

A Downtown Vision

What's next? An entire city block brimming with the arts?

By Carolyn Kranzler

DIVA, the Downtown Initiative for the Visual Arts, began its efforts about three years ago to bring the visual arts into parity with the performing arts in the greater Eugene community.

Its establishment at 110 W. Broadway in November 2003 has created a cultural community center with classes, lectures, exhibitions, performances, and artists' services. It has a growing multi-media and film program that has attracted and built a young audience. DIVA has received national recognition for these activities. As a purely bootstrap effort DIVA has been successful beyond the dreams of its founders. Our programs currently bring 1,000 people a month through our doors and DIVA is progressing in its goal to become self-supporting.

DIVA's mission is to be a "catalyst for visual arts activities in downtown Eugene" and it has been effective in its mission. Collaborative efforts have been most successful and have put to rest the fears of many that our efforts would dilute, weaken or compete with existing arts organizations. We firmly believe that all arts activities strengthen the cultural life of our community.

Downtown Eugene Inc. is working toward a marketing program to brand downtown as a regional arts center, and Robb Hankins, the director of cultural services for the City of Eugene, is promoting Eugene as "the World's Greatest City for the Arts and the Outdoors." Funding for support and signage should be seriously considered from our city councilors and the Budget Committee for both these efforts.

I'm writing, however, to speculate on what's next. With the rumors and discussion of future change and development in downtown Eugene, I want to encourage us, as a community, to think of the next step and to be engaged in the decision-making.

An arts facility such as DIVA has been included in the recent city of Eugene Downtown Plan. Of course there are no funds to provide such a facility at this time. Typically a capital campaign would be organized to raise funds, but perhaps there is another way. I'd like to propose exploration of other opportunities such as a public-private partnership. This is a strategy that has been successful in many other cities.

Recognizing that typical retail development is not currently working in our downtown, can we forge a partnership to encourage private commercial development to



DIVA's building, owned by Connor & Woolley, is at a prime downtown corner at Broadway and Olive.

TED TAYLOR

include a visual arts center? Can we find investors in this concept? Can we encourage our Planning Department to use its tools to leverage our progress and secure a permanent location for the visual arts downtown? I believe we can fill an entire city block with arts and related activities.

Consider the possibility of a truly comprehensive visual arts center and the activity it would create. Let's bring together DIVA, Maude Kerns Art Center, the Eugene Glass School, the Lane Arts Council office and a sculpture and ceramics facility. Add classrooms and exhibition spaces, a rental gallery, a small lecture and performance hall, an experimental/independent film theater, an art supplies store, and studio space for artists. A major component would be a large "art" film theater. Consider too a sculpture garden and room for storage and display of a regional art collection. Within the downtown we already have in place parking structures, a bus transit center, and an arts resource library.

It is time to begin serious discussions of possibilities, specific properties, investors, private developers and city of Eugene participation. I invite you to take the initiative and join DIVA to work for development that includes a visual arts center and an arts-active downtown. ■

Carolyn Kranzler is an architect, arts advocate, past-president of City Club of Eugene and one of the founders of DIVA and a current member of its board.



Hey Eugene!

Tell us what **YOU** want to see at the next **Eugene Celebration.**

Log on to eugeneweekly.com
Take a short survey and you will be entered into a drawing for dinner and a movie for two

A C E
ACTORS CABARET OF EUGENE

LIMITED ENGAGEMENT!

Oh, Rats!

by Doug Katsaros, J.J. Coyle & LaRue Watts
Directed by Joe Zingo
Fri. & Sat. May 20 - 28, 2005 at 7:30 PM
Doors open at 6:15
Dinner, Dessert & Beverages Available
Production Sponsored by

Actors Cabaret, 996 Willamette
FINAL TWO SHOWS!!

The Miss Firecracker Contest
by Beth Henley
Directed by Jesse D. Lally
Fri & Sat. - May 20 & 21, 2005 at 8:00 PM
NOW PLAYING at 2 PM!!

ACE Youth Academy presents
Disney's Aladdin
Sat & Sun at 2 PM May 21 - 28, 2005
Desserts & Beverages Available
Call 683-4368
www.actorscabaret.org

Northwest Media Project, U of O Cultural Forum and Eugene Weekly proudly present

JEFF COHEN

Founder of the media watch group *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*
Co-authored *THE WIZARDS OF MEDIA OZ* with Norman Solomon
Media Pundit Formerly with Fox and MSNBC
Communications Director of the Kucinich for President campaign
Former Producer of the Phil Donahue Show

Speaking on
**Overcoming Mainstream News Spin:
Exploring the Role of Independent Media**
With local media activists Alan Siporin and Amy Pincus Merwin

May 19, 7:30pm
Lillis 182
Lundquist College of Business
on the U of O campus
Limited seating
Tickets at the door beginning at 7pm

Admission:
\$10 general admission
\$5 for those "living lightly"

FREE for students with valid ID

Sponsored by the UO Cultural Forum, Eugene Media Action (a committee of Eugene PeaceWorks), Eugene Weekly, Northwest Media Project, Speakers Clearinghouse and Justice Not War Coalition. For more information call 541-484-9167

GREAT FOOD, NIGHTLIFE, & POOL TABLES.
EVEN YOUR PARENTS WILL LIKE IT...

*tuck in
for your
Graduation*

tuck in: v : eat up; to eat or drink heartily.

DISH

COMFORT CUISINE

TAKING RESERVATIONS FOR GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS

DINNER M-SAT. 5 PM-10 PM
LUNCH M-F 11AM-3 PM
LATE NIGHT MENU 10 PM-LATE

959 PEARL STREET
DOWNTOWN EUGENE
541.393.0158

NOW OPEN!

*Sweet
Basil
Thai Cuisine*

*Have it wild
or have it mild!*

**Open for
Lunch &
Dinner**

Mon-Thurs: 11:30am-9pm
Fri: 11:30am-10pm · Sat: 12pm-10pm
Sun: 12pm-9pm

*Sweet Basil Bar
Open Late Every Night*

941 Pearl · Eugene
541-284-2944
www.sweetbasilbar.com