opportunity came up to get it done at less than it was going to initially cost and we felt that it was a goal that had been put on hold for the last couple of years and felt it was the right time to push forward on this now," said Sewell.

Board member Robert Zeunert agreed that proceeding with the restoration was the right move.

"Having a piano of this caliber is tremendously unique to our community and when we looked at either restoring our piano or purchasing a new one, it was a no brainer," said Zeunert, who pointed out the value of the nine foot grand sits somewhere around \$130,000.

Mayor Bruce Lantz said the piano's restoration demonstrates the community's commitment to the arts moving forward.

"The arts have come to the forefront in Fort St. John in the last couple of years in a very major way and this is a continuation of that," said Lantz.

The piano will be restored just in time for its 60th birthday and the cultural centre's 20th year serving the community.



Ryan Lux Photo

Volunteers bid the cultural centre's nine foot grand piano bon voyage with a bit of fanfare Thursday as it sets out on its journey to Alberta for its long-awaited restoration.



RYAN LUX PHOTO

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Grand piano getting refurbished

MAY 23, 2011.

RYAN LUX
Staff Writer

After more than four years of fundraising, the North Peace Cultural Centre's Board of Directors seized an opportune moment and sent their nine foot grand piano away to be restored.

While that does mean the community will be without the instrument until the fall, the cultural centre's Executive Director, Bettyanne Hampton, told the Alaska Highway News that following repairs the piano will be an even bigger source of pride for Fort St. John.

She explained that few, if any, venues in B.C. boast owning a nine foot grand, especially one with real ivory. However, after years of providing entertainment to the community, the 1952 Baldwin Concert Grand needs some work.

Hampton said the piano has cracks in the soundboard, the pin block needs to be replaced and the finish is in extremely bad shape.

Volunteers tore the piano down to its basic components Thursday to be

shipped to Stony Plain, Alberta, where it will be restored and rebuilt from the ground up. The restoration was made possible through four years of fundraising efforts, where residents could donate \$600 and in turn get their name on a banner featured in the cultural centre and receive one of the piano's original hammers.

Hampton said she'll be posting a link to the piano factory in Alberta on the cultural centre's website, where residents can take a virtual tour online.

The restoration will cost roughly \$30,000, half of which the board has already raised. Board member Linda Sewell said it made both cultural and financial sense to go ahead with the repairs now.

"The opportunity came up to get it done at less than it was going to initially cost and we felt that it was a goal that had been put on hold for the last couple of years and felt it was the right time to push forward on this now," said Sewell.

•SEE PIANO ON A3

Grand Piano unique to community

•CONT. FROM A1

Board member Robert Zeunert agreed that proceeding with the restoration was the right move.

"Having a piano of this caliber is tremendously unique to our community and when we looked at either restoring our piano or purchasing a new one, it was a no brainer," said Zeunert, who pointed out the value of the nine foot grand sits somewhere around \$130,000.

Mayor Bruce Lantz said the piano's restoration demonstrates the community's commitment to the arts moving forward.

"The arts have come to the forefront in Fort St. John in the last couple of years in a very major way and this is a continuation of that," said Lantz.

While board members know the piano needs repairs, they weren't as clear about where the piano came from.

It would seem to be a rather

imposing instrument to simply stumble upon, but neither Sewell nor Zeunert have any idea how the piano ended up at the cultural centre.

They invite the community to send in stories about their experiences with the piano or to shed some light on where the piano came from or who donated it.

The piano will be restored just in time for its 60th birthday and the cultural centre's 20th year serving the community.

Fabric stories

Local quilters celebrate stitching with show at Peace Gallery North

RYAN LUX
Staff Writer

Fort St. John quilters celebrated 25 years of stitching Friday evening at Peace Gallery North with the opening of their retrospective show, which features quilts from throughout their many years in the community.

Nadean Johnson has been threading her needle since Fort St. John Country Quilters' Guild first started patching their cozy works of art together in 1986, making her one of the group's charter members. Johnson has lived in Fort St. John since 1966 and when her friend approached her to get the organization off the ground she was all for it - even though she had never quilted before.

"Here I am 25 years later and still at it," said Johnson.

Rose Fuhr is the President

of the Guild and she said the group has now grown to include 45 members who annually produce 50 to 60 "care quilts" each year for Preemies, Children's Hospitals and women's shelters, among others. That figure is in addition to the quilts members work on individually for their families and friends.

The women gather twice a month for business meetings and workshops where they can work on collective projects or learn new techniques to broaden their quilting horizons. They learn appliqué, chenilling, crazy patch quilting, and yoga quilting.

Their breadth of technique was evident at the show where quilts of all colours, sizes and varieties covered the walls, creating a cozy and warm atmosphere in the gallery space.

•SEE QUILTING ON B1

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•SEE QUILTING ON B1



Quilting about memories as much as assembling material

•CONT. FROM A1

Fuhr explained, for her, the best part about quilting as an artistic medium is the camaraderie of the group who share not just in fabric selection and stitch technique, but also in life's sorrows and joys. To use an apt metaphor, Fort St. John's quilters are a tightly stitched group.

The differences between a common blanket and a quilt are obvious, according to one quilter who's exhibiting a piece that she spent ten years putting together.

For quilters, making a quilt is just as much about memories as it is about assembling material. Shannon Ross has a scrap quilt in the show that is composed of tiny pieces of fabric she's accumulated over her lifetime.

"I sewed ever since I was young and people who sew hold onto their fabric," said Ross. Over the years she's kept scraps from curtains, maternity wear, pieces of cloth from her children's cloths, the worn-out shirts of her husband etc. Her quilt, called "Scraps of Time" is made up of tiny squares, which are in turn made up of six smaller pieces of fabric. The result

is a kaleidoscope of colour and memory that pleases both the eye and soul.

Fuhr explained that quilting is a deeply personal experience that stems from the amount of time you spend on each project.

When her husband passed away last year, Fuhr noted that she found herself working mostly with black and grey fabrics, which reflected her state of mind at the time.

"Now I'm through that state and I'm onto scrap quilts which are full of memories. It really just depends on what's going on in your life at the time," Fuhr said.

There's just something about a quilt that provides more than physical comfort.

"It's more than just the quilt's warmth, for instance whenever I'm sick I curl up in a quilt my mother made and I feel my mother's arms around me. It's the memories that the quilt brings you," she explained.

One quilt at the show is imbued with perhaps one of the most radical quilt stories of all. Years ago, local quilters sewed a piece to mark the Alaska Highway's 50th anniversary. It hung in

the cultural centre until one the day it was nabbed by a thief.

Nine years later, Fuhr received a telephone call from a man claiming he had the quilt and wanted \$1,000 for its return. She said she was taken aback and told the quilt's hostage taker that she would have to consult with the guild before she made any promises. Once she hung up, Fuhr dialed *69 and discovered that the call was placed from a pay phone at the cultural centre.

When the man called her back the next day, again from the cultural centre, police apprehended the culprit, but weren't able to arrest him because he didn't have the quilt in his possession. A few months later, Fuhr recalled, police got a tip that the quilt was in Kelowna and finally they were able to return it to Fort St. John.

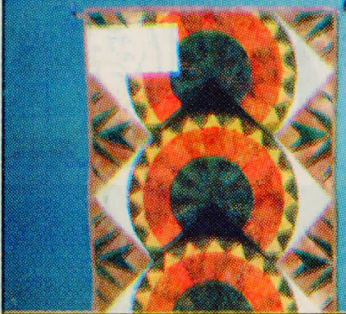
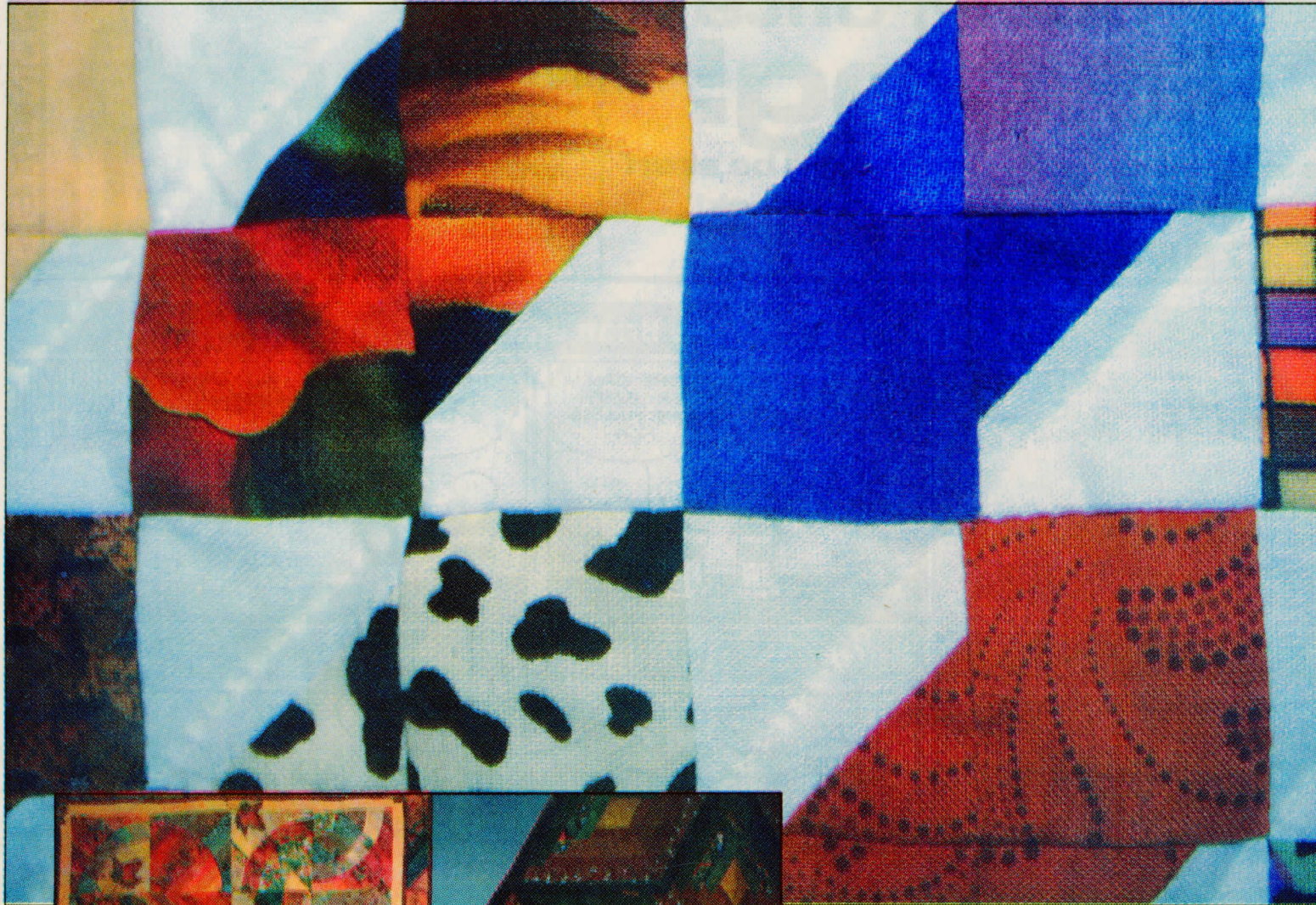
It was returned unscathed except for a graffiti tag, something Fuhr wasn't too worried about since it was part of the quilt's storied history.

The quilts, including the infamous Alaska Highway Quilt, will be on display at Peace Gallery North until May 31.

(Bottom Right) Rhys Fuhr, 7, shows off the quilt he helped his Grandma make to commemorate his Poppa. He chose a bee pattern because he used to help his grandfather keep bees and a rock border because, "all boys like rocks." (Bottom Left) Linda Babuik, runs a program called Scrap Happy University, where she shares her passion for scrap quilting with local quilters. She posed at the gallery with her latest creation, which features colourful pieces of cloth on each side. (Top Right) Fort St. John residents stopped by Peace Gallery North Friday to admire 25 years of quilting in the Peace. (Above and left) A wide variety of quilts were on display. (Ryan Lux Photos)



COMMUNITY





Head Librarian Starting New Chapter

RYAN LUX
STAFF WRITER

Fort St. John is losing one of its most prolific bookworms. After 17 years working in the Fort St. John Public Library, head librarian Kimberly Partanen said she's ready for the next chapter of her life.

Partanen and her husband have lived in Fort St. John since 1994, when she started working at the library as a casual employee. The couple raised their daughter here, but she's been away for three years at university in Ontario.

"We've been empty nesters for years now and we don't have any family here, so we just decided that we were still the right age to move on to the next phase of our lives," said Partanen about her move.

Her husband will be starting school in Kelowna in the fall for waste water treatment and Partanen said she will try to eke out a spot for herself in the library world down south.

Over the course of her 17 years at the library, Partanen has seen a lot of changes.

"When I first started here we were still on the card catalogue system," she recalled.

The biggest changes have been technological.

"We only had a few computers in the library that some of us used for word processing, but not for our daily work," said Partanen.

Now Partanen said the office is completely automated, which makes keeping track of the vast book collection much easier.

Despite the efficiency computers have brought to the library, Partanen said she's glad that she got into the trade at the sunset of the analogue days.

"Working with the card system really taught me the guts of it and let me understand the processes of cross-referencing authors and subjects," said Partanen.

Along with the catalogue shift, Partanen said technology has changed the way people use the library.

She said that when she started, there were no public access computers and, accordingly, research was done in a completely different way.

"When you came to the library to work on a school project, you had to look everything up in books and photocopy reference materials," said Partanen, "You didn't

have the internet where you could type something in and a Wikipedia article would pop up. You'd have to drag out these big almanacs to find your information."

Now Partanen said she could probably get rid of the entire reference system and all but a few old-timers wouldn't notice.

For the most part, she said, people come to the library now to use the computers or for reading material.

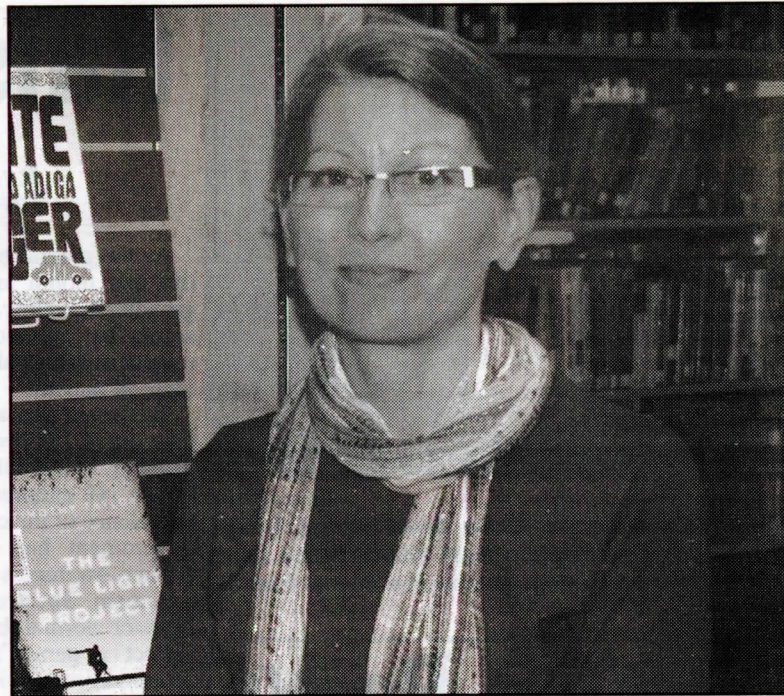
As the years have taken their toll on the operations of the library, Partanen said they've had a big impact on her personally.

"I feel like I've grown up with the library because I was 24-years-old when I started here, this was my first professional job," she said.

Now that she's worked her way from casual part-timer all the way to head librarian, Partanen said she has the feeling that she's achieved as much as she can here and is ready for a new challenge.

However, she didn't make the decision lightly.

"It's very hard because basically the two of us are walking away from two good jobs. [We] made our lives and careers here," said



Ryan Lux Photo

After 17 years at the Fort St. John Public Library, head librarian Kimberly Partanen said the south is calling.

Partanen.

"But one of the hardest things will be leaving my coworkers, there's four or five of us that have been here for ten years or more and it's going to be hard to leave such a great group of people."

Leaving the Fort St. John Public Library staff will be tough, but potentially leaving her trade also weighs on her.

She said one of the things she'll

miss most is seeing the little children climbing up the stool at the sign out desk with their heads just popping above the counter with a stack of books.

Despite that, Partanen said she's excited about her decision.

"We came here to work and we stayed to raise our daughter and now we feel like we have time to explore," said Partanen, "Life is too short to stay in one spot forever."

Art auction fundraiser vital to art community

RYAN LUX
Staff Writer

APR 2011

Art is pouring in at Peace Gallery North for the upcoming 28th Annual Art Auction scheduled for April 30th but the trouble is that tickets to the auction aren't selling at the same rate.

"Expressions 2011," will feature more than 150 pieces donated by local artists to support the gallery and its free summer art camp. Pottery, jewellery, textiles, wood, original paintings and limited edition prints will be available to the highest bidder.

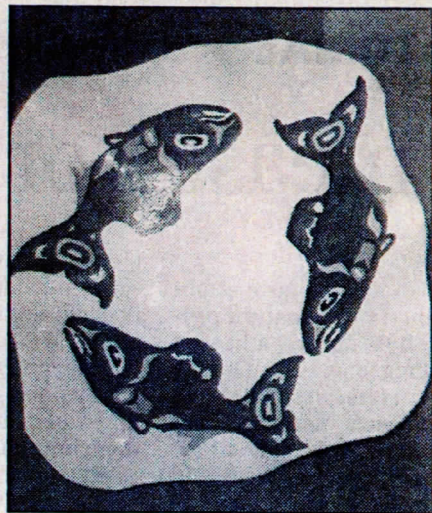
The evening will include silent and live auction components, in addition to a buffet dinner and light entertainment by "Gidd & Friends."

"This fundraiser is so vital because without it Fort St. John would be minus performing and visual art space," said gallery manager Shar Coultry.

She pointed out that Fort St. John artists are incredibly talented noting that many are members of the Federation of Canadian Artists.

"We have all this local talent and the whole reason we're here is to showcase it," Coultry said.

For more information contact the Peace Gallery North at 250-787-0993.



RYAN LUX PHOTO

One of the items that will be available for residents to bid on during the 28th annual Art Auction on April 30.



ROCK A BILLY

RYAN LUX PHOTO

This sculpture will be among the items available for residents to bid on during the 28th annual Art Auction on April 30. Turn to A3 for the full story.

Stretching bodies – and minds ^{DUP}

RYAN LUX
STAFF WRITER

In an age where children are ferried from sports to music classes, getting more homework assigned to them than ever before and exposed to attention span withering cartoons and computer games, Sheri Anderson is teaching children to live in the now.

“The world is very rush, rush, rush and we’re constantly moving our kids from here to there, so yoga is important to centre them because our world is so crazy,” said Anderson, who taught ArtSpace spring break campers how to turn their bodies into flowers, dead bugs and warriors.

She said that introducing kids to yoga at an early age helps foster a body-mind connection that simultaneously strengthens and stretches their bodies.

Anderson asked the kids to invent their own poses, which they drew on flash cards in order to remember them. The kids took turns leading the group and teaching the others their inventive poses, which ranged from bacon to up-bear.

They don’t take themselves too seriously, but when things get a little haywire, Anderson gets all the kids to lie on their backs and focus on their breathing, which reduced the noise in the North Peace Cultural Centre from

shrieks of giddy laughter and horse play to inhales and exhales.

By increasing the children’s awareness of their own bodies, Anderson said she tries to teach them about individuality.

“They stay on their own mats and are supposed to concentrate on what they’re doing,” said Anderson, “I always remind them not to point out if someone is doing a position differently because everyone is different.”

“I tell them you have your body and you may do it one way but other people are different and I think they take that into their lives.”

An important part of yoga is about harnessing personal energy and Anderson teaches her students about how their energy can affect others.

“I teach them about the law of attraction, I’ll tell them that if you’re mean to someone then eventually people will be mean to you back,” she said. “One time I was teaching a class of five-year-olds and when I told them about it their jaws just dropped.”

Kids yoga is different from adult yoga in that it’s more interactive and far less serious.

Many of the positions are based on familiar objects, like flowers or animals and some of the things the kids came up with were just plain wacky.

“They’re going to make mon-

key sounds or puppy dog sounds when they do their poses,” said Anderson

All of the kids said they enjoyed learning yoga and like to do it by themselves when they go home after camp, or in the morning when they wake up.

The general consensus seemed to be that they just liked being able to stretch out their mats and

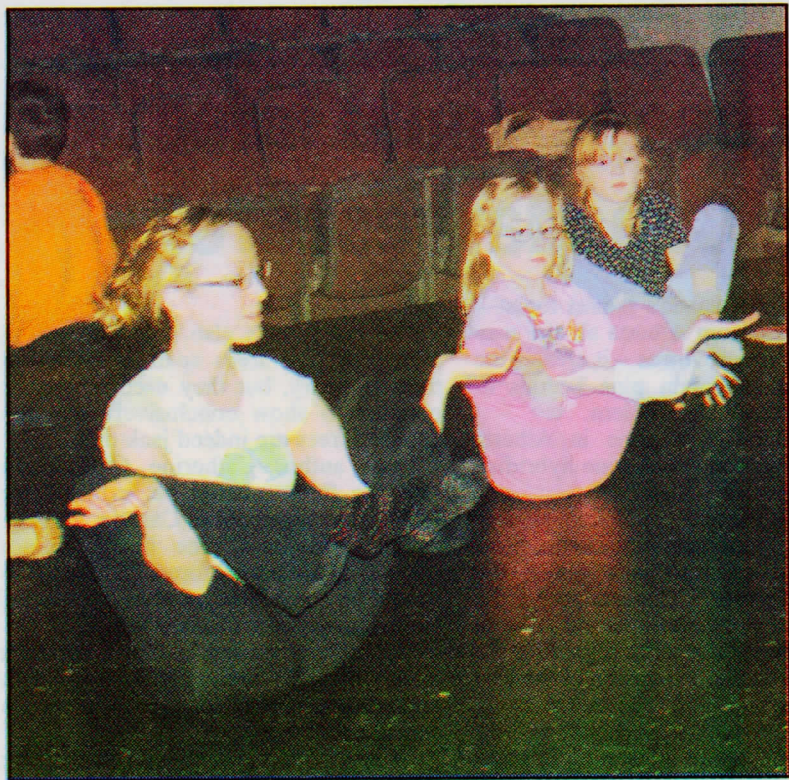
get creative.

As the students become more familiar with yoga, Anderson said that the exercise inevitably becomes more serious, but that the early stage is all about introducing the basic principles of the activity.

According to one 2003 study by researchers from California State University, there is a strong correlation between yoga and aca-

ademic performance, discipline, attendance and self-esteem – things that are increasingly in short-supply among today’s youth.

The study showed a 20 per cent increase in the number of students who felt good about themselves and a six per cent increase in classroom discipline score. In addition, the study showed improved GPAs.



Ryan Lux Photo

ArtSpace campers, with instruction from Sheri Anderson, are learning how to live in the now through their yoga classes.

FACE THE MUSIC UPDATE

Dave Tolley and Bettyanne Hampton were on hand to provide council with an update about how the Face the Music program was received in Fort St. John and how the \$20,000 investment was affecting the community.

Overall, the program was extremely successful and came in under budget at \$19,500 with 11 workshops being hosted. The group said this was exciting because they originally anticipated only being able to do eight. The world-class musicians teaching the workshops attracted a lot of attention to Fort St John via pod casts and social media.

The Cultural Centre hopes to host this event again next year with the support of the city and expand it's programming out to help boost interest in music education among students in grades 8-12. DEC 30, 2011

Local Talent in the Spotlight



Spotlight 2011 showcased plenty of local, and adopted-local, talent at the North Peace Cultural Centre on Oct. 8. The whole building was used, with art, music, poetry and improv in nearly every corner. (Right) Dayna Manning whistles during her performance of a newly written song about Charlie Lake. (Bottom Right) The North Peace Community Choir sang for residents. (Below) Jayden Stafford shares some cowboy poetry. (Bottom Left) Lindsay Pratt sings and plays the ukulele. (Left) Folkly Strum Strum did plenty of strumming during their performance. (Aleisha Hendry Photos)

