

Fort St. John Community



ARTS
COUNCIL

"Shaping Today, Inspiring Tomorrow"

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Non-profit charitable organization.

We help creative people do cool stuff.



The Downtown Painted Flowerpot Project is now underway. Sponsors welcomed. *Does the paint on your older Flowerpot need refreshing? We can help.*

Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament

Buy in
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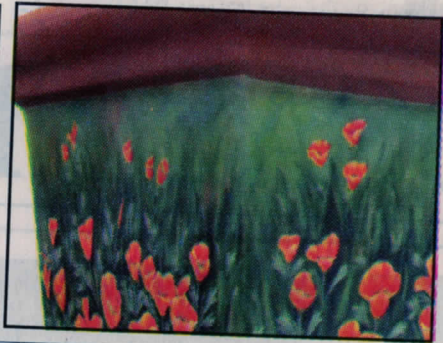
\$100

April 9th

Chances Casino



The FSJ Community Arts Council is working towards a better community through the development of arts and culture.



Arts

PAINTED POTS

Fort St. John Community
Arts Council prepares for
the Flower Pot Project

See page A12

Stretching bodies – and minds

RYAN LUX
STAFF WRITER

In an age where children are relieved 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

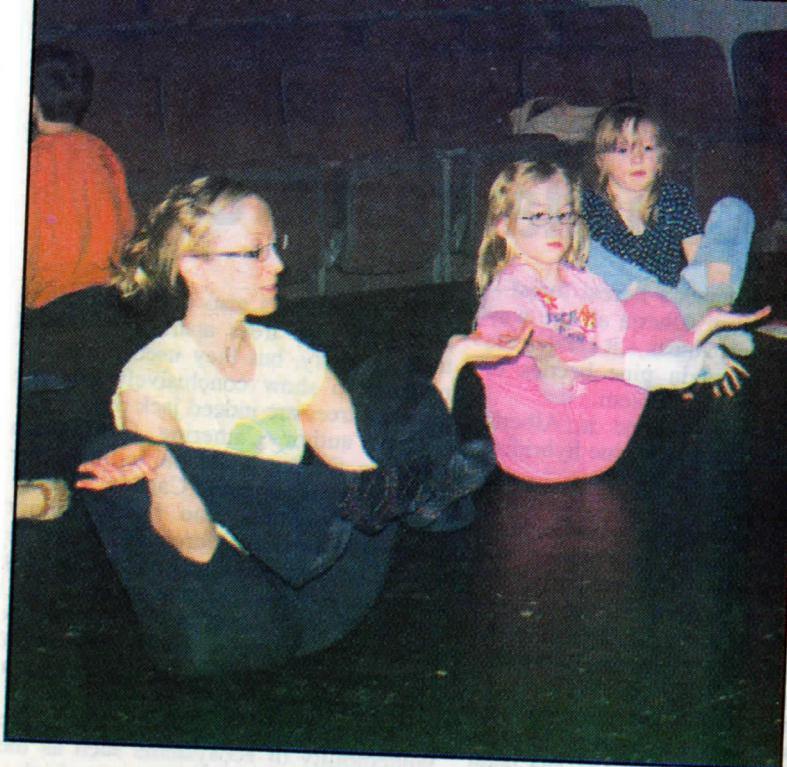
get creative.

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.



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

Ryan Lux Photo

B.C. arts council hands out extra funding to local arts group

RYAN LUX
Staff Writer

The B.C. Arts Council announced recently that it would be distributing an additional \$5.7 million in grants to more than 280 artists and arts organizations across the province.

"As past president of the Realwheels Society, I know from personal experience how important B.C. Arts Council support is for artists and arts organizations," said Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, Stephanie Cadieux.

"The province recognizes the vital role that arts and culture play in the lives of British Columbians. We continue to make the arts a priority and to work with the council to invest in the creative sector."

B.C. Arts Council board chair Stan Hamilton added; "We are pleased to be able to support these talented individuals and organizations. It's been another challenging year financially for B.C.'s artists and arts organizations, and continued support from the government helps to ensure the long-term health of the province's creative sector."

According to the B.C. Arts Council's web site, the Fort St. John Arts Council will be receiving \$15,157, although members said that currently they're not quite sure for what or why they are receiving this extra money.

Some projects that were previously awarded funds were targeted towards specified goals, however, there doesn't seem to be any string attached to Fort St. John's latest cash infusion.

"Generally we get \$10,000 in an operating grant, it's possible that the extra funds are to recognize performance, but nothing has been sent to us as official notification so at this point we don't know," said Fort St. John Community Arts Council President, Lisa Bush.

The new money will most likely be used to improve the council's web site and secure the future of the ArtsPost, which has suffered several financial blows over the last few months.

Bush said she was pleased about the announcement but admitted to some trepidation.

"It's definitely great that the B.C. Arts council still recognizes the valuable work that local arts councils do in the province and that squeezing us out is not a good idea," she said.

Her reason for being unsure at this point is that the funding announcement comes on the heels of a less-publicized financial decision by the B.C. Arts Council to slash funding for regional arts councils by 40 per cent.

The B.C. Arts Council couched the decision in a statement that they would be re-modeling the way they fund arts groups in the province. Within the new framework the Peace-Liard Arts Council will receive approximately \$5,000 less in funding.

There are only three regional arts councils in the province, with each one spanning a large remote area – such as the Peace-Liard, the West-Kootenays, and the Central Interior.

"I don't know, maybe it's because the powers-that-be in the Lower Mainland just don't understand them, because the regional councils don't exist down there," speculated Bush on the funding cuts.

She said these regional arts councils are vital in the province's vast and disparate regions.

Bush explained that the regional councils help smaller arts councils in places like Fort Nelson with additional capacity.

Justifying the regional council's existence, Bush recalled how important the committee was in keeping the arts in Fort Nelson.

She said that, for years, the Peace-Liard Arts Council kept the council in Fort Nelson on life support because there was just no one there willing or capable of taking it on. Although, a new Fort Nelson resident has now enthusiastically taken on the challenge of reviving the local council, with great success.

As a result of the funding cuts, Bush said she doubts that the regional council will be able to continue traveling its jurisdiction and keep the region's various arts communities linked to one another. Bush said that when it comes to arts funding it's ill-advised to let any one decision excite or disappoint too much.

"It's difficult to have long-term planning in the community when you don't know what sort of vagaries you'll run up against," said Bush.

She said she's optimistic that with government under a new leader, and the arts portfolio handled by a new minister, there will be better times for the arts.

"It's a holding pattern, we don't know what the environment is going to be like and we just have to survive until the next thing comes."

Other arts groups in the region to receive funding include the Chetwynd Community Arts Council Society - \$5,405; South Peace Community Arts Council in Dawson Creek - \$6,992; Hudson's Hope Historical Society - \$6,600.



RYAN LUX PHOTO

A funding announcement by the B.C. Arts Council may mean a more secure future for the financially beleaguered ArtsPost in Fort St. John.



Local ARTS FUNDING

Local Arts Council receives a little extra funding from B.C. Arts Council

See page A3

ARTS



Flower Pot Project ready for another year

ROSEMARY LANDRY

*Fort St. John Community Arts
Council*

February is Paint-the-Pots Month. The Fort St. John Community Arts Council is looking for volunteer artists to paint flower pots.

The flower pot project is part of the Communities in Bloom competition. Since 2001, the City of Fort St. John has provided fifty new pots annually to be painted, planted with flowers and displayed on 100th Street and at the North Peace Regional Airport during the summer months.

In partnership with the City, the Community Arts Council is responsible for securing the artists, painting and varnishing the new pots, and cleaning and touching up the older pots. This year there is a new challenge in

that there will be 40 self-watering pots in addition to 10 traditional flower pots. The self-watering pots are shorter and wider in shape, but still a lot of fun to paint.

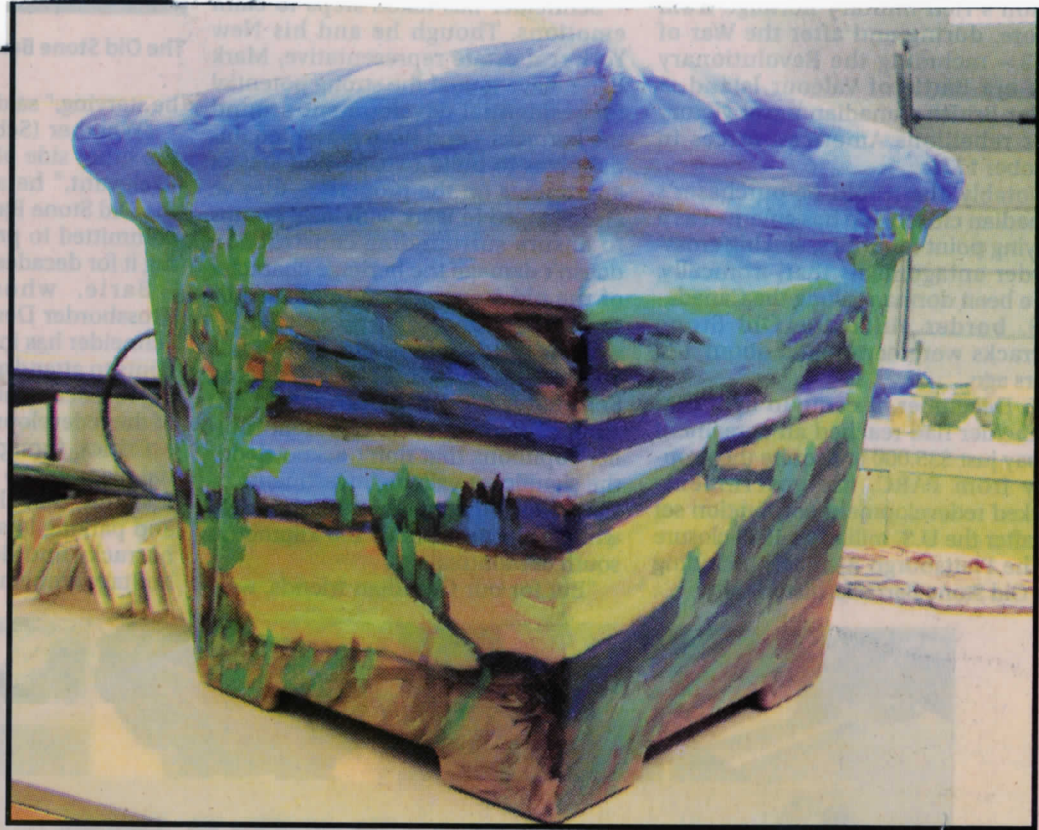
Artists do not need to be professionals but rather painters with a keen interest in creating a quality work of art that will appeal to the public and create an interest at an auction in two years time. The Arts Council will supply the necessary paint and brushes for painting the pots either at the ArtsPost or at the artist's home.

Once the pots have been displayed on the street for two years, they are refreshed and sold as a fundraiser for the arts. The money for these one-of-a-kind flower pots is raised through sponsorship by local businesses, corporations and individuals and through a

Flower Pot Auction held in June.

This year, the Arts Council is offering a new service of refurbishing pots owned by businesses and private individuals. The artwork on these privately owned pots purchased at auction years ago will have faded and chipped due to our harsh weather conditions. Each of the pots has an original painting and each can be touched up to look like new again. For a small fee, the Arts Council is welcoming these pots back to the ArtsPost at 10320 94th Avenue for paint touch ups.

Artists interested in painting a flower pot, long time flower-pot owners, and interested sponsors can contact the Community Arts Council at info@fsjarts.org or call 250 787-2781 at the ArtsPost. The office is open from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. on weekdays.





Nov 10, 2011

Kyla Corpuz photo

Councillor candidates and two School District 60 zone five candidates gathered for an open discussion about the city's arts, culture, tourism and history sector hosted by the Arts Council on Nov. 3.

All-candidates arts forum story continued from Page 1.

whose rehearsal space is currently operated out of a basement.

Sue Popesku, Stage North executive director, supported that idea.

Tourism also made its way into the discussion when one attendee brought up utilizing the Peace River, by making it more accessible to tourists.

While some current and new councillor candidates agreed that it could benefit the tourism sector, others, like new candidates Carol Kube and Brandon Joice were not as keen, stating that capitalizing on the area could mean that it would lose its "natural beauty" and "what it really means."

The discussion made a turn that started to focus on funding and the competition that the arts sector seems to have against sport and recreation.

Many members of the arts council said they were tired of asking the city for money to keep their programs afloat and made a notion that sports and recreation seemed to be favoured more in the city.

Davies said both pillars were equally important, but stated that most municipalities fund recreation more than arts.

Current council members, Trevor Bolin and Dan Davies pointed out that the facilities used by sports members like the Pomeroy Sport Centre are city owned as with the North Peace Cultural Centre which the city spends upwards of \$600,00 on.

The second all-candidates forum took place on Nov. 9, and had a more board-ranged discussion.

Candidates talk arts and culture

Nov 10, 2011

By Kyla Corpuz

FORT ST. JOHN – The Arts Council hosted an all-candidates forum on Nov. 3.

The open discussion saw Fort St. John councillor candidates and two School District 60 trustee candidates, Jaret Thompson and Darrell Pasichnyk.

Mayoral candidates were at a prior engagement at the Fort St. John Petroleum Association.

The forum was an opportunity for the public to engage with candidates on current issues surrounding the arts, culture, history and tourism in the city.

The discussion covered a whole spectrum of thoughts and ideas. It started off with downtown revitalization.

Some aspects that came up were the possibility of underground parking to couple with the use of space from the old Fort Hotel.

Counc. Larry Evans was against the idea of implementing additional parking. He said it would deter people from walking and using, the already not so used, transit system.

What he did offer was an idea to use the soon-to-be vacant fire hall on 94 St. and 100 Ave. as a possible location to house art and culture clubs like Stage North,

Story continued on Page 3.

Paying it forward

By Kyla Corpuz

FORT ST. JOHN - Chances Casino Fort St. John donated three months worth of 'found money' to the Arts Council on Aug. 31.

Bruno Bourassa, director of gaming operations, presented a cheque worth \$4116.08 to the volunteers at the



Kyla Corpuz

Bruno Bourassa, Chance Casino Fort St. John's director of gaming operations, presented the Arts Council with a donation worth over \$4,000.

casino.

'Found money' is a collection of thrown out or discarded money slips that people either chuck or simply forget while gambling. From \$0.5 to \$0.25, it adds up, said Bourassa.

The casino created a charity box to stash the found money and decided to donate it every three months to four different non-profit organizations a year.

In the past, organizations like the North Peace Ride for Disabled have benefitted from the 'found money' donation, according to Bourassa.

"We all need help somehow, what goes around comes around," he said.

Since the decrease in funding from the Community Gaming Grant, it is evident many non-profit groups struggle to stay afloat throughout the year.

Sue Popesku, executive director of the Arts Council, said trying to keep funds alive is a tough duty.

"The Arts Council struggles to keep the funds coming...it drains on our volun-

teer energy."

The Arts Council operates out of a building that houses a pottery, weavers and spinners studio.

The donation received that afternoon would go towards the next two months of their commercial rent, said treasurer Sonja Butts.

"[Bourassa] did not have to do this," said council member Rosemary Landry.

"Obviously, he sees the values of the art," said Popesku.

The Arts Council is an umbrella organization of around 29 member groups from dance, pottery, painting, choir, theatre and literacy.

Chances Casino Fort St. John opened its doors in 2007, since then it has donated over \$200,000 through the Bingo Association and the 'found money' box, but it also benefits the Community Gaming Grant.

Though the casino has been a positive asset to funding non-profit organizations, the social issue around gambling has its own downsides.

"You have what they suggest are the benefits — the money that comes in — but the social costs and families destroyed far outweighs this," said Area C director, Arthur Hadland, in a previous interview with the Northeast News.

Hand-painted flower pot auction May 28



Michaela Garstin photos

Margaret May (left) and Dena Morra (right) from the Northern Dance Theatre Society touch up flowerpots that will be auctioned at Centennial Park on May 28 at 1 p.m. The fifty pots being sold were painted by local artists and placed around Fort St. John for two years. Proceeds go to local arts and theatre societies.

By Michaela Garstin

FORT ST. JOHN — Fifty unique flowerpots painted by local artists will be auctioned off at Centennial Park on May 28 at 1 p.m.

The pots are sponsored by local businesses and have been beautifying the streets of Fort St. John for two years. They will be cleaned and touched-up before the day of the auction.

An average flowerpot sells for \$100 to \$150 but they have been auctioned off for up to \$400, said Margaret May, who helped restore the pots.

May also helps out with the Fort St. John Community Arts Council and Northern Dance Theatre Society, which will be accepting the proceeds from the auction. The North Peace Potters Guild and Stage North will also take their share.

“It’s a great opportunity to buy something beautiful and help out the community at the same time,” said May. “We made \$5,000 last year and the year before we made around \$8,000.”

The auction has been held for nine

years. Pot painters range in age from nine to 90 but most are adults, May said.

“Professional artists always come out and donate their time to paint pots,” May said. “Every pot is beautiful and unique in it’s own way. There are so many styles, so one is sure to appeal to everyone. We all have our favourites.”

The pots adorn colourful designs including flowers, suns, zebra stripes, windmills and horses. The patterns range from traditional to modern.

“The artists have a lot of fun painting and their artwork gets to be displayed for two years on the streets where everyone can see it,” May said.

Kids will get to show off their artistic skills by painting their own mini-pots at the auction. They get to keep the pots as a souvenir when they leave.

New pots have been painted and will be placed around Fort St. John in the next couple weeks.

Anyone who is interested in sponsoring a pot for \$100 can call the Fort St. John Arts Council at 250-787-2781.



FLOWER POT AUCTION

SATURDAY, MAY 28, 2011

CENTENNIAL PARK

AUCTION BEGINS AT **1:00 P.M.**

POTS ON DISPLAY AT NOON

Children's Activities



All pots painted by local
artists

Fort St. John Community



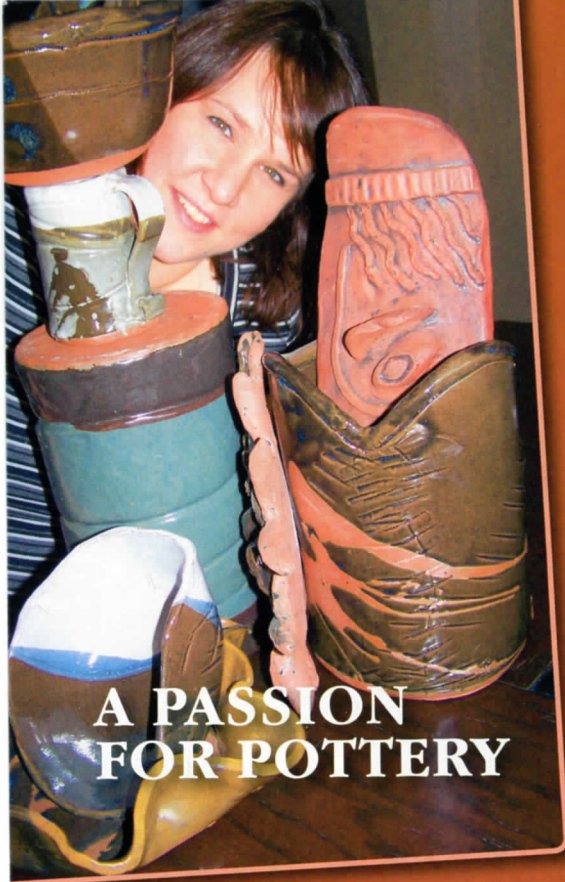
ARTS COUNCIL

"Shaping Today, Inspiring Tomorrow"



Northern Dance Theatre Society
North Peace Potters' Guild Stage North
In partnership with the City of Fort St. John





A PASSION FOR POTTERY

WORDS & IMAGES SUE POPESKU

As a business woman and mother of six-month-old triplets, Becky Lauriente has little time left for herself. But for three hours each week, Becky hires a babysitter and chooses to spend that time pursuing her passion for pottery at the Artspost Pottery Studio. Becky summed up her reasons for taking pottery classes in the few precious hours she has to herself, by saying, "It's productive; it's therapeutic; there's so much to learn and even my mistakes turn out to be acceptable."

Becky claims she tried many different classes in the arts such as painting, music, and scrap booking but nothing held her interest until she discovered pottery. She honed her artistic talent in hairstyling. She owns and operates Becky's Hair Artists in Fort St. John where her three boys are close by in the salon's day care. Right before she had the triplets, Becky took a pottery class which hooked her on clay for life.

Becky always had an artistic flare for form and colour. Her mother insisted that music and dance were part of a well-rounded education. Becky managed a framing shop on the weekends while in high school. "With pottery, I will never stop learning," she said. "There are so many levels in handling clay from hand building to wheel turning and so many types of glazing." Pottery teacher Heather Hannaford has encouraged Becky to try new techniques by offering multiple solutions to tricky situations. Being able to use what she makes from a lump of clay brings out the practical side of Becky. "What you can produce from a \$30 box of clay makes pottery a relatively inexpensive activity."

The social aspect of being with people who are all interested in the same art form does not escape Becky's analysis of her passion for pottery. "I meet people I would not have met otherwise and we discuss topics of mutual interest," she said. "And it is something to look forward to during the long winter months." She is a great believer in supporting the community through her business and expressed her appreciation for what the Artspost provides for the community.

When it came to the therapeutic reason Becky likes pottery so much, she said with a smile, "I can pound that clay, throw it around, knead it, twist it, and take out all my frustrations of the week in a perfectly acceptable way." Making pottery is an ideal stress reliever. The tactile nature of clay lends itself to getting your hands dirty and expending pent up energy making it work. She summed up the conversation by saying, "I can make it work and the flaws in the finished pieces make them more interesting."



REFRESH NOW FOR FRESH FLOWERS IN THE SPRING

MARGARET MAY

Cold winter months go by faster with thoughts about warm sunshine and fresh flowers. Although the sun may appear soon, it seems a long stretch before Fort St. John will see flowers lining the downtown streets again. But local painters can transport their thoughts to summer months now by volunteering to paint a flower pot for the Fort St. John Community Arts Council.

February is Paint- the-Pots Month. Over 50 artists are needed to paint the new flower pots that are added to the vast array of pots and flowers that make Fort St. John so colourful during the summer. Since the Flower Pot program began in 2000, the City of Fort St. John supplies 50 new pots each year to the program to be painted, with the pots from two years prior going up for auction in the spring. In all, 125 pots are freshly planted with flowers provided by the City and placed on the corners in the downtown core each summer.

The Flower Pot Program is unique to Fort St. John. The partnership of the Community Arts Council and the City of Fort St. John has caught the eye of a number of other communities who have asked about

the inner workings of the program. New pots are purchased, painted, and varnished. Previous pots are touched up and replanted. Auction pots are touched up, and re-varnished for the spring sale. The process starts in January with the pots on the street by late May or early June. Each pot is sponsored by a business, corporation or an individual. New sponsors are always welcome.

The Arts Council is offering a new service of refurbishing pots owned by private individuals. The artwork on the flower pots purchased at auction years ago will have faded and chipped in our harsh weather over the winter. Each of the pots has an original painting and each can be touched up to look new again. The Arts Council is welcoming those pots back to the Artpost at 10320 94 Avenue for paint touch ups for a small fee. As soon as you can free up your flower pot from the snow and ice, bring it in for touching up.

Artists, long time flower pot owners, and interested sponsors can contact the Arts Council at info@fs-jarts.org or call 250-787-2781 at the Artspost. The office is open from 9am-12pm on weekdays.

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"The creative industries play a major role in building and sustaining economically vibrant communities, serve as magnets to attract businesses and their employees, and are the main reason for stimulating a marked increase in cultural tourism."

U.S. Conference of Mayors

*"Art enables us to find ourselves
and lose ourselves at the same time."*

Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

The FSJ Community Arts Council is working towards a better community through the development of arts and culture.