



Arts and Culture Commission
of Contra Costa County

Contact: Robin Moore

Phone: 925-646-2278

Email: ac5@ac5.org

For Immediate Release, October 1, 2008

Contra Costa County Arts Champions Honored for their Contributions

Martinez, CA — October 1, 2008 — Four individuals and one organization that have made significant contributions to the enrichment of arts and culture in the county will receive the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County's Arts Recognition Award at a public celebration on Sunday, October 26, 2008 at 4 p.m..

The awardees were nominated by community members, and selected by an independent panel of judges. Awards will be presented by the Honorable Supervisor Gayle Uilkema from District 2, who will serve as the Master of Ceremonies. The recognition celebration will take place at the Soda Center at St. Mary's College in Moraga. The public is invited to attend this free event. To reserve a seat, please RSVP by sending an email to ac5@ac5.org, or calling 925-646-2278 by October 16, 2008.

This year's award winners all work tirelessly to bring arts and culture to our community. They include: **Jerrold Hatchett of Richmond**, an arts enthusiast and volunteer; **Joan Landis of Pinole**, arts volunteer and President of the Pinole Artisans Foundation; **Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff of Pleasant Hill**, a writer, teacher, and youth program organizer; **Oscar Reynolds of Walnut Creek**, composer and performer of Bolivian music; and the **Richmond Art Center**, which for over 70 years, has provided world class gallery exhibitions and arts classes to the community.

JERROLD HATCHETT

Jerrold Hatchett can be found at almost every art and cultural event in his home city of Richmond, and has often made significant contributions to making those events successful. As Sydney Metrick, who nominated Jerrold for this award says, "Whenever a stage is needed for a performance, or money for a cultural event, or there is an emcee slot to be filled, Jerrold is there." From pouring blacktop beside the Artrain in Richmond, to serving on logistics committees and boards of local organizations, Jerrold's reach, influence and energy have established him as a local arts leader.

As Division Manager of Sims Metal Management in Richmond and as an enthusiastic volunteer, Jerrold Hatchett works with his employer and on his own to ensure that arts and culture thrive in the city of Richmond. Through the informal community giving program of the Richmond Division of Sims Metal Management, Jerrold has helped build the involvement and reputation of his employer as a generous, local corporate citizen. For example, when materials were needed to complete Guillermo the Fish, the 800 pound, 50 foot recycled metal golden trout sculpture that hangs outside the Richmond Art Center, Jerrold not only made the materials available, he also brought workers from Sims to help with the construction. When local arts and

culture organizations have needed metal for restoration or art projects, Jerold has invited them on behalf of Sims to come to the facility to collect the materials they need.

Jerold cares deeply about his community, and believes that the arts and local festivals help children and adults to find relief from the stress in their lives, while strengthening their communities and elevating their spirits. Jerold organized and raised funds to produce the Juneteenth Festival in Richmond, and supports and funds (through Sims?) the Richmond Main Street Initiative's "Music on the Main" annual concert series. In addition, Jerold lends his talents to support the Richmond Mardi Gras Festival and the Black History Festival, and the work of the Richmond Art Center, Richmond Friends of the Arts, Point Richmond Music, the East Bay Center for Performing Arts, the Rosie the Riveter Memorial.

LIZ KOEHLER-PENTACOFF

Liz Koehler-Pentacoff has taught and inspired children and adults in the fields of drama and writing for decades. Liz is many things, including the author of nine books, a columnist for *Byline Magazine*, and a former middle school teacher and instructor at California State University Hayward's East Bay Extension and the University of California's Santa Cruz Extension. One of Liz's greatest passions is her work with the Young Writers Contest of the California Writers Club's Mt. Diablo Branch. Since 1995, the Young Writers Contest has honored winning Contra Costa County middle school students at a community banquet with 1st, 2nd and 3rd place certificates and cash awards in the categories of short stories, poems and essays.

As a former middle school teacher, Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff knows that children in 6th, 7th and 8th grade benefit from extra-curricular artistic outlets more than other age groups. "It's a precarious time in a student's life," she says. "They need a spark of enthusiasm and passion at this time which will motivate them for the rest of their lives. That passion can get them through those painful teenage years like nothing else will." This understanding and concern for children is why Elizabeth has dedicated her attention to facilitating The Young Writers Contest, which now receives over three hundred entries each year. Liz's work with the Contest includes teaching writing workshops and judging, publicizing, and fund-raising for the annual event. For the past seven years, Liz has directed California Authors Night, a production that funds the Young Writers Contest while highlighting California authors of the past. Liz's goal "to increase enthusiasm and passion for creative writing and drama in young people" has inspired scores of young writers throughout our county's school system. She has inspired adults as well, to become more knowledgeable about our heritage of great California writers. Her fondness for drama, humor and writing have been uplifting to all who have had encounters with her teaching and directing.

JOAN LANDIS

Joan Landis' boundless enthusiasm and dedication to furthering the visual arts have inspired members of the Pinole Artisans to nickname her "Saint Joan." As President of the Pinole Artisans Foundation, Joan volunteers her time to run the Pinole Art Center gallery, organize volunteers, and liaise with city government officials, all while passionately promoting local visual artists and artmaking. Joan also participates in the painting of local murals and

community improvement projects. She was a driving force behind the establishment of the Pinole Art Center, which provides gallery space and community art education programs. When Joan is not painting herself, you can often find her helping with the Pinole Art Center's many arts education programs and helping with the rotating art exhibit at the local library. She also helps local artists and crafters to show their work at the local farmers market, and is there every Sunday at 7:00 am to help them set up their displays. Joan encourages the members of the Pinole Artisans to not only make creativity a priority in their own lives, as she does, but to also share what they know about art with others. Creating and sharing art, Joan believes, strengthens communities and has personal transformative effects that benefit all of us.

OSCAR REYNOLDS

A native of Bolivia, Oscar Reynolds is a leading cultural ambassador and advocate for his country's native music, as well as a composer, multi-instrumentalist, educator, flute maker, and recording engineer. Originally a self-taught musician, Oscar played keyboards in a Bolivian rock band as a teen, and as a young man attended the renowned Bolivian music school, Instituto de Jaime Laredo. After graduation, his mother encouraged him to pursue a more traditional line of work. Oscar went back to school and graduated with a law degree in 1987 from the Universidad Mayor de San Simón in Bolivia, but still yearned to play and perform music. He moved to the United States in 1989, and in 1991, formed the band Karumanta Jamuyku (which is *Quechua*, the Incan language of Reynold's ancestors, for "we have come from far away").

As documented by the Creative Work Fund, a musical tradition called *tundique* took hold after African slaves were brought by Spanish *conquistadores* in the 16th century to the Lake Titicaca region (which borders Bolivia and Peru) to work in the gold and silver mines. African percussion was combined with music played with indigenous Peruvian and Bolivian instruments, resulting in new rhythmic styles, dances and instrumental innovation. This musical history of collaboration among Afro-Andean and Indian culture in Bolivia and Peru is largely unknown, even in Bolivia. Oscar's interest in educating people about the rich musical traditions of Bolivia led him to collaborate with the California Academy of Sciences' Traditional Arts Program, and Afro-Peruvian percussionist Lalo Izquierdo, to create new musical compositions and dance pieces rooted in the unique, regional musical styles of their homelands.

Oscar has played a significant role in spreading cultural awareness and public appreciation of traditional arts in our community and beyond. Between songs at his performances, Oscar often explains the background of the indigenous instruments being played. He also explores the history of each composition, which have ties to particular places and cultures. To help to preserve and promote cultural traditions and music, Oscar traveled to Bolivia to record and collaborate with Afro-Bolivian people and to create a DVD documentary on their culture and history. In addition, Oscar works with many charities and artists - including jazz, classical and hip-hop musicians - to help expose the community to the roots of Bolivian music. Oscar's creativity, virtuosity, and particularly his work with Afro-Bolivian communities, demonstrate his belief that music can unite communities, cultures and people.

RICHMOND ART CENTER

When Hazel Sami moved to Richmond from San Francisco in the 1930s, she brought with her a belief that art should be part of everyday life. This belief and her hard work led her to establish the original Richmond Art Center (RAC), and eventually to secure a permanent home for RAC when it was included in the Richmond Civic Center's construction plans in the mid-1940s. This established Richmond as the first city in the nation to include a community art center in its civic center, setting a standard that is still used throughout the country today. With its leading edge Exhibition, Education and Community Arts programs, RAC continues to operate as a model community institution.

RAC's Exhibition Program has a reputation for leading the region in developing, finding and exhibiting up-and-coming visual artists through four exhibition seasons (Anne, is "seasons" the right word here?) in its four galleries. In 1963, RAC became one of the first venues to present the work of Jasper Johns, and continues to recognize important regional artists early in their careers, including Roy DeForest, Squeak Carnwath, Hung Liu, Enrique Chagoya, Joe Sam, and Tom Marioni. RAC's Education Program offers studio art classes taught by professional faculty to beginning and advanced youth and adult art students in its 25,000 square foot facility, which houses six well-equipped studios. With its Community Arts Program, RAC offers arts workshops and exhibition tours to local school children when State and Federal support has vanished, and partners with other community organization to develop public arts projects that spark community dialogue on vital issues. Now in its 72nd year, RAC is the oldest arts institution in the County. With continued excellence in the programs it offers the community, Hazel Sami's legacy of making art part of everyday life will be carried on as RAC continues to promote and interpret groundbreaking, non-traditional art for generations to come.

***About AC5:** The County Board of Supervisors established the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County in 1994 in response to a growing interest in arts advocacy on the part of artists, educators, the business community and county officials. AC5's mission is to support artists and arts organizations in the County and to forge strong partnerships between the arts community and such stakeholders as the Board of Supervisors, municipal governments, community-based organizations, regional business community, and educational institutions. More information on AC5 and its activities is available at www.ac5.org.*

***About the Arts Recognition Awards:** Since 1994, AC5 has sponsored the Arts Recognition Awards program, which honors individuals whose work in arts and culture has had a significant impact on the quality of life in Contra Costa County. No other organization recognizes our county's arts champions. The public and all levels of government representatives—city, county, and state—are invited to and often attend the awards event. Each year, a video is produced about the honorees for airing at the awards ceremony in October, and for broadcast on Contra Costa Television.*