



## “We would like to hear from you”

An Arts and Culture Campaign for Courtenay’s Electoral Candidates

We, as active and committed directors of four of Courtenay’s key Arts and Culture organizations, **the Comox Valley Community Arts Council, the Comox Valley Art Gallery, Courtenay & District Museum and the Sid Williams Theatre Society**, would like to share, with each of our respective memberships’ *your* views, visions and ideas on the goals identified in the City of Courtenay’s Arts and Cultural policy (as part of Courtenay’s Official Community Plan).

### See the Arts and Cultural Policy goals below:

Item 4.8.2 of the City of Courtenay’s *Official Community Plan* outlines an Arts and Cultural Policy that identifies the following goals:

1. To recognize arts and culture as a fundamental ingredient for a vibrant, healthy, active and sustainable community, with many social and economic benefits.
2. To actively demonstrate support for arts and culture.
3. To show leadership in promoting arts and culture, both within and outside the community.

It is our hope that by sharing your ideas and views with our membership, voters can become better informed about issues facing Arts and Culture in the City of Courtenay and thereby take more of an active and informed part in the city’s political process.

**Please share with our respective memberships your position/views as they relate to each of the above-stated goals. We want you to identify specific actions that you intend to take, while on Council, as they relate to the role and value of the City’s Arts and Cultural policy. \*Please keep your responses to 100 words or less, per goal (ie: no more than 300 words in total).**

We respectfully ask that you respond to the question presented in this letter **by November 8, 2011**. Your response, along with those of the other Candidates, will be communicated publicly to the members of our respective organizations as well as to the community at large.

Please submit your responses to Sharon Karsten at [admin@comoxvalleyartgallery.com](mailto:admin@comoxvalleyartgallery.com)

On behalf of the arts and culture organizations in the City of Courtenay, we wish to thank you for your participation. Please feel free to contact Sharon Karsten, Administrator or Anh Le, Curator at the Comox Valley Art Gallery (Phone: 250-338-6211) with any questions related to this initiative.

Sincerely,

**Bobby Herron**, Vice President: Comox Valley Community Arts Council

**Roger Albert**, President: Comox Valley Art Gallery

**Daryl Wright**, Vice President: Courtenay & District Museum

**Nicole Deters**, President: Sid Williams Theatre Society

Four handwritten signatures are listed vertically, each with a horizontal line underneath. From top to bottom: Bobby Herron, Roger Albert, Daryl Wright, and Nicole Deters.

## Responses:

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### Bill Bate

1. To recognize arts and culture as a fundamental ingredient for a vibrant, healthy, active and sustainable community, with many social and economic benefits

For every dollar that is spent on supporting the arts and culture, many more are returned in kind. That awareness has to be in the forefront of decision-making as we look for means to improve our connectivity and enhance our sense of who we are as a community. Public art needs to be a more readily identifiable element of how we market ourselves; not just for the attractions they create and the spin-off benefits that come with it, but also the depth of community involvement which they can create. If any of the cornerstones of our arts and culture community are diminished, so are we all.

2. To actively demonstrate support for arts and culture

Our downtown is a key arts and culture core that needs greater revitalization. Whenever there is an opportunity to showcase who we are and the wealth of talent we have, we must work with them to increase the positive exposure that should be made available to this integral component of who we are. The members of our arts and culture community have a long history of giving to their community and now we must give back. By raising their profile, we enhance our reputation and provide greater opportunities for all to do well.

3. To show leadership in promoting arts and culture, both within and outside the community

With the recent Westworld article, "Artopolis", discounting us as a community to pass on by, we find ourselves in a situation where we must "unring the bell". There has been little to address the need to actively counter the damage that has been done. The arts and culture resources are some of our greatest assets and when we protect and grow those assets, we add to the vitality of our community and improve the opportunities for our success and the viability for those pursuing that path as a career. We must provide greater opportunities to reflect back to those within and outside our home, that the Comox Valley is a vibrant arts and culture capital, not just for our region or our Island, but our entire country.

Cordially, Bill Bate

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### Greg Phelps

As stated in your questionnaire, Arts and Culture are identified in our Official Community Plan, which in itself is recognition of the importance that we as a city place on this subject. The city also recently increased funding through our gaming revenues for the Museum, Art Gallery and Sid Williams Theatre. Again, this shows the city's commitment to ensuring a "vibrant, healthy, active and sustainable" arts and culture community.

There is no doubt that all three facilities contribute to the economic well being of not just Courtenay, but to the Valley as a whole. There are many on-going initiatives that are truly worthy of further support.

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### Larry Jangula

Thank you for the opportunity to respond and my regrets at not replying sooner. However I have received a large number of requests and am answering them in the order of receipt while also trying to campaign in the public eye.

I note that in the titles of your four groups it is the common theme that you represent the community as a whole i.e. the Comox Valley, the District, etc. Courtenay represents a portion of your terms of reference. If successful in my election efforts my results in the area of art and culture would depend on the cooperation of all other areas of governance. My direct response to your query is set out below.

1. I feel that, while the economic well being of Courtenay is driven by industry, agriculture and business in terms of a monetary sense, the character of the community is determined by its diversity and its attention to art and culture. Item 4.8.2 of the City's OCP in my view is not a wish list but rather a mandated direction that

the elected council and City must follow. The Comox Valley is well known for its artistic and musical community and many of our local businesses are based on the creation, display and sale of our artisans, musicians and theatrical performers. I have in the past and will in the future continue to support these efforts.

2. In my nine years at the council table I have supported the initiatives that relate directly to the areas of culture and the arts. My efforts would continue if successful in my electoral campaign. Using 2011 as a guide I voted in favour of the giving of grants and funding to your specific groups in excess of \$589,000. Additional to that amount Council included the Arts Centre, the Museum and the Sid Williams Theatre in the property tax exemption by-law which would take that figure above \$600,000.

In a more oblique manner of funding I aggressively supported a reduction in the Business/Other tax rate at Council in an effort to make our business community more viable in these times of economic hardship. I think that we can agree that the continued good health of those businesses that deal in the areas of art and culture benefits us all.

3. In terms of leadership to promote art and culture I would propose a partnership among the local governing bodies based on the initial impetus from your groups to all councils of Courtenay, Comox, Cumberland, the Comox Regional District and the School Board of SD 71.

In these economic times I feel that we should be lobbying the senior federal and provincial governments to stop the downloading of responsibilities and the cutting of funds to both the municipalities and the schools. The latter is most important since the first school programmes to disappear with funding are in the areas of art and music.

I feel that in all efforts our youth represent the future. I propose that the Arts Council establish a mentoring programme cooperatively with the schools in the areas of art and music. The creative results of such a programme should be supported by a rotating display of student art in Municipal buildings and offices. In terms of performing, art displays should be encouraged through our public venues.

I feel strongly that a partnership of the whole could also market our community efforts in the areas of art and culture via the Comox Valley Economic Development Society. One of my goals, if elected, is to push for a review and audit in this area to ensure that the full potential of Comox Valley is being realized.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to respond. I realize that my response calls for a cooperative effort upon your groups in a longer run. More realistically though it also depends upon my being elected and I would ask for your support in this area.

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## **Bill Anglin**

All societies have seen their prosperity rise and fall directly linked to the support and encouragement of the arts within their communities. I know Courtenay has a long history of working with the members groups to provide places for our citizens to experience the varied exhibits brought to the Valley. I know I have seen many of the best Valley artists and indeed provincial, national and international exhibits showcased through the hard work of your member groups. Given the tremendous work you do, I can certainly see the benefit of supporting you in achieving your goals.

The renovations of the Sid Williams, Courtenay Museum, and the Comox Valley Art Gallery highlight the commitment to nurturing and supporting the "Soul of our City". The City has taken a leadership role in securing funding to ensure that the arts and culture organizations of the valley have a baseline level of support to meet each of their mandates. By providing us with your requests, we are able to assist each of the organizations meet their stated aims and missions to foster, promote and exhibit the fields within their area of expertise. The provision of this funding is a small price to pay for the long term benefit to the wellbeing of our citizens.

It should also be noted the amount of fundraising and self-help that you do on behalf of your member organizations and the community as a whole. It is refreshing to see community members take a lead role in making the Comox Valley a better place to live and experience not only with their time and hard work but also with their cheque books. If elected I look forward to reviewing your requests and providing any support that I can to aid you in promoting arts and culture in the community. Thank you for making the Valley a better place.

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**Dave Smith**

See the Arts and Cultural Policy goals below:

Item 4.8.2 of the City of Courtenay's Official Community Plan outlines an Arts and Cultural Policy that identifies the following goals:

1. To recognize arts and culture as a fundamental ingredient for a vibrant, healthy, active and sustainable community, with many social and economic benefits.
2. To actively demonstrate support for arts and culture.
3. To show leadership in promoting arts and culture, both within and outside the community.

I do apologize for being naive about the arts. I am not sure what the councils mandate is for the support of the arts.

I do however believe the arts are a very important for any community.

All I can offer you is that I am an active but new coordinator of Music Fest. Last year I ran the performers and volunteer shuttles for the entire weekend. Further my office manager and I were co coordinators for the parking and traffic department. I spent the entire weekend available and on site. I worked closely with Cresslyn, Marcy and Meg.

I drove for the big time out to support their transportation issues when the site was forced out of Cumberland and onto the farm.

I donated our bus for the transportation of passengers to the Filberg Festival. We raised 471 over two days which was put in our community fund and will benefit the LINC youth center and the Military Family Resource Center.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me

With Warm Regards

Dave Smith

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**Doug Kerr**

I believe that Arts and Culture give a community its character and identity. Not only its contemporary identity but a historical identity as well. With a number of venues available for music, art, history and performance our city is in an excellent position to promote the arts within the city and abroad. Assistance from the city in this regard would be a definite benefit to the town not only socially but economically as well.

In the past, as a citizen and business owner, I have supported a number of different projects related to arts and culture. I have sponsored several shows at the Sid, participated in solo and group shows at the gallery and museum and spent 4 years as a member of the art gallery board. In my election platform I have given funding for the arts in our community a major focus.

To take our A/C benefits beyond our borders we require someone on council who has an active interest in this aspect of Courtenay life. As a photographic artist and working photo professional I believe that I am well suited for this position. Through my past and present association with many involved in our Arts and Culture community I am able to adapt and move easily between city government and the various societies, groups, galleries etc.

Thanks for asking, Doug Kerr

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## John Ambler

### Arts and Culture: the Soul of our Community

1. Do I “*recognize arts and culture as a fundamental ingredient for a vibrant, healthy, active and sustainable community, with many social and economic benefits*”? You bet I do! My full time job is Program Manager and Volunteer Coordinator of the Comox Air Force Museum. Of note, I worked with CVAG and we created the West Coast Military Aviation Heritage Show. So love and respect for our culture, our heritage, and our artistic community is central to my makeup. Furthermore, I understand the vital role played by volunteers in our community: if the cultural facilities are the soul then our volunteers are the heart!
2. Do I “*actively demonstrate support for arts and culture*”? Again, you can count on me! Of the 16 candidates I am one of only four incumbents: as such, I can refer to my voting record over the past three years on Council. My support of the Art Gallery, Theatre, and Community Centre etc is consistent: I have always spoken in favour of our arts and cultural facilities and always voted in support of each and every request made to Council.
3. Will I “*show leadership in promoting arts and culture, both within and outside the community*”? I have and I will. When our facilities need financial support, whether it is money or a change to how they operate, I will vote in favour of doing what is best for the facility. When opportunities arise to showcase our cultural centre, such as car free days or other festival-like activities I will support it. When you need an elected representative to speak in support of an event, I will be there for our arts and culture facility.

I believe that a community, if it wants to be anything other than a bedroom, must have a theatre, an art gallery, a library, a community centre and a gym. I commit to looking after Courtenay's!

Jon Ambler

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## Marcus Felgenhauer

One of the most important things I learnt from my parents is to admit when you don't know the answer. Having never sat on council it is hard to know how far the municipal mandate extends so I can only give you personal insights. Certainly I have to agree with 4.8.2 of the OCP that art and culture enrich all of our lives. As a member of the community as well as a member of council I would like to see a keynote arts festival in the City of Courtenay. We have seen the benefits of events like Snow to Surf and Musicfest can have both socially and economically for the city, I think a multi discipline, multi day, destination type festival would have similar positive impact. I would also encourage greater interaction between the business community and the arts community, many businesses already display local art, lets work to increase this so people say " lets go to Courtenay the shops there are amazing" . On council the most important thing is to be open to new proposals, I look forward to working together with you on many new projects in the future. While I have no track record on council, leadership is set by example, Sandy and I have supported the museum in the past, we have local artists work in our home and certainly enjoy the benefits of having a facility like "the Sid" in Courtenay.  
Thanks Marcus

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## Mark Middleton

1. To recognize arts and culture as a fundamental ingredient for a vibrant, healthy, active and sustainable community, with many social and economic benefits.  
Arts and culture are a large part of why people chose Courtenay and The Comox Valley as their home. One of my more memorable moments from this summer happened at MusicFest with my wife Christine. We were watching a group of musicians jamming on one of the smaller stages when she leaned over to me and said "this is kinda magical isn't it". I was so inspired that since that time I've bought a drum kit and an acoustic guitar. I can't play either worth a darn yet but if a cultural event like MusicFest can have that kind of effect on me, then I'm eager to explore other aspects of our arts community.

2. To actively demonstrate support for arts and culture.

On a personal level my support has been as an encouraging parent. Three of our children learned their music skills through their highschool music programs. While listening to Van Morrison in the car one day, my then 15yr old daughter commented "I listen to music differently now". That struck a chord (music pun) with me and I made a point of thanking her music teacher. Another daughter has had some of her artwork displayed at the Muir Gallery. I will continue to support the arts however I can.

3. To show leadership in promoting arts and culture, both within and outside the community.

As President of the DCBIA and a local business owner, I will (elected or not) continue to show leadership and do my best to support and promote arts and culture to the best of my ability.

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### **Ronna Rae Leonard**

Courtenay currently supports arts and culture with significant funding to the Museum, the Art Gallery and Sid Williams Theatre. I supported the guarantee of a portion of the city's Gaming revenues for these facilities, which are cornerstones of our downtown cultural precinct.

There is no doubt the city benefits by these distinguished arts and cultural services.

Other jurisdictions have recognized that they are not deriving the same direct economic benefits as Courtenay, as the host city.

Collaboration between various municipal departments with the non-profits who are involved with the promotion of arts and culture is one way the city can actively demonstrate support. We saw the beginnings of a very creative process with the Colours Festival. Also, on a trip to Calgary, I was inspired by that city's public art – metal sculptures creating a proud streetscape. I support a program to institute art in public spaces.

Since many residents make their living through their art, it makes sense to use Economic Development dollars to help forge collaborations both within and outside the Comox Valley.

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### **Starr Winchester**

I have always been a strong supporter of the Arts & Culture community and my record will show that.

I was a member of Courtenay Council when the Arts and Cultural Policy was developed and subsequently identified in the Official Community Plan.

I was also a member of Courtenay Council when the "old Post Office" was purchased for the Museum, and the "old Fire Hall" was renovated to accommodate the Comox Valley Art Gallery.

I recognize that we have a community rich in arts and culture and I am proud to say I have always and will continue to support this vibrant sector of our Community.

Thank you.

Starr Winchester