

ARTS NORTH

A JOURNAL OF THE ARTS PRODUCED BY THE CENTRAL INTERIOR REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL

A Quarterly Newsletter

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In This Issue

| | |
|---|----------|
| Cariboo Regional District Initiative | page 1 |
| Contact Info | page 2 |
| Featured Artist | page 2 |
| About CIRAC | page 2 |
| CIRAC: What a difference in a decade by Graham Kelsey | page 3-6 |
| Presidents Report | page 3 |
| Book & CD Nook | page 6 |
| TechTips | page 7 |
| Events & Announcements | page 8 |

A Wonderful Initiative from the Cariboo Regional District

Late in 2008, the Cariboo Regional District (CRD), in conjunction with the City of Williams Lake passed a bylaw to provide funding for arts and culture in its Areas "D", "E" and "F". The bylaw provides for tax revenue up to \$200,000 to be dedicated for arts and culture in Williams Lake and what is called the "Central Cariboo", that is, the area surrounding the city and including the communities of Alkali Lake, McLeese Lake, Likely, Horsefly, Miocene, Big Lake, 150 Mile House, and Wildwood. Three First Nations are also in the included area.

The Cariboo Regional District (CRD) and the City of Williams Lake have created the Central Cariboo Arts and Culture Function

For 2009 only a portion of the approved tax will be collected—enough to engage in wide consultation about how the fund should be managed and distributed. Stonefield Consulting of Beaver Valley are currently at work on the consultations and expect to report to a joint CRD/ City committee this Fall.

This initiative on the part of CRD puts the Regional District in a unique position. Few, if any, rural

municipalities provide specifically designated funds for arts and culture. Quesnel has established an arts and culture advisory committee, Fraser Fort George Regional District has developed an arts and culture strategy and supports the major regional institutions of Two Rivers Gallery and Exploration Place. But to the best of our knowledge no other regional districts have developed a bylaw which provides specific funding for arts and culture.

We eagerly await the recommendations of the current consultation and look forward to seeing real dollars flow to arts and culture organizations in the central Cariboo. Kudos to CRD!



CIRAC ONLINE
for events, news and
announcements
WWW.CIRAC.CA

Member Arts Council Representatives

BELLA COOLA COMMUNITY ARTS

COUNCIL: Pauline Russell

FORT ST. JAMES COMMUNITY ARTS

COUNCIL: Pat Gauthier

MACKENZIE COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL:

Carol Skulmoski

NECHAKO VALLEY COMMUNITY ARTS

COUNCIL: Azucena Rudland

PRINCE GEORGE COMMUNITY ARTS

COUNCIL:

Wendy Young

QUESNEL COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL:

Cyndi Cassidy

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BC ARTS

COUNCIL:

Dr. Rob Budde

WILLIAMS LAKE COMMUNITY ARTS

COUNCIL:

Harry Jennings

100 MILE HOUSE COMMUNITY ARTS

COUNCIL:

Ginny Alexander

LAKES DISTRICT ARTS COUNCIL:

Wayne Brown

ROBSON VALLEY ARTS COUNCIL:

Dannielle Allan

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIRECTOR:

Duncan Barnett/ Cariboo Regional District

Featured CIRAC Artist for September & October: Caroline Anders

Caroline came from Ontario and lived at Bowron Lake seven years ago, now calling Wells home. She is currently working on her first series entitled 'Cities' with a show at Island Mountain Arts in 2010. She currently resides in the small town of Wells, BC where she paints full time in the winters.

About CIRAC

The Central Interior Regional Arts Council (CIRAC) is a not for profit charitable organization funded by membership fees, donations and grants, the most significant of which is an operating grant from the BC Arts Council.

We serve a vast area from MacKenzie in the north to 100 Mile House in the south, from Valemount in the east to Burns Lake, Vanderhoof, Fort St James and Bella Coola in the west. Our territory thus includes all or part of four Regional Districts with CRD and Fraser-Fort George being the most populous.

Our mandate is to initiate and promote the cultural enrichment of the lives of the people in the central interior. Our membership consists of the various Community Arts Councils in the region, together with sixty individual members. We serve the members through communication, coordination and education. This mandate means that we must not duplicate what the local arts councils do, but rather seek opportunities to showcase regional work. We publish a quarterly journal, Arts North.

We mount an annual juried arts show, with the best works touring throughout the region (Arts Fest 2008 was held in Quesnel this year and will be in Prince George in 2009). We hold an annual "Book and CD Nook" in which published authors from the region are invited to display (and sell) their work. We hold regional meetings of arts council representatives twice a year, and every two years we try to mount a more significant seminar or conference.

Contact Us

Central Interior Regional Arts Council

Regional Coordinator:

Thomas Schoen

Box 4537

Williams Lake, BC

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604 629-9883

"The B.C. government's own study shows that for every dollar invested in arts and culture, they get \$1.38 back in taxes."

Spencer Herbert

PresidentsReport

Congratulations Thomas on publishing your first edition of Arts North!

It's that time of year again, when the children are back to school and we start back with clubs and activities. Since our last Arts North, we've had a change in the executive and coordinator of CIRAC. Thomas Schoen is the CIRAC coordinator while Cherie-Lynn Bailey is on maternity leave. Anna Barley has stepped down as President of CIRAC and at the last executive meeting it was agreed that I, as Vice-president will step in to that position until the end of her term. Our fall regional meeting's workshop/seminar in Quesnel was "Do's and Don'ts of Event Planning". Wayne Brown, Lakes District CIRAC rep (Burns Lake) and Carmen Mutschele from Arts on the Fly Festival (Horsefly) presented, then led a panel discussion afterwards. Many of the things they discussed can be applied to our every day lives, not just event planning. Have a plan, have a plan B, have a budget, exchange ideas with others, and promote, promote, promote. Much like planning an event we are planning our calendar for the year ahead. We will hold Book/CD Nook in conjunction with the Medieval fair in Williams Lake. If you know of, or are an author/artist that has produced in this media, we'd love to help promote your work at this event. Arts Fest 2010 will be held in Prince George, and Wendy Young the PG CIRAC rep is already planning and setting the ground for work it. With the publishing of this Arts North, Thomas is already planning for the next edition. If you have an event or news or are an artist that you would like the region to know about, drop Thomas a line. This is a great media for exchanging ideas as well as the promotion of the arts and artists.

As a final note, Thomas has made a few changes to the web page, www.cirac.ca. You will find the new contact numbers there. One of the changes on the webpage, is the featuring of an artist from the region, which will be changed every 2 months. Check it out. Help us, help you to promote your work and the work of others through the webpage and Arts North.

Sheri Ukrainetz, Acting President CIRAC

CIRAC: What Difference in a Decade

by Graham Kelsey

Ten years ago the British Columbia Arts Council (BCAC) reviewed its Regional Arts Council Operating Assistance program. The review was completed in 1999 and the results published in January the following year.² To re-read those results now is to wonder whether things have changed, at least for CIRAC.³ Accordingly, at the CIRAC Regional meeting in May of this year, I undertook to lead a seminar on the general topic of "Ten Years On: How Is CIRAC Doing?"

In the following paragraphs I first describe the findings of the 1999 review. Second, I make some observations about the extent to which those findings still seem relevant. Third, I report the outcomes of the May seminar.

Way Back Then

CIRAC was one of four regional arts councils (RACs) established in the mid-1970s as pilot projects aimed at using a regional approach to provide small community arts organizations with consistent support and expertise. In the mid-1980s the government established a province-wide network of eight regional support services and the Regional Arts Council Operating Assistance program was launched. At the time of the 1999 review there were still eight RACs, of which all save one (Northwest) were active. The review describes their structure and finances,

their activities, their value and challenges.

Structure and Finances.

The basic structure of the RACs was prescribed by government funding requirements. They were non-profit societies, each with a written constitution and bylaws defining its goals, board composition and mechanics of operation. Boards always included representation from each member Community Arts Council (CAC). Finding these representatives was not easy--all seven of the RACs had at least one Board vacancy. None of them enjoyed full-time staff, but four had part-time coordinators. BCAC grant money made up on average just over half of each council's revenue.

Regional Arts Council Activities.

The core activities of all seven ACs councils were virtually the same and included (a) membership meetings two to five times a year (mainly for information sharing and often with a workshop or seminar in addition), (b) a regional juried art show, (c) providing resource information on request, (d) representing members at provincial and regional forums and (e) publishing a newsletter and/or a journal two to four times a year. The councils consistently listed the juried art show and the communication activities as the most important. On the whole, the activities of RACs changed little from year to year. The review notes that "tight budgets, limited human resources and constraints against competing with CACs are significant deterrents to taking on anything new".

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Perceived Value and Challenges.

When CACs were asked to rate the helpfulness of these activities, the average rating was “moderately” helpful. However, the mid and small-sized CACs, especially those in early and middle stages of development, gave above average ratings. They saw the sense of support and shared learning gained from their RAC membership as critical to sustaining their growth and motivation. Notwithstanding the moderate helpfulness scores, there was strong support for the regional concept. While some respondents saw no benefit in RACs, most saw them as much better positioned than provincial organizations to provide support services.

Six major challenges for RACs emerged from the review. First was a lack of clarity about their role and their place in the provincial arts picture. Second was the continual need to identify and deliver services that had value for their constituents. The third challenge was the difficulty of providing regional service delivery. This was especially so in two contrasting circumstances (a) in geographically large regions with remote, sparsely populated communities and (b) in areas with very dense populations with exponential population growth and a consequent demanding, very competitive environment. Sustaining momentum with a volunteer-based organization was the fourth challenge—especially because most RAC volunteers also have commitments in their own CAC. The fifth challenge was that of having poor support, of feeling isolated and, finally, there was

the challenge of how to generate enough revenue to keep going from year to year.

Then and Now

There is one striking difference between 1999 and 2009 in the provincial RAC picture. Of the seven active RACs listed in 1999 only three remain as clients of the BC Arts Council. These are Peace Liard, West Kootenay and the Central Interior. It is interesting that three of the four that have disappeared are the three with the largest population base, and, hence, presumably with the greatest development of a rich variety of local arts and culture activities, making a separate regional activity redundant. It is also noteworthy that the three of us that remain are all characterized by a large geographic area in which one, two or three medium-sized population centres serve frequently remote and sparsely populated areas and in which most local CACs are in the medium to small range.

Table 1 summarizes the comparison between 1999 and the CIRAC of today. It is clear that many of the challenges found in 1999 persist still. Three of them are serious. First, human resources are difficult to find. The search for a CIRAC Coordinator to replace Gail Hunt in 2007 was a difficult one. We have two Board vacancies, and the difficulty of finding volunteers to staff Book Nook was part of the reason for moving it from Prince George last year. The second serious challenge is financial. We have lost a long-standing corporate donor because of the economic problems in forestry and have been

unable to find alternate sources. Moreover our recent attempts to diversify have been unsuccessful (we were turned down for Direct Access gaming funds). The third serious challenge is the difficulty of providing regional service delivery. Our moving of Arts Fest to different communities has been a success, but, although the 2001 service delivery plan called for greater travel throughout the region, and in spite of some increase in grant funding for this purpose, we continue to find it difficult to visit many CACs—rarely does Bella Coola see anything of CIRAC except for the ArtsFest tour and one visit by a Coordinator who found an opportunity to visit while going there on other business.

These challenges notwithstanding, there must be some reason why CIRAC remains operational while most other RACs have disappeared. Part of the reason, as suggested above, may well be our location and the nature of our CACs. Another reason is that between 2001 and 2008 we undertook a number of initiatives that were well-received. We developed a service delivery plan through extensive consultation with CACs and wrote budgets that attempted to reflect it. Our Coordinator designed and mounted a major conference in 2004 (*Dreams and Schemes*) which focussed on cultural tourism and drew an audience from both outside and inside the region. Our Coordinator built on the success of that conference to make an ambitious proposal for a cultural alliance (*BC CAN*) to do for the north what the Alliance for Arts and Culture is able to do for the Lower Mainland.

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Initial outside funding helped us do a feasibility study and a business plan, but further funding was denied us. Nevertheless, the initiative had involved a wide range of organizations and artists in the region and certainly helped to keep CIRAC's profile before the arts and culture community. We saw an increase in membership as two newly-formed CACs joined us. We mounted several well-attended regional workshops bringing in well known and well informed speakers (from Vancouver Institute, UBC, HUB-Barton Insurance, BC Arts Council) either on a pro bono basis or in partnership with Legacies Now. CIRAC has also had some success with advocacy, both with Quesnel City Council and the Cariboo Regional District.

In short, then, there seem to be reasons why, in spite of our thin human resources and financial situation and in spite of our inability to be physically present throughout the region, we are able to continue. That said, however, I found the similarities between the findings of the 1999 review and our own situation to be at least thought-provoking. The thoughts they provoked at our May seminar were stimulating and helped us to look forward. It is to that seminar that I now briefly turn.

Now and Beyond

At the time of the May seminar our organizational difficulties of 2007 and 2008 were still of recent memory and, as a member of the Executive Committee, I may have been feeling rather organizationally ambivalent. Were things perhaps not all that different from what was described in the review of ten years ago? It was this that led me to suggest the seminar—an event at which I could either put my fears to rest or have them confirmed by our CAC members.

In the event, the seminar gave good reason for optimism. The participants talked about the CIRAC mission, identified a number of CAC needs and made concrete suggestions for CIRAC activities and fund raising.

The very first suggestions led to the basic question of what CIRAC's purpose and mission are. From this came the suggestion that it was probably time to review those basic matters in the light of a context somewhat different from that of ten years ago. Several particular CAC needs were identified (help in dealing with "bureaucratic stuff" like grant applications, help in ensuring organizational stability, help in giving business education and exhibition

expertise to artists), and there was a clear message that it was probably time once again to survey and reassess what CACs needed. Finally, a number of new suggestions were made for CIRAC—purchase one of the Arts Fest works and put it up for auction, develop a grant-writing workshop, extend partnerships with regional post-secondary institutions, update our artists directory.

All this was encouraging and the participants found it stimulating. However, perhaps more than any of the concrete ideas that were discussed, the most encouraging feature was the enthusiasm that pervaded the room. At the time of writing, A process for reviewing the constitution and mandate has been put in place, a CAC needs assessment is on the cards and, most important, the enthusiasm seems still to be there. We approach the next ten years with some confidence.

Footnotes:

[1] Luey, Sheila. 2000. RAC Operating Assistance Program Review, Victoria: British Columbia Arts Council.

[2] The BC Arts Council's program itself has undergone a number of changes in the intervening 10 years. Those changes and their effect on the RACs certainly merit examination, but the focus of this article is on the RACs themselves (and specifically CIRAC), not on the program. An analysis of the program's changes and their effects will be the subject of a later paper.

[3] The eight were Northwest, Peace-Liard, Southwest, Pacific, Okanagan, West Kootenay, Central Interior and East Kootenay.

About the author:

Graham Kelsey is a Professor Emeritus of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia and resides in Big Lake Ranch (Cariboo). He has been a frequent consultant to school boards and to not-for-profit boards in the arts and culture sector. He holds a University Teaching Prize and the Distinguished Service Award of the Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration. He has also narrated and directed award-winning museum audiotape guides.

Summary Comparison:

Regional Arts Council Review, 1999 and CIRAC, 2009

| Province RACs 1999 | CIRAC 2009 |
|---|--|
| Seven active RACs | CIRAC is one of three active RACs |
| At least one Board vacancy in each RAC | Two Board vacancies in CIRAC |
| BCAC grant averages 51% of budget | BCAC grant to CIRAC in 2008 = 75% of budget |
| Activities rated most important are juried art show and communication activities. | Arts Fest and Arts North + 2 regional meetings (workshops) are the major activities. |
| On the whole, the activities of RACs changed little from year to year. | CIRAC's core activities change little from year to year, but there have been one or two exceptional workshops, a major conference and a potentially important regional initiative. |
| Tight budgets, limited human resources and constraints against competing with CACs are significant deterrents to taking on anything new. | This situation continues |
| CAC ratings of RAC activities show an average of "moderately" helpful. But mid and small-sized CACs, especially those in early and middle stages of development, give above average ratings | No data since October 2000 when an extensive survey of CIRAC's member CACs showed good CAC support and led to a new service delivery plan. |
| Lack of clarity about RACs role and their place in the provincial arts picture. | No data |
| Continual need to identify and deliver services that have value for RAC constituents. | This need persists, especially since we have acquired three new member CACs since 2000. |
| Difficulty of providing regional service delivery. | This continues to be difficult, although budgets since 2001 have tried to make provision for a greater CIRAC presence throughout the region. |
| Difficulty of sustaining momentum with a volunteer-based organization—especially because most RAC volunteers also have commitments in their own CAC. | This difficulty persists. |
| RACs feel they have poor support and are isolated. | Until recently we have had a member on the ABCAC Board and sent at least two people to the ABCAC conference |
| The challenge of how to generate enough revenue just to keep going from year to year | This challenge continues (in spades) |

Call for Entry

Attention all
Central Interior
BC Authors
and
Musicians!!

The Williams Lake Medieval Market on November 21st & 22nd, 2009 will include a CIRAC booth (Book/CD Nook) which will be dedicated to representing regional authors and musicians to promote sales and awareness.

Please submit your literature and music so we can assist the region in getting excited about local talent!

*Contact
Thomas Schoen at
CIRAC
tschoen@lincsat.com
for more info or
604-629-9883*

Join CIRAC!

Your \$26.50 membership will get you

- ◆ One year of ArtsNorth
- ◆ Listing in our web directory
- ◆ Discount rates on special CIRAC events
- ◆ Opportunity to help shape arts development in the region by becoming a board member, attending meetings and committee work
- ◆ Assurance that your views and interests are being represented to all levels of government

"If we can hold on to the core principles of dignity, decency, humanity and goodwill, all manifested in cultural expression and ingenuity, we can produce communities that are welcoming and distinctive and innovative as well as more prosperous and more resilient, more humane and understanding."

Max Wyman

The B.C. Arts Council

The mission of council is to engage all British Columbians in a healthy arts and cultural community that is recognized for excellence.

Please visit the BCAC's new website:

www.bcartscouncil.ca



Tech Tips: Photodocumentation

by Bill Horne

If you ever wished you had a super high-resolution digital camera so you could photodocument your work with more detail, plus have the option of printing larger reproductions, here's a simple way to make larger files than your camera is meant for.

Using a tripod, take a series of photos of your work, overlapping them by about one third each (see figures 1-3). Be careful to stay in the same picture plane, i.e. don't swing the camera around as if you were shooting a panorama outdoors. If it's a large rectangular piece, try hanging it on the wall horizontally and evenly sliding your tripod across the room, parallel to the wall that your work is mounted on. Even lighting is essential, as is consistent exposure - you'll want to use manual exposure settings if possible. When you've finished shooting, optimize each image in Photoshop

using the same settings. If you are processing Raw files in Adobe Camera Raw or a proprietary program, save the settings from the first image and apply them to the subsequent files so that they're all consistent. Save each file as a TIFF.

In most recent versions of Photoshop, you can automate the process of stitching together panoramas. From the File menu, select Automate>Photomerge. Select your TIFFS and have Photoshop assemble them into a large composite of your art while you take a break (it can take a while, depending on the size of your files and your computer's memory and processing power!). Save a flattened version of the composite and do any final corrections at this stage. You'll now have a file that's much larger than what your camera can create in one shot by itself!

And while you're in Photoshop, if you have a poorly exposed JPEG or TIFF that you want to try fixing up,

see if it helps to use Photoshop's "Open As" command which allows you to open it as an Adobe Camera Raw file. That's right, you can open JPEGs and TIFFs in Camera Raw! This will allow you to use tools like the fill light, "clarity" and black boosting to salvage substandard images. It's always worth a try.

Bill Horne lives in Wells, BC

*Reprinted with permission from Visual Arts Voice, the newsletter of CARFAC BC
www.carfacbc.org*

News & Announcements

CIRAC coordinator CherieLynn Bailey started her maternity leave September 1st. We are happy to announce that Thomas Schoen from McLeese Lake & Barkerville will be our new coordinator during her maternity leave. The contact number for CIRAC will be changed to: 604-629-9883

Anna Barley has stepped down as president of CIRAC due to personal reasons. Vice President Sheri Ukrainetz stepped in to fill the position until the end of the term

ArtsFest Touring Schedule

Burns Lake - Mid September to Mid October

Fort Fraser - Mid October to End of October

Vanderhoof - Early November to Mid Nov.

Fort St. James - Mid Nov. to End of Nov.

Mackenzie - December

Prince George - January

100 Mile House - February

ArtsFest is a regional showcase of mixed media art pieces by an eclectic mix of artists from throughout the province.

Dramatic Cuts for B.C. Arts

BC's budget projected \$2.25-million in arts funding for 2010-11, down from \$19.5-million in 2008-09

Together, the province's cuts to arts and culture could total more than 90 per cent.

The Liberal government has cut the gaming grants by more than \$60-million this year.

Upcoming Events

Williams Lake

Williams Lake Medieval Market

November 21st & 22nd, 10:00AM to 4:00PM, Columneetza Secondary School

Burns Lake

Prince George Symphony Orchestra - October 18th, 3:00PM, LDSS MPR

Jake's gift starring Julia Mackey - November 10th, 7:30PM, LDSS MPR

Russel Braun - December 4th, 7:30PM, First Mennonite Church

For more info please visit: www.lakesdistrictarts.com

Mackenzie

Festival of Bells Craft Fair - November 14th, Morfee School

For more info please call Carol at: 250-997-5818

Bella Coola

Annual Arts & Craft Fair - November

For more info please call Pauline at: 250-982-2126

Prince George

Art Classes for the Fall:

Papermaking with Michael Cruickshank, October 11th

Felting with Ruth Hansen, November 14th to 15th

Glass Jewelry with Wendy Young, November 28th to 29th

For more info and many other events in Prince George please visit www.studio2880.com

"Performing arts attracts more spectators than sporting events".

**Cromie, Mary
Editor -Focus on Culture**