



Ken Gousseau/AHN

SUPERB SALE

Sue Popesku sorts items donated from the community in advance of the Fort St. John Community Arts Council's garage sale Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the old Arts Post building. Funds raised will support the council's new Arts Post Too facility.

ARTS

Elves Christmas continues

With Christmas less than a month away, most of us have caught it by now. No, not that nasty cold going around the office, I'm talking about the Christmas spirit! If not, then it's not too late. The Fort St. John Community Arts Council continues to deliver fun-filled entertainment for the whole family with its Elves Christmas program throughout the month of December

What are the holidays without your favorite classic movies? The Lido Theatre will be showing holiday favorites such as *The Grinch* (both the original and the newest version with Jim Carrey), *A Muppet Christmas Carol*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, *It's a Wonderful life*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Scrooged*, and *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. What kid (young or old!) doesn't love *A Muppet Christmas Carol*? I won't even go into the fact that I remember when many of these films originally debuted in theatres, but it will be great to see those

classics again on the big screen. Tickets are \$4 and can be purchased at the Lido at show times.

Tara O'Donnell



STATE OF THE ARTS

Another event that promises something fun for everyone is the upcoming *Raising Our Voices Variety Concert* at the North Peace Cultural Centre. Performers such as The North Peace Community Choir, the Northern Lights Children's Choir, Dana Manning, Jason Kowenhoven, American Tribal-Style Belly Dancing with Suzon Anne Tremblay, and a

performance by Tom Kirschner & friends. Tickets are on sale now for \$18 at the North Peace Cultural Centre.

Elves Christmas is a community-based program brought to you by the Fort St. John Community Arts Council. Programs such as *Elves Christmas* assist in raising funds for the Arts Council which supports the continued development of arts and culture in Fort St. John and the North Peace Region.

Pipeline to the Arts

ART EXHIBITIONS

- *Magical Christmas Market*, runs until Dec. 24, Peace Gallery North.

FILM

- *Holiday Movie Nights*, Dec. 13 to 19, 7:30 p.m., Lido Theatre.

THEATRE

- Stage North presents *A Christmas Story*, Dec. 29, 30 and 31, North Peace Cultural Centre.

MUSIC

- *Raising Our Voices Christmas Choral Concert*, Dec. 21, 7 p.m. North Peace Cultural Centre.



Submitted Photo

Christmas balls and twinkling lights were in abundance at the Fort St. John Community Arts Council's Festival of Trees Gala last night.

ARTS

The Elves are busy in Fort St. John

It's starting to look a lot like Christmas in Fort St. John with the first snowfall of the season finally here. If there is any doubt whether Santa's helpers are out in full force then all you would need to do is stop by the ArtsPost, home of the Fort St. John Community Arts Council. These days, the ArtsPost is quite the place to be if you're into all things glitter and gold or you share an affliction with my mother, whom I tease as being 'Christmas Crazy'. The Elves are busy decorating trees, wreaths, and creating festive centerpieces for the upcoming Festival of Trees Gala and Auction.

Elves' Christmas is a series of holiday events organized by the Community Arts Council that guarantees tons of fun for everyone. Elves' Christmas kicks off on November 15 and is free to the public. There will be hot chocolate, cookies, and live entertainment at the Northern Grand Quality Inn at 7pm. Join us for some tasty treats while you check out some of the beautiful items that will be up for auction at the upcoming Festival of Trees

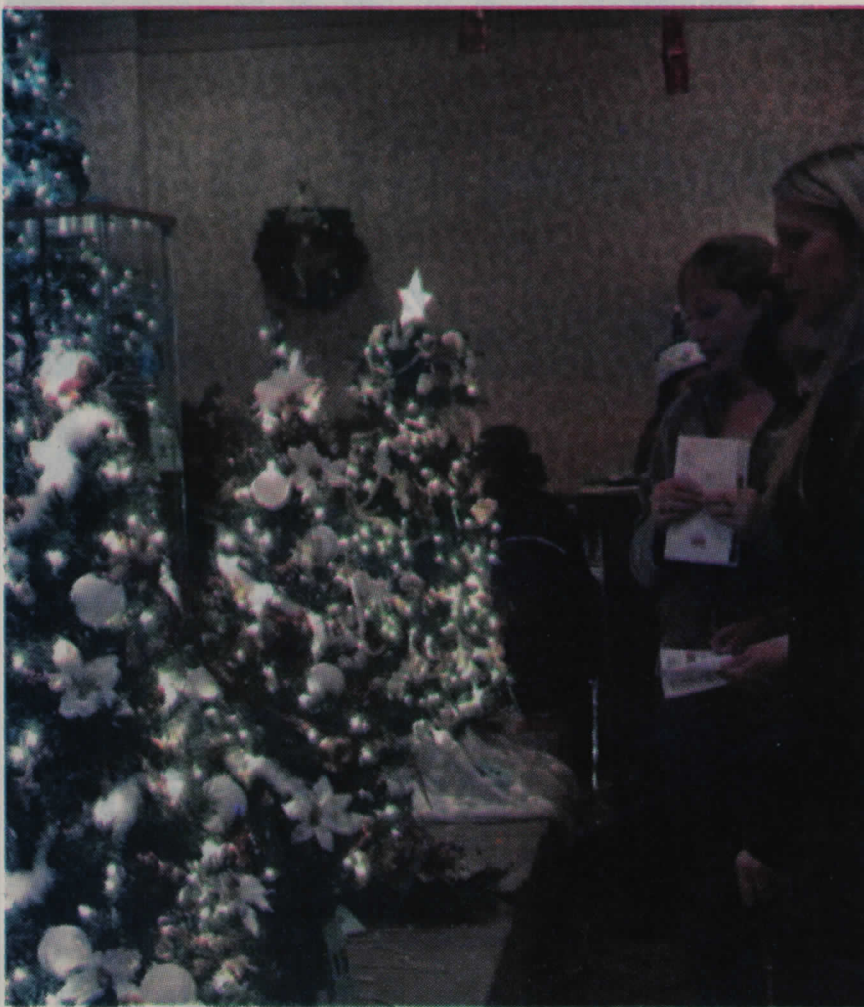
Gala and Auction. The Festival of Trees is the Elves' Christmas signature event and it's there that you will see a stunning display of Christmas trees, wreaths, hand-painted ornaments, quilts, flower arrangements, photographs, paintings, and pottery all up for bid. This event promises to be an elegant evening complete with a 5 course dinner, wine, and the chance to own some truly exquisite and one of a kind holiday pieces. This year, the elves are raffling off a diamond necklace amongst other great prizes.

The Festival of Trees fund raiser also assists the Fort St. John Community Arts Council in the continued development of arts programs and supports the growth of arts and culture in Fort St. John and the Peace region. The Festival of Trees takes place at the Quality Inn Northern Grand on December 3, 6pm, dinner to be served promptly at 6:30pm. Tickets for this event are on sale now at the North Peace Cultural Centre for \$60.

Tara O'Donnell



STATE OF THE ARTS



Submitted Photo

The 2007 Festival of Trees Gala Dinner and Auction.



Aleisha Hendry photo

HOLIDAY HANDIWORK

Fort St. John Community Arts Council executive director Tara O'Donnell is going to be a busy little elf as the arts council prepares for its upcoming Elves Christmas events, the workroom at the ArtsPost is already filling up with ornaments and decorations. The festivities begin on Nov. 15 for the grand opening of the Festival of Trees at the Quality Inn Northern Grand, and will once again feature a holiday concert, a Christmas movie week and the gala dinner and tree auction. Call the ArtsPost at 250-787-2781 for more information.



EVENTFUL ELVES

Aleisha Hendry/AHN

Fort St. John Community Arts Council executive director Tara O'Donnell is going to be a busy little elf as the arts council prepares for its upcoming Elves Christmas events, the workroom at the ArtsPost is already filling up with ornaments and decorations. The festivities begin on Nov. 15 for the grand opening of the Festival of Trees at the Quality Inn Northern Grand, and will once again feature a holiday concert, a Christmas movie week and the gala dinner and tree auction. Call the ArtsPost at 250-787-2781 for more information.

Arts Council celebrates art of pie eating

FORT ST. JOHN - We do serious things here at the Arts Council.

We advocate for the arts, artists, and arts groups in Fort St. John. We network and connect those interested in arts and culture in our community. And if you didn't know, we also happen to make really, really good pie.

The North Peace Fall Fair is a celebration of our heritage here in the North Peace, complete with livestock judging, tractor pulls, and plenty of delicious treats to seriously derail your diet, but who cares? Besides, everyone knows that treats eaten at a fair never count.

The Fort St. John Community Arts Council (FSJCAC) participated in the North Peace Fall Fair selling ice cream treats, cold drinks, coffee, and pie.

With our outrageous claims of 'Best Ever Coffee' and 'World's Best Pie', some were skeptical to say the least.

Word on the street got out fast though and sure enough, it turns out the slogan rang true.

What's a fall celebration without apple pie a la mode and a good cup of coffee?

If you can think of something better, I'd be glad to give it a whirl.

All in all, it was a wonderful weekend of Fall Fair fun and festivities. The Fall Fair celebrates our region's people and cultural heritage and we could not have been happier joining in the fun.

Although it is possible some of us, okay, I got a bit carried away with the pie eating this weekend. Time to hit the tread-

mill!

The Fort St. John Community Arts Council brings you programs such as High on Ice, Elves' Christmas, the Flowerpot Project, Art That Moves You, Crushed Grapes Wine Festival, and Art in the Park. Proceeds from the Art's Council's Fall Fair Booth benefits the ArtsPost.

For volunteer opportunities with the Fort St. John Community Arts Council, contact us at (250) 787-2781.

- Contributed



Contributed photo

Pictured are Pam Clemen on the left vice president of the FSJCAC and Sue Popesku director, FSJCAC enjoying a moment at the fair.



Ken Gousseau/AHN

ACTIVE ART

Fort St. John Community Arts Post executive director Tara O'Donnell poses with one of eight original paintings by local artists that will appear on the side of city transit buses as part of the Art That Moves You program. Now in its third year, the program aims to increase the accessibility of art in the community.

Flower pot auction raises \$8,500

KELLY LAPOINTE
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

Despite rain and frigid temperatures Saturday morning the eighth annual flower pot auction raised \$8,500 to support the Arts Council and its projects.

Fifty-four pots that have adorned the streets of Fort St. John for the past two years brightened up the morning as they were auctioned off in the North Peace Leisure Pool parking lot. Most of the pots were sold for around \$100, with some going for \$50. One pot, painted by Margaret Cavers-May, fetched \$450 for the Arts Council.

Joy Gould, who bought Cavers-May's flower pot decorated with larger-than-life sunflowers, said it was well worth the money.

"I've been looking at it for two years on the road," she said. "It's nice to see that the people of our town make them."

Organizer Nicola Hedges said that on average the pots sold for much less than last year, when the average selling price was around \$200. She said the weather hindered the turnout, but it also gave a chance to get some art for below-average prices.

"I think some pots were a bit of a give away, but that's great," she said. "It's great that people had an opportunity to get a pot and not pay an absolute fortune."

Since some of the pots were cheaper than previous year's, many people walked away from the auction with more than one, only to discover that the large planters don't fit very easily into their cars.

This year's batch of flowers pots will hit Fort St. John's streets in the coming week, so watch out for those colourful and unique creations by local residents. The Arts Council is still looking for a few flower pots to be sponsored. For more information on how to sponsor a flower pot call Nicola Hedges at 793-0530 or the Arts Council.



Kelly Lapointe/AHN

Potential bidders stand out of the rain Saturday morning before the start of the eighth annual flower pot auction.



Aleisha Hendry/AHN

PAINTING POTS

Flower Pot Project coordinator Niki Hedges shows off some of the new pots that will be lining 100 St. later next month. The Flower Pot Project auction will be taking place in Centennial Park on May 24 at 11 a.m. See story on A3.

REGION

Flowerpot project fuses art, horticulture

FORT ST. JOHN — With spring comes flowers, and in Fort St. John that also means a load of 125 flowerpots on 100th St. for the annual Flowerpot Project.

The Fort St. John Community Arts Council is once again combining art and horticulture to help beautify the city during the late spring and summer months.

“I reckon that this year it’s been the very best art, quality-wise,” said Niki Hedges, coordinator of the project. “I’ve been stunned on a few occasions. I picked up one pot and just stood there with my jaw open — it’s unbelievable how much talent there is.”

The Flowerpot Project began in 2001 as a fundraiser for both the arts council and one member group that would volunteer to sign on, but this year Hedges is taking it on herself as a labor of love.

Every year, 50 new pots are painted by local artists and put on the street, which replace the 50 oldest pots that are put up for auction.

There are 125 pots placed along 100th St. that are tended to by City workers, who water them twice a day for the duration of the summer. Each pot is sponsored by a local business or individual.

Hedges said she’s heard residents comment on how much

they enjoy seeing the pots every year as they walk along the street.

Artist Suzon-Anne Tremblay has painted a flowerpot for the program for the last four years as a way to keep painting and creating.

“When I first came to Fort St. John, it just looked dreadful, but now with the flower pots in the summer, it makes the city look so much more beautiful and alive.”

The pots will be put out 100 Street starting on May 23, with all 125 on the street by May 25.

The year the Flower Pot Project auction will be taking place at Centennial Park on May 24 at 11 a.m.

Painted pots sell

By Melanie Robinson

FORT ST. JOHN – Residents of Fort St. John were keen to get their hands on some local art at the annual Flower Pot Auction on May 24.

The event, which sells off pots that will no longer line the streets of the city, offered a choice of 54 pots up for bid.

With a variety of local artists' touches on each pot, there was some-

thing for everyone at the event.

Trish Breisch purchased two pots at the event, something she wanted to do after she saw another one in someone's backyard.

"We drove by and we saw them and I saw it in the paper that they were going to have an auction so we came and we bought," she said.

And the good thing about buying this year was it was easy to get a pot at a reasonable price, said this year's organizer Niki Hedges.

"We had a great audience willing to bid some good prices," she said.

"I think some prices were a bit of a give away but that's great, that's how auctions go and it's great that people had an opportunity to get a pot and not have to pay an absolute fortune."

The arts council made about \$8,000 at the auction on May 24 with an average bid of about \$148 per pot.

Hedges reminds businesses that they are looking for sponsors for the pots hitting the streets this year.

For more information or to sponsor a pot, call Hedges at 793-0530 or the Fort St. John Arts Council at 787-2781.



Melanie Robinson photo

Lauren Olsen displays the item up for bid, a Laurel Simpson painted pot at the annual flower pot auction on May 24.

Flower pots old and new waiting for auction

By Melanie Robinson

FORT ST. JOHN – It's getting to the time of year when the painted flower pots start to line the city's streets.

New pots have been painted but there are several old pots from years past that are looking for homes.

This is where the annual flower pot auction comes in. Pots that have lined the streets for the last two years will go up for sale at the end of May and organizers want to make sure area residents know in advance.

"A flower pot will spend two years on the street, it goes out onto the street in the spring after being planted then it will go out the following year and on the third year that's when it gets completely touched up so it's ready to go to auction," said this year's organizer Niki Hedges.

The auction will feature 50 pots from throughout the years and can offer those interested some superb art from local artists who've painted new ones.

Artists who painted pots this year include Barb Daley, Chandra Wong and

Mike Kroecher, among others.

Hedges said for the first time there are people on a wait list to paint pots and she's seen the talent grow immensely since the program began about six years ago. "I've been stunned by the quality," she said.

The flower pot auction will be in Centennial Park May 24, at 11 a.m. All are welcome to attend the event which can raise as much as \$50 to \$800 a pot.

Money raised will go to helping fund the Fort St. John Arts Council.



Melanie Robinson photo

Niki Hedges with some of the pots to be auctioned.

ARTS

Filling chili bowls to flower pots

• CONTINUED FROM B1

NORTH PEACE POTTERS' GUILD

The North Peace Potters' Guild is a non-profit society whose membership includes potters and others interested in working with clay. The group has been active in the North Peace for almost 40 years.

The guild operates a working studio at the Artspost (10320 94 Avenue). The studio is equipped with two kilns, several wheels, a glazing area, and ample working space.

The Guild is developing a comprehensive educational programme for adults and children to include a variety of classes and other opportunities. The Guild plans to offer workshops and weekend events for students and members.

The guild will soon host a Celebrity Chili Bowl fundraiser at the studio. Local celebrities will provide chili recipes to be cooked and eaten on June 20. With the purchase of a ticket purchase participants receive a bowl made by guild members in which to sample the chili.

Contact: Instructor Heather

Hannaford

Phone: 785-5550

Email: scarab@xplorent.com

NORTH PEACE SPINNERS AND WEAVERS GUILD

Members of the North Peace Spinners and Weavers Guild blend traditional cloth making practices with current fibre art trends.

The non-profit group is dedicated to promoting communication, education and stimulation in the fiber arts, specifically spinning, weaving and dyeing and associated handcrafts.

Guild member, Faye Egglestone said that working with fibre can be very therapeutic.

"It's very satisfying to completely immerse yourself in a project," said Egglestone. "From one project to the next, the look and technique can be so different.

"It's such a versatile craft."

Members of all levels learn from each other and cooperate with other arts groups to stage shows and sales, and participate in workshops throughout the year. Meetings are on

the 3rd Saturday of each month from September to June. Beginners are welcome.

Contact: President, Norma Currie
Phone: 785-7919

PEACE ARTS GALLERY SOCIETY

The society is a supporting advisory, and fundraising group for the operation of Peace Gallery North in the North Peace Cultural Centre.

The gallery features the artwork of local artisans and artists within the region. As well, artists from outside the area are able to exhibit their artwork in the gallery.

A major project of the society is hosting a children's art camp that exposes young people to the four strands of the arts: visual arts, performing arts, music, and literature.

Two much-anticipated fundraisers organized by the society are the Annual Art Auction and the Chocolate Festival. Both are held in support of Children's Art Programs.

The society also brings in art instructors for adult workshops in acrylic and watercolour painting.



The Flower Pot Project helps to beautify the streets of Fort St. John, while showcasing the artwork of local painters. After two years of being on the street the flower pots are auctioned off to raise funds for the arts council and a member group.

Contact: Visual Arts Coordinator
Shar Coultry

Phone: 787-0993
ebsite: www.npc.bc.ca/gallery



COLD GAZE

April 21, 2008 Kelly Lapointe/AHN

Amy Diehl carves a piece of ice at Chippin' Away Ice Carving Saturday, which she worked on with her father, David, an intermediate ice carver. The event was hosted by the F.S.J Community Arts Council as a chance for people to try the art form. It was linked with January's High on Ice festival. "Here we have winter most of the year and this is an activity that can celebrate winter," said arts council director Sue Popesku.



CLAY CLASS JAN 18, 2008

Tessa Holloway/AHN

Karen Schoett pushes her hands into the clay on a wheel for the first time at the beginning wheel throwing class at ArtsPost. Spots are still open for the beginners handbuilding class, a prerequisite for wheel throwing, which starts on Jan. 31.



Melanie Robinson photo

Local artists created paintings on panels that will go onto buses throughout the community as part of the 'Art that Moves You' campaign, which is part of BC Arts and Culture Week from April 20 to 26. From left: Tara O'Donnell, executive director, Janice Closson, FSJ Library, Lisa Bush and Niki Hedges



Ken Gousseau/AHN

CULTURE CONDENSED

Tara O'Donnell, executive director of the Fort St. John Community Arts Council, addresses city council at a meeting Monday regarding Arts and Culture Week, which takes place Apr. 20-26. Events planned include Stage North's production of Legoland and an ice-carving workshop.



Melanie Robinson photo

Arts and culture are essential to thriving communities and last week, Tara O'Donnell, the new executive director of the Fort St. John Community Arts Council made that clear. She was at city council promoting arts and culture week which will feature a variety of activities for all ages to take in from April 20 to 26. For more information go to www.bcartweek.ca.

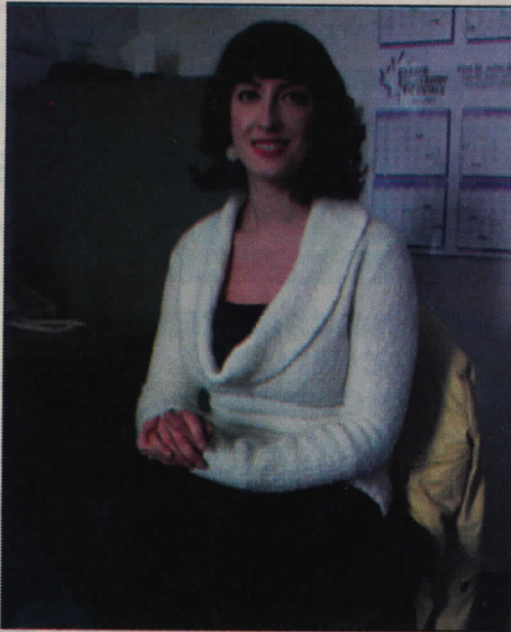


Aleisha Hendry/AHN

MAKING A MARK

(L-R) Arts Council president Lisa Bush, library program coordinator Janice Closson, and Arts Council executive director Tara O'Donnell, show off this year's bookmarks made from last year's Art That Moves You panels as a kick off to BC.. Arts and Culture week. The bookmarks are available at the Fort St. John Public Library.

New arts director named



Aleisha Hendry/AHN

Tara O'Donnell

FORT ST. JOHN — The Fort St. John Community Arts Council named Tara O'Donnell its new executive director Wednesday.

O'Donnell's background in the arts includes a BA in Art History, as well as practice with many different mediums.

"That's why this particular position appealed to me, I thought it would be a good fit for both me and the community," O'Donnell said.

She has lived in Fort St. John for two years and was at first amazed at how diverse an arts community the city has.

O'Donnell said she is looking forward to furthering the endeavors of the Arts Council and the 23 member groups it encompasses.

"I'm excited to support the arts in any channel, and I think while I'm here in Fort St. John I want to be a supporter of and help facilitate the growth of arts in the community," she said.

ArtsPost Too is located at 10320 94 Ave, and is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information about the Fort St. John Community Arts Council, call 787-2781.

November 26, 2008

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PEOPLE



Melanie Robinson photo

The opening night of the Festival of Trees as part of Elves Christmas took place on Nov. 15 at the Quality Inn Hotel. Trees ranged from a Dr. Seuss Grinch tree, Tropical tree, bear tree, sassy cats and a rotating tree – with everything in between! The event is part of a series of events including movie nights, a concert and a gala night on Dec. 3. Gala tickets are available for purchase at the North Peace Cultural Centre for \$60. Here, Sonja Butts, the treasurer of the Arts Council stands next to the Grinch tree.



FEB 2008

Melanie Robinson photo

Spirit of BC Week wrapped up last week with the final celebration of Arts Day. During the celebration, Fort St. John Mayor Jim Eglinski recognized the work the Arts Council does in the community by presenting director Sue Popesku with his Spirit of BC scarf. The Arts Council reminded the public of a number of events coming up in the future.

A new executive director for the Community Arts Council

Tara O'Donnell is originally from Cleveland, Ohio but now calls Fort St. John home, and is lucky for the Fort St John Community Arts Council. Two years ago Tara moved here with her husband Ryan who was born and raised in this fair community.

"I am passionate about the arts in all forms and truly am a product of the ultimate liberate arts background, lol! I spent my childhood learning many types of dance (ballet, pointe, jazz), participated in multiple High School musicals as well as doing some community theatre. I also love to sing in cho-

ral groups. I was a member of Voices of Praise Gospel Choir as well as an A Cappella choir. I enjoy dabbling in a variety of different artistic mediums such as watercolor and charcoal drawings. I graduated in 2000 with my BA in Art History from a university near Cleveland named Baldwin-Wallace College. For fun, I also do makeup artistry on the side and have worked as a free-lance makeup artist for years. In the future, I'd love to try my hand at other artistic endeavors. Maybe pottery, I can't seem to get past my dismal perfor-

mance in my pottery class during university!"

When speaking of her new position with the Community Arts Council, Tara says "I couldn't be happier. I'm looking forward to getting others in our community passionate and participating with the arts. Art truly is a tangible reflection of society and I think it's important for people in FSJ to make their mark. There are many talented people right here in our community, both professional artists as well as those who create art as a hobby, and it's wonderful to see.