

Westside Renaissance

Over the years, many artists have gravitated to Ventura's Westside, drawn by cheaper rents, industrial zoning, and the neighborhood ambiance. These artists have succeeded in making a home and or studio in the Ventura Avenue area, connecting with their neighbors, and drawing many people, both citizens of and visitors to Ventura, to the western portion of the city. They have become an integral part of the atmosphere of the Westside, and a key component of its economic activity.

Looking to the Past, Embracing the Future

Stephen Erickson, chairperson of the Westside Community Council (WCC) and an active participant in the revitalization of the Westside, says, "We want to work together with the City to make Westside an attractive, thriving community. WCC started as a grass roots organization, and still relies on the strength and energy of its members, past and present." WCC is a non-profit, community-based organization made up of a group of residents and business owners that are dedicated to addressing the neighborhood's social and economic issues. Rejuvenation, in many forms, is an ongoing goal of the organization. Working with the newly founded Community Based Development Organization, WCC plans to continue efforts to beautify the neighborhood while improving living conditions for its residents.

Stephen describes the Westside as "a unique community within Ventura. We are, in reality, a mosaic of many peoples and cultures." The neighborhood is also home to a broad spectrum of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. Growing out of the oil boom of the pre-Depression era, the Westside is the oldest intact residential neighborhood in the City and therefore the WCC is ever mindful of its past. Striving to preserve important historical resources, WCC has recently worked with the San Buenaventura Conservancy to explore plans for the historic E. P. Foster house and adjacent Avenue School grounds on the north end of the Ventura Avenue.

With the adoption of the City's General Plan in August 2006, the City of Ventura Planning Division has embarked on grassroots outreach to create individual neighborhood or community plans throughout the city. Under the rubric of "Avenue to the Future", the city hopes to partner with residents this spring to begin to formulate the goals of both the Westside Community Plan and the Westside Economic Development Strategy. Visit the City's website for details.

Urban Design Strategies

Coupled with the natural gravitation by artists to the "Avenue," as the locals call the neighborhood, are several street and public art strategies implemented by the City of Ventura in partnership with the WCC and other residents to bring a renewed sense of vitality to the area, including the Westside Urban Design Guidelines. The most noticeable street change has been the underground

relocation of the utility lines along the Ventura Avenue corridor, creating a cleaner sight line on the busy street.

Another component of the Westside Urban Design Guidelines that has been eagerly anticipated and supported by community members is the installation of public artworks fabricated by Ventura artist Helle Scharling-Todd. In 2001 she was selected to develop a public art plan for the Westside and integrate public art at the gateways identified in the Westside Urban Design Guidelines – at Stanley Avenue, Simpson Street and Park Row. Through this plan she has identified opportunities for other artists' participation in a report called the *Decorative Elements for the Westside Community*. Through her innovative designs of intersections, crosswalks and gateway markers, Helle pays tribute to the Westside as a unique and important historic, cultural, and geographic neighborhood. The intersections and crosswalks incorporate colors and patterns reminiscent of colors and geometry found in the artwork and architecture of Native American and Latin American cultures.

Helle's most recent installation, completed in March, consists of two vertical mosaic pillars, one placed at East Park Row and Ventura Avenue and the second at the intersection of Stanley Avenue and the River Trail. Each pillar is made of galvanized steel and incorporates three 8' x 20" panels of tile and Italian glass mosaic with images depicting an important historic, cultural or economic influence to the community. Her artworks elegantly speak to the community's historic citrus and oil industries while paying tribute to the Chumash and Latino heritage of the Westside. Her designs came about as a result of tremendous outreach, dialogue, and interaction with residents of the Westside and with the enthusiastic participation on the part of the Westside Community Council.

An award winning artist, Helle is originally from Denmark where she earned a degree in art history. Initially her studio artwork focused on mosaics, stained glass, and murals because, she says, "I wanted to do something that could be applied in buildings." Eventually, art in public places became her primary focus, allowing her to share her works with everyone. Over the last thirty years, Helle has worked successfully with architects, community members and design professionals, creating significant works of public art in Europe, South America, Mexico, and the United States. Locally, you can see other works by Helle at the Port Hueneme Prueter Library, Ventura's Wright Library, the Santa Clara Senior Center, and the Barranca Vista Center. The artist's work can also be found in the City's Municipal Art Collection.

The Vibe of Creative Enterprises

Other efforts to add to the vibrancy of the neighborhood include the development on the south end of Ventura Avenue of the Working Artists Ventura (WAV) project, an artist live-work development. Realizing that artists have played an instrumental role in revitalization in other communities, the City has aggressively

pursued this project and has expanded it to include not only 54 artist apartment/studios but also units dedicated to supportive housing for individuals and families struggling with permanent housing issues (see page 2, Manager's Letter).

WAV will join an eclectic mix of studios and creative businesses that stand out as contributing to the ongoing creative vibe that continues to draw artists to the Westside. First and foremost amongst these is Art City stone sculpture studios. Founded in 1984, Art City has evolved into a dynamic environment that allows artists to create in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere. Founder Paul Lindhard had a vision of a place where sculptors could work together and sell their art. Located at 197 Dubbers Lane it is the culmination of that vision. Art City studios host world-class professional artists, who share common facilities and each other's knowledge. Art City showcases both "in-house" and "guest" artists in a wide variety of media including stone sculpture, painting and photography. While stone sculpture and stone sales are the main focus at Art City, the on-site Micro Gallery showcases all disciplines of art. Paul, president of the San Buenaventura Artists' Union, has become the touchstone of the Ventura visual arts community through his activism and leadership.

In 1987 Michele Chapin moved to Ventura to apprentice with Lindhard and fellow sculptor Joanne Duby. Through this connection Michele immersed herself in the thriving visual arts community on the Westside. In 1995 Michele founded her own Stoneworks Studio, an open-air studio and sculpture garden at 300 N. Ventura Avenue near Park Row. At this location Michele works on public and private commissions and teaches sculpting classes to youth at risk and private clients.

Until recently Michele shared her studio space with local muralist MB Hanrahan. MB has since moved her studio to a larger space at the newly opened Bell Arts Factory, at 432 N. Ventura Avenue, just a few blocks from Stoneworks Studio. The expanded space was needed in order to accommodate her upcoming City of Ventura public art commission for a mural project commemorating the Tortilla Flats neighborhood. MB, working with partner Moses Mora, will be installing the artwork this fall at the Figueroa Street underpass. The Tortilla Flats Mural celebrates the people and history of a neighborhood displaced by the construction of the 101 freeway.

In addition to housing MB's new studio, the Bell Arts Factory features an additional 25 artist studios shaped from the conversion of an old mattress factory into an "art factory." The range of artwork being created on site includes murals, paintings of all types – watercolor, acrylics, oil, you name it - collage, mixed media, ceramics, illustrations, mosaic works, sculpture and fabrication, fiber-arts woodworking, industrial design, weavings, photography and even a resident band. The facility also has space to host community events, exhibition and arts classes for neighborhood kids and adults.

One of the studio artists at the Bell Arts Factory, Ines Monguio, says, "I love how well the spaces are working. My studio has a lot of light, is close to the common area and to the outside, and the flow of the place is really nice." Ines continues, "I know most of the artists in the place and I am looking forward to witnessing their creative endeavors. I suspect we will all enrich each other in the process. The idea of converting an empty factory/warehouse into artist studios is as organic an idea as I have seen in Ventura."

Further up Ventura Avenue is an artists' studio that has evolved over the years from a single artist's space to another collaborative effort. Founded in the mid-90s by ceramist Carl Perkins, Fired Up Ceramics became a beacon to local ceramists seeking studio space and kiln access. Founded in 1998 by ceramists Andrew McMorran and Dawne Fowkes, the studio became a source for gorgeous ceramic objects and supplies. After the departure of Carl and the addition of new artists to the space, the studio was christened Westside Studios in 2001. Over the last five years the studio has broadened the focus of the studio to include artists practicing in other media such as sculptor Lynn Creighton. Now called Studio 1317, this multi-media haven of the arts provides an important anchor to the ever-expanding boundaries of the Westside.

Across the street, at 1328 North Ventura Avenue, the publishers of *VC Life & Style* magazine recently introduced Gallery 33 to the community. Earlier this year, business owners Amy Jones and Dina Pielat moved their magazine and design studio from downtown, attracted by this culturally burgeoning area. The 6500-square foot facility has been completely refurbished, including creative suites and a fine art gallery, complete with vaulted ceilings and over 2,000 square feet of exhibition space. "We've always loved the color and authenticity of the Ventura Avenue community," says co-publisher Amy Jones, "We're delighted to be in the company of the many fine artists and craftsmen who work there. We're also looking forward to using this beautiful venue to collaborate on special events with Ventura County cultural organizations."

Gallery 33 will feature contemporary works by local artists and will host a series of art receptions, magazine release parties, book signings, special exhibits and lectures throughout the year. The gallery offers a full array of artist services, including limited edition giclée reproduction, scanning, canvas mounts and finishing, and digital color duplications. Currently the gallery is developing an online site, which will feature client artwork to be available for purchase on the internet.

Continuing north is the studio of John Suttman. John is a fine artist and furniture maker who designs and builds truly unique metal furniture and decorative ironwork. Updating architectural and design motifs from earlier periods, he translates classic objects, traditionally crafted in marble or wood, to steel. Located in a large industrial unit on Ventura Avenue, just south of Stanley, John's studio is an environment where the creative energy flies like sparks through the

air. John's functional artworks have most recently been featured at the Gallery of Functional Art in Bergamot Station.

A Neighborhood to Explore

Residents and visitors interested in exploring the creative sector businesses and artist studios on the Westside will be happy to find a welcoming atmosphere displayed throughout the community. During the City's three annual ArtWalks Stonework's studio hosts up to 40 artists and provides an incredible tour for thousands of residents and visitors. The Bell Arts Factory, Gallery 33 and Art City will also be active participants during upcoming ArtWalks. In addition, during the Focus on the Masters' Studio Tour on May 20th and 21st John Suttman and 14 artists from Bell Arts Factory along with numerous other Westside artists will be featured participants (see separate article). The Cultural Affairs Division Discover Ventura Tours also provide guided tours of Westside historical sites and culinary hotspots as well as artists' studios. Bring your sense of adventure and creative spirit and discover the hidden treasures of this lively cultural quarter.

Letter from the Cultural Affairs Division Manager

Kerry Adams Hapner

It is an exciting time to be in Ventura and part of a thriving cultural community. Several innovative cultural facility projects are making significant advancements. The Downtown Cultural District is thriving by day and night. New festivals, events, exhibitions and public art inspire us and make us proud to have chosen Ventura as a place where we live, work and play.

The Working Artists Ventura (WAV) affordable artist live/work space project is making strides. The City has entered into an agreement with a new partner, P.L.A.C.E Inc., to lead the development. P.L.A.C.E. (People Linking Art, Community and the Environment) is a nonprofit led by Chris Velasco. Its mission is to help communities create inspiring places that serve as a focus of community life. P.L.A.C.E. has taken on all interests and liabilities of our previous partner, Artspace. In other words, the architectural designs and site will stay with the project. Groundbreaking is anticipated in November 2007.

The City is continuing its partnership with the San Buenaventura Foundation for the Arts with the goal to develop a cultural arts center in downtown Ventura. The City Council has reserved City-owned parcels for the cultural center through June 30, 2008. This spring and summer, the SBFA will work with downtown community leaders in a series of design workshops to fully integrate the developing center, dubbed the "Cultural Arts Village," into the fabric of downtown. The SBFA will identify potential partnerships with neighboring stakeholders that can realize the development of the "Village." This September, the SBFA will be developing a fundraising and development plan and will report to City Council their progress to date. For more information, check out venturaarts.org.

On a bittersweet note, the City of Ventura says goodbye to an integral member of our team, Cultural Affairs Supervisor Alice Atkinson. In July 2006, Alice and her husband will relocate to Washington, D.C. Since 2003, Alice has overseen programs in the areas of grants, technical assistance, and special events. Under her direction these programs have thrived. A trusted friend and colleague to many, Alice will be dearly missed.

Thank you to everyone who shares and participates in our efforts to weave the arts into everyday life to make Ventura "California's New Art City." Enjoy this issue of *State of the Arts*.

Insights

Interviews with Cultural Affairs Coordinator Michelle Godoy
Insights encourages a creative exchange of ideas, processes and artistic thought through glimpses of people involved in a variety of artistic disciplines.

Dan Flores

Host, Open Mic Crew Overlord. Religious Studies Student, UCSB.

What was your first creative project? Moment?

I've been a band nerd since 5th grade. I was a comic book reading band nerd till I graduated high school. I even had my own comic book in middle school called "the Uncanny Danny"; I was a super hero with a magical liquid metal chain and sidekick dog named "the Uncanny Canine". Needless to say, it was a hit!!

How would you describe your role in Ventura's Cultural Scene?

I'm just an artist like everyone else that loves to express himself. I see how important it is to have a place where people can do that, so I host my own open mic (at The Underground, 3367 Telegraph Rd, Ventura, Tuesdays, 6:30 – 10 pm). Its not a new idea by any means, but I just try and take it a step further by organizing it well, advertising, and getting the crowd riled up and excited for the performers.

What brought you to Ventura?

I'm gonna need more than 2 lines to answer that, but the short answer, a girl.

What was the last movie you watched?

Walk the Line with Reese Witherspoon. Awesome flick

What inspires you?

History, and the people in it that lived lives according to their own convictions, and who stood for what they believed in.

What was the last book you read? Currently reading?

Living Buddha, Living Christ by Thich Nhat Hanh and In Dubious Battle by John Steinbeck.

Who is your favorite artist?

I don't know how to answer that, I've been inspired by so many people its hard to just give one name. I mean, off the bat, I would say that growing up Kurt Cobain was really the artist that stood out to me. I could relate to the way he played and the passion in the songwriting. As I got older, I learned a lot about Jazz, Reggae music, Hip-Hop and R&B and there were just too many to mention that influenced the way I play. Steel Pulse is probably my favorite band ever.

What was the most embarrassing moment?

Every single day is an embarrassing moment for me. Do you realize that my life is like a sitcom? My son is a bigger movie star then me though....

If you could own any artwork, which one would you chose?

Something really expensive so I could sell it and buy a big house!

How do you define art?

Art is the universal language. No matter what culture, what race, what gender, or what part of the world you come from; you can interpret art and can be affected by it. I would like to quote one of my teachers, Adnan Sarhan who taught: "Art is the soul yearning for freedom."

Proudest personal achievement?

I'm really happy about how the Open Mic Crew is doing. We just moved to the Underground and added 4 more hosts plus me. I'm just amazed at how many people have come on board to make the open mic what it is. It's really turned into a movement, and a family has been formed that will be united for the rest of our lives, I'm gonna start crying....

What is your goal next year? 5 years?

Next year, I just want to graduate from UCSB. To be honest, I really am trying to graduate with Honors, I'm pretty sure I can do it; I have a 3.6 right now. Next 5 years? Hmmm, that's a hard one. I'm going to Grad School for sure. I'm probably going to continue my research in Religious Studies. I need some more funding though...anyone giving out scholarships?

Cheryl Heitmann

Executive Director, Ventura Music Festival

How would you describe your role in Ventura's Cultural Scene?

My role as the executive director of the Ventura Music Festival is to ensure that world class music is brought to Ventura to be experienced by people of all ages and backgrounds in historic Ventura venues.

What brought you to Ventura?

I came to Ventura to be the executive director of the Ventura Music Festival. Living in Thousand Oaks for the past 18 years, I have always been drawn to the Ventura, spending many hours walking the beaches, attending the cultural events and street fairs and shopping on Main Street. Although I continue to reside in Thousand Oaks, I am happy that I get to spend part of my day in Ventura.

Last movie you watched?

Crash

What inspires you?

I am inspired by people who must overcome adversity in their lives to follow their passion and are not afraid to stand up for what they believe is right.

Last book read?

The Kite Runner and am currently reading Our Endangered Values by Jimmy Carter

Favorite Artist

Since I am thinking mostly music, I think composer and it would be Tchaikovsky. In the art world, I am partial to the Impressionists.

If could own artwork, which would you chose?

I can't imagine choosing just one piece; everywhere I have traveled I have found pieces that I love. Spending time in art museums is one of my favorite things to do.

How do you define art?

I believe art is an expression of feelings. Art is a means of communication that transcends cultural and language barriers. It is a window into history and the soul of the culture at that time.

Proudest personal achievement:

Raising 3 children into young adulthood

What is your goal for the next year?

To help produce the best Music Festival. In 5 years, it is to expand the Festival to be known at the best Music Festival in the West, a world class Festival, a Festival for everyone.

Tyson Cline

Chair, Public Art Commission; member, Municipal Art Acquisition Committee; Vice President of the Green Building Council of Ventura County

What was your first creative project? Moment?

I can remember trying to explain to my parents how my disheveled room was just “a part of my process.”

How would you describe your role in Ventura’s cultural scene?

I see myself as a supporting cast member.

What brought you to Ventura?

My Great Grandfather on a mule train.

What was the last movie you watched?

Crash.

What inspires you?

Anything that gets passed over on a daily bases. ‘Minutia is my Muse’

What was the last book you read? Currently reading?

Last book: Slow space. Currently: Yesterday’s quotes

Who is your favorite artist?

Samuel Mockbee

What was the most embarrassing moment?

I don’t do that.

If you could own any artwork, which one would you chose?

Ronchamp by Le Corbusier. Google it, you’ll see.

How do you define art?

I don’t and nor should you!

Proudest person achievement?

My son.

What is your goal next year? 5 years?

Continue to work on community-valued projects in the City I love.

Creating the Connections

April Debut of Askew

Creating the Connections is an occasional series on the arts community connecting with the broader community “outside the box” of traditional programs.

The month that T.S. Eliot famously called “the cruelest” in *The Wasteland* is now considerably less so for poets since the Academy of American Poets designated April as National Poetry Month a decade ago, and literary arts journal *Askew* debuted in Ventura at the end of the month.

Its newspaper-size (22" x 17") format seems consciously to celebrate the dictum that "Poetry is news that stays news" and promises to be a forum for over thirty area poets per issue to make their work better known.

The seed money for the publication came from a fellowship grant by City of Ventura Cultural Funding Program received by one of the two co-editors last year. "I wanted to put it back into the arts in some visible way," said Marsha de la O, a well-known poet and teacher, whose book *Black Hope* won the New Issues Press Poetry Prize.

Askew partner Phil Taggart – poet and literary editor for original limited edition monthly *ARTLIFE* for many years – began *Askew* as a video series cablecast over most of Ventura County documenting more than 30 poets in the course of almost three years of production – it currently runs at noon Tuesdays and Thursdays on Ventura's VTV Channel 15. Taggart is a board member for both the San Buenaventura Artists' Union and the Bell Arts Factory.

"Ventura needs a literary journal to define itself," continued de la O. "Our vision for *Askew* is to feature Central Coast writers from Ventura, Santa Barbara, Oxnard, San Joaquin Valley and Los Angeles, as well as California poets."

The 500 copies printed of the inaugural issue feature Gary Soto, Chris Buckley, David Oliveira, Kevin Clark, Elijah Imley, Enid Osborn, Shelley Savren, Glenna Luschei, Sarah Maclay and Dixie Salazar.

Phil Taggart will be reading his poems with David Oliveira on April 22 at 7pm at the Carnegie Art Museum in Oxnard. Marsha de la O will be reading her poems with Christopher Buckley on June 3 at 7pm at the Artists' Union Gallery in Ventura.

Subscribe for a year of two issues with \$10 to *Askew*, P.O. Box 559, Ventura, CA 93002. For future issues, submit no more than three short to medium length poems (no simultaneous submissions to other publications, please).

Cultural Funding Program

The City of Ventura will honor the grant recipients of the 2006 Cultural Funding Program at a reception to be held on Wednesday, May 24 at the San Buenaventura Artists Union Gallery, 330 S. California Street Plaza, from 6 to 8 pm. The reception will also serve as the opening event for the accompanying Artist Fellowship Showcase, May 20 to June 11, featuring the artwork of the nine artists selected for grants this year. Local nonprofit arts organizations and visual artists were awarded a total of \$180,500 through the Cultural Funding Program, a competitive grant process that is overseen by the Cultural Affairs Division

Each year the City solicits applications from non-profit arts organizations located in, or providing special programs for, the City of Ventura. In addition applications are also accepted for Artist Fellowships for which eligibility rotates annually between performing and literary artists and visual and media artists. A panel of arts professionals and community representatives evaluate the applications in a public meeting on the basis of artistic excellence, organizational capacity, community impact, collaboration, and program accessibility. After ranking the applications the panels' funding recommendations are forwarded to the Cultural Affairs Commission for final review and approval.

Created in 1993, following the recommendations of the 1992 Cultural Plan, the Cultural Funding Program has continued to grow over the past decade awarding over \$1,000,000. Its goals are to: increase access to arts education programs for youth; increase the number of programs that celebrate Ventura's diverse community and rich history; and make the arts a major component of the community's fabric. The next round of cultural grants will be made available to artists and arts organizations after July 1, 2006. For more information regarding the City of Ventura Cultural Funding Program please call 805.677.3911 or visit the City website cityofventura.net

2006 Recipients

Artist Fellowships

Emerging Artist - \$1,500

Scot Saunders

Established Artists – \$5,000

Daniela Arriaga

Paul Benavidez

Donna Granata

Lee Hodges

Hanna Lore Hombordy

Paul Lindhard

Michael Pedziwiatr

Cheryl Ann Thomas

Arts Organizations

Operating Grant Recipients

Small Organizations—annual budget under \$50,000

Kids' Art	\$6,000
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San Buenaventura Artists' Union	\$4,000
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Medium Organizations—annual budget between \$50,000 - \$150,000

Buenaventura Art Association	\$2,500
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Channelaire Chorus	\$4,000
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Ventura College Opera Workshop	\$1,500
Ventura County Ballet Company	\$7,500
Ventura County Master Chorale	\$5,500

Large Organizations—annual budget over \$150,000

Focus on the Masters	\$25,000
Rubicon Theatre Co.	\$25,000
San Buenaventura Foundation for the Arts	\$3,500
Ventura Music Festival	\$25,000

Project Grant Recipients

A total of \$25,500 was awarded to arts organizations located in Ventura County to support a specific project within the City of Ventura.

All American Ballet Company	\$1,500	<i>To distribute free tickets to the spring performance of Fairy Doll to students in the Ventura Unified School District</i>
Bell Arts Factory	\$5,000	<i>To present a series of free arts education programs out of its facility located on the Westside.</i>
New West Symphony	\$5,000	<i>To present two family oriented concerts in the City of Ventura</i>
Performances to Grow On	\$5,000	<i>To present educational performing arts programs in Ventura Unified elementary schools</i>
Seaside Highland Games	\$5,000	<i>To present the annual Highland Games Festival at Seaside Park.</i>
Ventura County Arts Council	\$4,000	<i>To present a conference for arts professionals in collaboration with the City of Ventura</i>

Arts Education Grants

Through a special collaboration with the Ventura Education Partnership (VEP) a total of \$8,000 (\$4,000 from the City & \$4,000 from VEP) was awarded to instructors in the Ventura Unified School District to present arts education programs in the classroom.

Facility Use Grant

Facility Use Grants are in-kind contributions, up to a total value of \$3,000, available to arts organizations wishing to produce a cultural event at City Hall the Olivas Adobe or the Downtown Century Theatre. The grants allow organizations to use the facilities without having to pay the rental fees normally charged by the City. Organizations awarded Facility Use Grants this year include:

- Bell Arts Factory
- Broken Rope Foundation

New West Symphony
Ventura Music Festival
Ventura New Music Festival

Where is the Cultural Calendar?

Notice something different about this issue of *State of the Arts*? You may be asking, “Where’s the Cultural Calendar?” Well, after many years the Cultural Affairs Division has stopped compiling the calendar that has been published as part of *State of the Arts*. As our newsletter moves from three times to just twice per year, and with the rise of the Internet, the ability to access information in a more timely fashion has quickly made the printed form of the calendar an outdated delivery method.

Embracing changing developments in technology, the San Buenaventura Foundation for the Arts (SBFA) has stepped up to provide a comprehensive calendar listing service on its website venturaarts.org. The website strives to be the comprehensive resource for cultural events in Ventura County. SBFA accepts emailed press releases on cultural events, performances, exhibits, cultural fundraisers, workshops, classes and lectures at info@venturaarts.org. Website visitors can also read post reviews and visit the special “Ventura Kids Online” section for family friendly events and news. If you become a registered member at venturaarts.org you’ll also receive weekly updates on top events sent directly to your email address.

In place of the calendar, *State of the Arts* will include more articles about cultural events produced by local arts organizations. Press releases for events taking place during the relevant time frame can be submitted to culturalaffairs@ci.ventura.ca.us a minimum of eight weeks prior to the publication release date (a July 1 deadline, for September – February; and a January 1 deadline, for March – August).

Arts Explosion Bursts on the Scene

For the third year in a row the City of Ventura Cultural Affairs Division is partnering with the San Buenaventura Foundation for the Arts to present Arts Explosion, a series of 15 arts encounters presented in Ventura’s Downtown Cultural District. Continuing through December of this year, Arts Explosion features cultural events presented by local professional and community arts group utilizing unusual performance and exhibition spaces in every corner of the Cultural District.

Since its inception in 2004, Arts Explosion has brought a greater awareness of the variety and quality of Ventura’s performing and visual arts groups to over 6,000 adults and children attending the events. Through Arts Explosion, audiences have been able to experience puppetry, modern dance, ballet, storytelling, contemporary and classical music, musical theatre, painting and sculpture. What is extraordinary about Arts Explosion is that almost every event

is presented free of charge, creating a family friendly opportunity to sample the best of local arts programming.

Already underway in April, Arts Explosion featured a visual art exhibit by De Colores Art Festival and a dance performance by Danza Azteca Cuauhtemoc in at the Albinger Museum. In addition, the New West Symphony performed a special concert during the Spring ArtWalk in honor of Mozart's 250th birthday. Thirteen more events will take place this year including the events listed below for May to August. Visit venturaarts.org or call 805.653.6100 for the complete schedule of events.

Saturday & Sunday, May 20 & 21, 10 AM – 5 PM

Ventura Studio Artists Tour

Over forty artists throw open their doors all weekend in this third annual self-guided tour, with rest stops at neighborhood cafes and restaurants. See where they work, talk with them and buy striking art – directly from the creators. Tickets \$25, \$20/FOTM and VCMH&A members: 805/653-2501, at 1147 East Main Street or www.focusonthemasters.com. Presented by: Focus on the Masters

Saturday, May 20, 7:30 PM - FREE

The Pink Moment at City Hall

The Ojai String Quartet, lead by cellist Virginia Kron and violinist Yue Deng, brings that city's famed festival and sunset hour to Ventura for a concert of adventuresome music by masters classical to modern.

At City Hall Atrium, 501 Poli Street. Presented by: Ojai Music Festival

Saturday, May 27, 7 PM – FREE

Hobey Ford's Golden Rod Puppets

Fantastic puppets and "foamies" and their creator who won puppetry's highest award (the UNIMA) perform entrancing out-of-this "World Tales" for all ages.

At Church of Religious Science, 101 South Laurel Street. Presented by: Performances to Grow On

Saturday, June 10, 11 AM - FREE

Shall We Dance?

Artistic Director Burns Taft and his singers perform a world premiere of choral music inspired by Western dance that will "slipper your ears" straight to the ballroom with Brahms' exquisite "Love Song" Waltzes.

At City Hall Atrium, 501 Poli Street. Presented by: Master Chorale of Ventura County.

Sunday, June 18, NOON - FREE

Greetings from Ventura County

Kids of all ages can make their own Father's Day card on his day, inspired by the museum's vintage collection of nostalgic, historic and humorous postcards blown up large for this special exhibition.

At/Presented by: Ventura County Museum of History & Art, 100 East Main Street.

Wednesday, July 19, 7 PM - FREE

Bye, Bye Birdie dress rehearsal

Director Brian McDonald rehearses the young cast of Rubicon's Summer Musical Theatre Program in this captivating Broadway pop musical set in the early sixties about a teenage daughter who wins a kiss from her favorite rock star. For tickets to regular performances on July 20-22, call 667-2900.

At/presented by: the Rubicon Theatre, 1006 East Main Street.

Saturday, August 19, 3 PM – FREE – during Summer ArtWalk

Snow White

Get lost in an enchanted wood of music and dance with Snow White as she encounters magical dragonflies, lively mushrooms, joyful bunnies and busy bees before meeting some adorably grumpy little men.

At City Hall Foyer & Atrium, 501 Poli Street. Presented by Ventura County Ballet Company

Focus on the Masters Ventura Studio Artists Tour Weekend

Now entering its third incredible year, the Ventura Studio Artists Tour Weekend has become a must-do art and cultural experience that takes art lovers behind the scenes and into the creative spaces of some of Ventura's finest artists. Selected through a juried process, the 46 artists featured on this year's Tour offer unique works and equally engaging studio spaces. From large, eclectic warehouses to intimate garden settings, tour-goers can visit studios at their own pace, converse with the artists, and enjoy the opportunity to purchase art directly from the creator.

Repeat tour participants will be pleased to find that there is more to experience on the tour this year. 14 new artists will be joining the Tour with many of the new artist's studios located in the much anticipated and recently opened Bell Arts Factory on Ventura's Westside.

FOTM is especially thrilled to welcome renowned watercolorist Norman Kirk to the tour for the first time at his new studio location on Main Street in downtown Ventura. Norman is a versatile painter who captures rural life and figurative works with sensitivity to line and color. Schooled in the classics at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Norman continued his studies at the Los Angeles Art Center School of Design, U.C.L.A., and Chouinards. His works have been exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California Museum of Science and Industry, Los Angeles Municipal Gallery, Ventura County Museum of History and Art, and the Buenaventura Gallery.

The Ventura Studio Artists Tour Weekend opens Friday, May 19, with the *Artists Reception & Gala*, from 6:30 to 9:00 pm, at the Ventura County Museum of History & Art where the wine will flow, and guests will enjoy a fabulous dinner by

Aloha Steakhouse, live entertainment, and the opportunity to mingle with many of the featured artists. Tickets are \$40/\$35

The weekend continues Saturday and Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm, with two full days of self-guided studio tours from intimate backyard sanctuaries to large industrial spaces located around the city of Ventura. Tickets (\$25/\$20) are good for both days. Capping off the festivities is the *AfterGLOW* Celebration & Cruise on Sunday, May 21, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm, at the Ventura Harbor Village. All Tour ticket holders are invited to enjoy a complimentary champagne toast and harbor cruise, followed by a no-host dinner with the artists at The Greek.

The annual Tour serves as the primary fundraising event for Focus on the Masters. All proceeds will fund the ongoing work of FOTM to document the lives and works of Ventura County artists, and provide arts education through the *Learning To See* Youth Outreach program and *Tuesday Talk* monthly meet-the-artist series. Tickets for the Tour and the Gala may be purchased on-line at www.FocusOnTheMasters.com or by calling 805.653.2501.

Thille Park

2006 promises to be a busy year for public art in the City of Ventura. In February, artist Nancy Mooslin and her fabricator Jeff Sanders and crew installed her public artwork, titled *Making Lemonade*, at the new Thille Neighborhood Park. *Making Lemonade* is an eighteen-foot painted stainless steel and aluminum kinetic sculpture. The sculpture is driven by the wind to turn 360 degrees on its central axis, with the top six feet made up of a series of interactive parts that will function similar to a weathervane. Since this successful installation Ventura has experienced gusty winds from both the east and west and the sculpture has performed admirably. Nancy's title *Making Lemonade* pays homage to the old adage "when life gives you lemons, make lemonade." While the City may have lost a lemon orchard, it stands to gain a wonderful community park that the surrounding neighborhood will enjoy for years to come."

The Thille Neighborhood Park, located at the intersection of Thille and Saratoga is being built through a collaboration of city and developer resources. In accordance with an approved development agreement between Greystone Homes and the City of Ventura, and in conjunction with the development of two multiple-family residential projects, Greystone has designed, constructed and will dedicate this five-acre park site to the City of Ventura. The park is scheduled to be open to the public by mid-June with a dedication ceremony to take place soon after. Contact Denise Sindelar at 805.658.4793 or dsindelar@ci.ventura.ca.us for more information.

Artist Designed Banners

Installed this April throughout Ventura's various tourism districts are beautiful and bright banners showcasing the photography of local artist Dave Rivas. The Ventura's Public Art Program, through the Public and Local Artists Creating

Environments, or P.L.A.C.E. Project, commissioned Dave's artworks. The selection committee chose three of Dave's compelling and colorful abstract works for this first series of art banners to "set the tone" for promoting Ventura's cultural image as authentic yet artistically progressive.

Dave creates his highly original images—often inspired by his work as a boiler operator at Arcturus Manufacturing in Oxnard—with a Nikon FM3A camera and a small-multicolored LED lights using a long exposure that captures various colors in different configurations. "My photographs are most successful when they not only show beauty but also evoke a sense of wonder and mystery," said the artist. "To look at one of my abstract photographs is to see a world you don't normally see." Dave created the image he calls *Storm*, which will be displayed on the Downtown Cultural District banners, by photographing a drum filled with bubbling liquid lubricant illuminated by a halogen lamp. He then used a LED light to illuminate the incidental light from the surface, capturing what appear to be multicolor concentric circles emanating from a brightly colored dot.

The City of Ventura's Civic Engagement, Cultural Affairs and Economic Development Divisions have collaborated on a comprehensive wayfinding program to improve signage and linkages that effectively direct visitors to the City's tourism districts, identified as the Oceanfront, Ventura Harbor, and Downtown Cultural districts. The permanent wayfinding banners that match the signage program aim to make each district easily recognized through use of specific colors and icons. The public art banners will change periodically and provide a lively take on the unique identity of each district. Contact Denise Sindelar at 805.658.4793 or dsindelar@ci.ventura.ca.us for more information.

Public Art 101

The City of Ventura's Public Art Program proudly announces its upcoming series of technical assistance workshops titled, "Public Art 101." This series is geared towards addressing practical public art issues for artists and will be held during the month of May in the Community Meeting Room at City Hall. The schedule is as follows:

Thursday, May 4th 6:30-8:00 PM
Introduction to Public Art
Featured Speaker Marc Pally

Thursday, May 11th 6:30-8:00 PM
Building Partnerships: Inside & Outside of the Box
Panel Discussion featuring: Public Artists Karen Atkinson; Wayne Healy; Helen Lessick; and Kathryn Miller. Moderated by Denise Sindelar

Thursday, May 18th 6:30-8:00 PM
Materials, Construction and Maintenance

Presented by Sculpture Conservation Studio, Conservators Rosa Lowinger and Andrea Morse

Thursday, May 25th 6:30-8:00 PM

Working with Design Professionals

Panel Discussion featuring: Artists Michael Davis; Noel Korten; and Landscape Architect Glen Dake. Moderated by Helen Lessick

The cost per session is \$10 or \$30 for the entire series. To make reservations please call 805-658-4726 or for more information contact Denise Sindelar at dsindelar@ci.ventura.ca.us

Create or Nominate for 2006 Mayor's Arts Awards

In 2005 the Cultural Affairs Division, on behalf of former Mayor Brian Brennan, established the Mayor's Arts Awards to recognize contributions to the cultural community by City residents, artists, educators, organizations and business leaders. Continuing the tradition, this fall current Mayor Carl Morehouse will award honors in the categories of Arts Leader, Arts Educator, Artist in the Community and Special Initiatives. Nominations of the 2006 honorees will be accepted from the public beginning in mid-June.

Following the precedent set by the first Mayor's Awards, the City will once again award each honoree a limited edition artwork commissioned from a local artist to commemorate the honor. A request for proposals has been released to solicit submissions for a limited edition of four artworks that will serve as the 2006 awards. All media will be considered and proposals will be accepted until May 22. Both the request for proposals and the nomination forms are available on the City website, cityofventura.net or by calling 805.677.3911.

Dig It: Archeology Month Celebrated in Ventura

Ventura will celebrate its deep archaeological heritage during the month of May as part of California Archaeology month, sponsored by the Society for California Archaeology. The Society, which held its annual conference in Ventura during March, publishes an Archaeology Month poster along with a comprehensive guide to archaeology-related events held throughout the state during the month. Locally, in recognition of the special month, Ventura will showcase many of the community's archeological resources that are representative of the areas diverse historic cultures. The Cultural Affairs Division, the Ventura County Museum of History & Art and the Albinger Archaeological Museum sponsor the events.

Ventura first began to recognize its archeological treasures during the summer of 1974 and 1975 through the Mission Park Plaza Archaeological Project, a systematic excavation that took place on the site just west of the San Buenaventura Mission. The Albinger Archaeological Museum was founded soon after to exhibit the artifacts uncovered during the excavation including cooking

utensils that were radio-carbon dated to 1600 BC (Pre-Chumash culture), as well as artifacts from the Chumash culture, the Mission period, Rancho period and the European settlers.

A walking tour of several previous excavation sites in downtown Ventura will be held Saturday, May 6 at 2 pm. The tour will begin at the Ventura County Museum of History & Art and end with refreshments at the Albinger Museum. Professionals that worked on the various projects will lead the tour and discuss the uncovered artifacts and the history they represent. Participants will receive an illustrated historical guide of the sites. Cost is \$25 per person and pre-payment is required.

In an illustrated presentation, John R. Johnson, Ph.D., Curator of Anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, will discuss the latest discoveries and theories regarding Chumash pre-history. The presentation will take place on Saturday, May 13, 2 to 4 pm at the Ventura County Museum of History & Art with a reception of light refreshments following at the Albinger Museum. The evidence of Native American presence on the Channel Islands and the mainland extends back for more than 13,000 years and has been traced through archaeological research over the past 130 years. The presentation is included with admission to the Ventura County Museum of History & Art.

Family Archaeology Day, Sunday, May 21 from noon to 3pm, will focus on the importance of local archaeology, preservations of artifacts and the history they represent. The event will feature hands-on workshops for the whole family. Children will earn a Junior Archaeologist certificate after completing docent-led activities involving artifact examinations, a scavenger hunt, crafts and professional excavation methods. The event and admission to the Ventura County Museum of History & Art is free that day.

For reservations or more information on any of the Archeology Month events please call 805.653.0323 ext 10.

Barranca Vista Park Offers Summer Family Events

Barranca Vista Park, located at 7050 Ralston Street in Ventura, is host to a variety of free family events this summer starting with its third annual Festival in the Park. The Festival, on Saturday, May 13 from 11 am to 5 pm, is designed to celebrate the teaching artists and their students who take cultural classes at the Barranca Vista center and provides the opportunity for newcomers to get a taste of what is offered there. The festivities include hands on arts activities, Mad Science, crazy critters, face painting, moon bounces, fire trucks and Mr. Tom the music man. The celebration starts with a "Kids' Swap Meet by Kids for Kids" at 11 am which closes with the season opener of Fairytales in the Parks production of *Jack & the Beanstalk* at 4pm.

Continuing throughout the summer, Fairytales in the Park performances are geared for the young and the young at heart. Patrons are encouraged to bring blankets or low lawn chairs and a picnic basket. The performances are interactive enough for the budding young performer to join in the show and silly enough for even the most jaded to break a smile. For more information about the Fairytales in the Park performances, or the Gypsies in a Trunk Players, visit fairytalesinthepark.com. Additional shows for the summer will take place the second Saturday of every month at 4 pm as follows:

The Hare & the Tortoise, June 10

The Wizard of Oz, July 8

Wraggle, Taggle, Gypsies, August 12

The Fisherman & the Little Mermaid, September 9

On Sunday July 30 at 5 pm Shakespeare's wondrous comedy about the magic of creativity *The Tempest* will be presented by the Classics in the Park performers. Bring a picnic dinner, a low lawn chair or blanket and prepare for a great night of entertainment.

All of the events planned at Barranca Vista Park this summer are free family friendly celebrations of the arts. For more information call 805.644.6542.

For information about the cultural classes held at the Barranca Vista Center year-round visit the City of Ventura's web site at cityofventura.net and link to eRecreation.

Cowboys, Heroes and Outlaws

Travel back in time as you experience a day filled with fun and cultural education at the 7th annual Cowboys, Heroes and Outlaws on Saturday, June 3rd, 10 am to 4 pm. The Olivas Adobe welcomes visitors to the historic park to savor traditional foods and entertainment as well as participate in hands-on workshop activities reminiscent of the rancho era.

People of all ages will delight in meeting gunfighters and listening to historic interpretations of famous heroes and outlaws. And, of course, no cowboy experience is complete without learning the ways of the land with hands-on rancho workshops and with demonstrations such as butter churning, quilting, animal tracing, roping, toy making and more.

Pull up a bale of hay and enjoy the wonderful entertainment line up, featuring dancers from Mexican, Spanish, and Aztec heritage, music from Mariachi and California fiddlers, and songs about the Old West.

Tickets are \$9 for adults, \$8 for seniors and children under 12 or \$7 for each additional child. For tickets or more information, please call 805.658.4726.

Expose your talent during the Ventura Photo Contest

Amateur and professional photographers of all ages seeking more exposure for their talents are invited to submit images for consideration in the third annual City of Ventura Photo Contest by June 9, 2006.

One winner selected in each of five adult categories receive \$100 – and youth in three age divisions receive \$50 – plus photo credit and placement in city publications, brochures and website.

Entries in digital or standard film format are limited to a total of five submissions per person but can be submitted in one or a combination of up to five categories; however an individual may win in no more than two categories.

Print dimensions must fall between a 4” x 6” minimum and an 8” x 10” maximum and digital files must have a resolution no lower than 300 dpi at 5” x 7” along with a printed copy of each image. A signed, completed submittal form must accompany your images – available from City Hall’s Civic Engagement Office by calling 805.654.7731 or visiting Room 216 at 501 Poli Street.

Entrants may submit images that are “recognizably Ventura” in up to five categories reflecting the recently adopted General Plan:

- (1) Our Active, Healthy and Safe Community – recreation, sports or public safety images
- (2) Our Natural, Well-Planned and Accessible Community – images of beachfront, hillsides, parks; architecture, landscape and urban design, creative forms of transportation
- (3) Our Creative Community – images of Ventura’s vibrant art scene, cultural heritage or city events
- (4) Our Prosperous and Sustainable Community – images capturing our city’s entrepreneurial spirit including local businesses, commerce and infrastructure
- (5) Our Educated and Involved Community – portraits of people that make up our diverse community; volunteers making a difference; and close-ups of people interacting in the community.

The theme of the youth contest is “What is special about Ventura to me?” with one winner each in elementary, middle and high school categories.

A separate contest, with the same June 9 deadline, sponsored by the Public Art Program focuses on the Harbor Wetlands Ecological Reserve with prizes and an exhibition: contact hlessick@ci.ventura.ca.us or 805.658.4793 for details.

Discover Ventura

Make your visit a “*Ventura to Remember*”

Experience the enchanting qualities of Ventura through the Discover Ventura tours scheduled throughout the spring and summer months. Everyone knows

that Ventura is home to sparkling beaches, dramatic hills, and an inviting Mediterranean climate but the Discover Ventura tours will introduce you to another side of Ventura, a vibrant artistic and culinary destination with a rich architectural heritage. Investigate the city's historic downtown, mid-town and harbor neighborhoods that contain landmark architecture from Mission to Mid-century modern, set alongside intriguing public art and beautiful gardens.

As you explore the heart of the city with entertaining and knowledgeable guides, you will enjoy everything from top local restaurants to mysterious ghost sightings and murder trials that inspired Perry Mason author Erle Stanley Gardner. The tours, however, are not just about historical sites, you can also enjoy tours that entice your senses such as wine tasting tours guided by a wine connoisseur, an aromatic garden tour guided by a horticulturist, or a spa tour highlighting local venues.

Explore Ventura on foot, a boat, from a bus, or even on a bike. With any means, you'll discover a "Ventura to Remember." Discover Ventura offers a tour for just about everyone, or special requests can be accommodated for clubs and groups. Prices range between \$15 and \$35 with some tours including lunch. Register for tours at www.cityofventura.net and link to eRecreation or call 805.658.4726. Tickets are also available through the Ventura Visitors and Convention Bureau 805.648.2150

Transform: Collecting & Communicating the Personal Benefits and Public Value of the Arts

Back by popular demand, after his previous two appearances in Ventura, internationally recognized cultural researcher and facilitator Jerry Yoshitomi will be the featured presenter at the 2006 annual arts conference, *Transform: Collecting & Communicating the Personal Benefits and Public Value of the Arts*, to be co-hosted on June 23 by the City of Ventura Cultural Affairs Division and the Ventura County Arts Council. *Transform* will take place from 9 am to 5 pm at Ventura City Hall and is open to regional artists, arts administrators, board members and arts marketing professionals.

The format for this year's conference will differ from past years in that instead of a program of multiple topics and sessions, the conference will be focused on a single topic - measuring and communicating the personal and public value of the arts. The introduction of this topic to the local arts community is timely as there is a national movement to evaluate the effect that art and the artistic experience have on an audience. Jerry has advised cultural groups on this subject both nationally and internationally and states, "If artists and arts organizations are to stay in business they must be in close contact with their public, knowing what actually happens to the art consumer as a result of the art experience." Part of the motivation in organizing *Transform* is that increasingly donors and grantmakers want this type of information before awarding funding.

The intensive format of the conference will allow participants to come away with a working tool to apply the new concepts to their organization or individual art practice. Working in groups facilitated by Jerry and his co-presenters, participants will develop methods of measuring the transformative experiences their programs and artwork create for their audience and patrons. Research has proven that these affirmative outcomes pay off in a public more likely to return, buy another ticket or painting, support a program, or make a donation. By gathering evidence of transformative experiences and outcomes, artists and arts organizations can also communicate the value of the arts to the authorizing environment, which includes parents, school administrators, city officials, gallery owners, funders, and collectors.

In addition to the full day session on Friday, Jerry will be presenting a special pre-conference on Thursday, June 22 from 12 to 5 pm designed specifically for representatives from arts agencies associated with a governmental entity. This session will tailor the topic to fit the special needs of government agencies that provide a diverse array of cultural programs and services to both the artistic community and the general public.

Registration is \$70 for the first two representatives from an organization, \$30 for each additional representative, or \$40 for individual artists, and includes lunch, snacks and conference materials. The pre-conference on June 22 is \$75 per person and also includes materials and lunch. For information on *Transform* call 805.677.3911 or email aatkinson@ci.ventura.ca.us.

Transform is being co-promoted with *Meet the Grantmakers* presented by the Ventura County Community Foundation Resource Center for Non-Profit Management on Wednesday, June 14, 10 am to 12 pm. Registration is \$40 and the panel will feature representatives from the California Council for the Humanities, the James Irvine Foundation, Martin V. and Martha K. Smith Foundation and the City of Ventura Cultural Affairs Division. For more information call 805.988.0196, ext. 110 or visit vccf.org.

Wave's Wandering Minstrels In Ventura's Downtown Cultural District

More local music is on the way! Every Thursday evening in July the Cultural Affairs Division will present a diverse range of sidewalk performances in Ventura's Downtown Cultural District under a new program called the Wandering Minstrels. If you are interested in performing or would like more details on the event series contact Robin Elander at 805.658.4760 or relander@ci.ventura.ca.us. The Wandering Minstrels is graciously sponsored by local cable, phone and internet service provider Wave Broadband.

4th of July Celebration

A *Summer Shindig* is what this year's 31st annual 4th of July Street Fair celebration will be. On Tuesday, July 4, 2006 the Downtown Cultural District will

host over 300 arts & craft, fine artist, non-profits and food vendors along with a wide variety of entertainment at four stages that surround the Street Fair.

Starting off the celebration at 10:30 am will be the “Pushem – Pullem” parade. The parade begins at Cemetery Park and proceeds west on Main Street to Fir and south on Fir, ending at Plaza Park. The parade participants decorate wagons, strollers, bicycles and anything that is not motorized but can be pushed, pulled or pedaled. Now in its 31st year of entertaining the public, the parade has attracted involvement by a second generation of parade participants. The “Pushem – Pullem” parade is co-sponsored by the Ventura Rotary East and is free to participate.

Starting at 11am, the annual 4th of July Street Fair will go until 5 pm. An estimated attendance of 50,000 is expected. The street fair draws vendors from throughout the United States and attendees from different regions of California. *Summer Shindig* will offer the guitar talents of David Wayne and the LeRoy Andrews Orchestra, making their 31st year appearance, as well as a variety of community groups performing at the Santa Clara & California Stage.

Attendees can expect a wide variety of crafts and fine art from vendors. Some of the most popular items are handcrafted glass jewelry and unique accessories made from recycled newspapers and colorful fabrics. The food court vendors offer everything from the traditional hot dogs to tamales, polish sausage and tri tip sandwiches. Scattered down Main Street you will also find kettle corn, taffy, funnel cakes and cool orange drinks. Local non-profits will be on hand to educate the public on their programs.

Children activities will be centered at Mission Park. Children can ride ponies, climb rock walls and try out one of the many inflatable games and slides. Not to let the adults out of the fun, a motorized train ride that can carry adults will be on site and temporary tattoos applied by an airbrush artist are not limited to the very young.

Free shuttle service will take place from the Ventura County Government Center parking lot closest to Telephone & Hill Streets, beginning at 11am and continuing until 5pm. The shuttle drop off point at the Street Fair will be at California & Santa Clara Streets.

For further information on how to become a vendor or any questions about the event please call 805.654.7830 or go to the official website at venturastreetfair.com.

Music Under the Stars

There's a party in Ventura all summer long and you're invited! This summer enjoy ten consecutive Saturday nights of great “Music Under the Stars” July 8 to September 9. The City of Ventura Cultural Affairs Division produces this popular

concert series from 7:30 to 9:30 pm outdoors in the courtyard of the historic Olivas Adobe, at 4200 Olivas Park Drive, near Ventura Harbor. Courtyard gates open at 6:30 pm for early picnicking.

The venue is intimate, seating is limited and concerts regularly sell out, so avoid disappointment at the door by making reservations early by calling 805.658.4726. Tickets are \$18. Optional: reserve a table (seats four) for \$10. Chairs (for free) are available in the non-reserved seating area or bring your own card table and chairs. Subscribers to all ten concerts receive a pair of free guest tickets for the final concert, when Silent Movie Night presents "Adventures of Prince Achmed" (sponsored by The Greek at the Harbor) on September 9 with an original score composed and performed live by Dan Redfeld.

Our season opens on July 8 with the hot Latin Jazz/Salsa sounds of *Louie Cruz Beltran* (presented by Ventura Toyota), who has been selected as the Latin Jazz Artist for this year's Playboy Jazz Festival venue in Beverly Hills; on July 15 one of the best swing bands in Los Angeles, *Jumpin Joz*, (presented by Gold Coast Acura) comes to the Olivas Adobe; the unforgettable *Porterhouse Bob* (presented by Old Creek Ranch Winery) brings his Blues/Zydeco sound back to the Adobe; the sensuous and vibrant *Bandidos de Amor* (presented by Edward Jones-Debbie Samaniego) fills the Olivas Courtyard with Flamenco Rumba, and our most popular entertainer, *Lisa Haley & the Zydekats* (presented by Andria's Seafood Restaurant) returns to the Olivas on August 5 with her foot stompin' Zydeco. *Lula & Afro Brazil* (presented by Merry Maids/Ventura) will have people dancing in the aisles on August 12 with their amazing Brazilian Carnival sound, and on August 19 *Jim Fox & the Pisanos* (presented by Gold Coast Acura) brings the classic jazz sound played by renowned musicians back to the Olivas Adobe. The magical blend of harmonies and riveting instrumentals create an entertaining and memorable evening on August 26 with *High Hills Bluegrass* (presented by Ventura Harley-Davidson/Buell) and the remarkably intense and high energy *Estrada Brothers* (presented by Henson's Music Centers) are welcomed to the Olivas on September 2.

Patrons in the know reserve a catered hot buffet dinner or bring their own twilight picnics and dancing shoes for concerts that showcase top recording artists performing a worldwide range of music before a garden stage and expansive dance floor under the stars. Call 805.650-7559 by Friday noon before each concert to reserve a complete hot buffet dinner by BuenaVentura Catering for \$13 per person. A different menu is served each Saturday 45 minutes prior to the performance.

Whether your taste is Salsa or Swing, Bluegrass or Zydeco, Carnival or Jazz, - the Olivas Adobe has all the "music under the stars" this summer for you!

Summer ArtWalk Featured Artist Carol Simson

The public will have the opportunity to meet Summer ArtWalk 2006 Featured Artist Carol Simson and view her paintings at Well Polished, 576 E. Main Street in Downtown Ventura on Saturday, August 19, 2006 between 1-9 pm. Simson's featured watercolor painting is titled *I'll Be Right Back*. This award-winning painter is the eighteenth ArtWalk "Featured Artist" since the City of Ventura Cultural Affairs Division began featuring original artwork by area artists, selected by their peers, to promote the City's tri-annual ArtWalks on its posters, postcards, guides and other publicity materials. Carol will sign posters of her featured artwork from 3 to 5 pm during the event.

Carol was born in Fargo, North Dakota and raised on a farm. She moved with her husband and two sons to Ventura, California in 1974 and later retired and became widowed in 1989. Carol's took her first drawing class at Ventura College in the fall of 1991 with Gerd Koch and her first watercolor painting class in 1992 with Hiroko Yoshimoto. She has since studied with Carlisle Cooper, Richard Phelps, Norman Kirk, and Ruth Eyrich. Carol has accomplished a lot in her paintings in the fifteen years since she first picked up a brush, and most viewers would imagine she must have been painting in the womb. Her mastery of shadows and details in her watercolors, especially in her patio series, has led to many awards. Amongst these accolades is first place at the Ventura County Fair. *I'll be Right Back*, the piece featured on the ArtWalk poster, received best of show in the California Gold Coast Watercolor Society Spring Membership Show. *I'll Be Right Back* features a woman's purse left on a chair in a coffee shop. The image is simple but the technique is complex, causing the viewer to ponder the moment as the eye hangs in the intricate shadows.

Carol is a signature member of the National Watercolor Society, a signature member of the California Gold Coast Watercolor Society, a member of the Buena Ventura Art Association and the Santa Barbara Art Association. Carol will be a participant artist on the Focus on the Masters Annual Ventura Studio Artists Tour (see separate article).

During Summer ArtWalk over 150 Southern California artists exhibit work at more than 70 downtown locations plus 20 performances and a free shuttle. This self-guided walking tour brings together area artists, studios, galleries, downtown merchants and visitors of all ages in a celebration of visual art. For more information on the ArtWalk go to www.venturartwalk.org.

Cultural Affairs Appointment

Gina Reyes, Cultural Affairs Coordinator

Gina Reyes joined the Cultural Affairs Division staff in January as the new coordinator for arts and historic programs. But she's not new to city staff – everyone knows Gina from her five years with the city's popular Street Fairs, working with maintenance crews, food vendors and arts and crafters. She's performed similar duties for Ventura's most popular springtime event for kids, Cottontail Day. Or you may have seen Gina behind the scenes at grant panelist

meetings, the Mayor's Arts Awards, Music under the Stars, Corporate Games, Alive After Five and Artwalks. In fact, Gina has assisted city staff in a diversity of programs from children's to adult sports – she has been a volleyball coach for kids – to most every “arts” activity offered by Cultural Affairs.

One of Gina's chief new duties will be programming the popular “Discover Ventura” tours. “I look forward to planning tours and continuing to meet our unique and knowledgeable guides. We have a wine connoisseur, modeling teacher, Native American elders, a ghost hunter and historians and each one brings a depth of experience and fascinating expertise, as well as life and color to each tour. I urge our residents to sign up for our wonderful tours. And if you are knowledgeable or an expert in unique aspect of Ventura's culture -- and want to be a guide – I would love to hear from you.” Gina will also provide oversight of activities at the historic Olivas Adobe, including the summer Music under the Stars series and other special events related to Ventura's heritage.

Gina Reyes, Cultural Affairs Coordinator, can be reached at 805.658.4728 or greyes@ci.ventura.ca.us.