Greetings from the Executive Director

I want to thank all of you who attended one of our public input sessions across New Mexico this summer to help us update our strategic plan to ensure we’re on track with what you think we should be doing as your state arts agency. I was really moved and impressed with the constructive tone of these meetings and value our partnership with all of you. We are in this together.

We now have a new strategic plan and, based on your input, our focus at New Mexico Arts over the next several years will be in four main areas: arts advocacy, arts vitality, arts education, and arts access.

Our new strategic plan helped inform our long application to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which we completed this fall. The NEA pays for 40 percent of our grants budget at New Mexico Arts, as well as several staff positions. Most of our other funding comes from the state.

In this issue of ARTSpeak we provide a county-by-county breakdown of our FY08 arts grants. The New Mexico Arts Commission approved about $1900,000 in grants for FY08 for 116 arts organizations and nine folk arts apprenticeships across our state. Please be sure to thank our congressional representatives, your state legislators, and the governor for their continued support of the arts in New Mexico. It is extremely important that we elected officials hear from you how their investments in the arts are making a difference.

One of the hot topics that came up during our public input sessions was how to increase our arts grants budget, which has been flat for several years. I’m pleased to report that we have a green light from Department of Cultural Affairs Secretary Stuart Ashman and Governor Bill Richardson to seek a budget expansion of $150,000 to double our grants budget to $1.8 million in the upcoming 2008 legislative session, which begins in January. Please be sure to ask the governor to include this budget expansion request for New Mexico Arts in his executive budget recommendation. And please let your legislators know you want them to include this $150,000 increase for arts grants when they fashion a new state spending plan for FY09. The more grassroots support we can show for this proposal to double our arts grants budget the more likely it is to happen.

We’re also requesting $1,000,000 in capital outlay money to restore and maintain our state public art collection. We need to preserve this important public artwork for future generations to enjoy.

We also get a green light during the upcoming legislative session to seek a new staff position to manage our very successful Arts Trails program, which is a Governor’s Initiative to put New Mexico artists on the map and bring the market to them. We created our pilot Arts Trails focused on fiber arts, using existing staff who have other duties. With a staff member focused solely on this project, we think we can really take it to the next level.

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Over the next year, we want to help jumpstart community-based arts trails. We sponsored a conference in September in Truth or Consequences for representatives from local arts councils. We’re also working with the McKinley County New Mexico Cultural Enterprise Network, the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, and others in the Northwest New Mexico/Four Corners region to help develop the Ancient Way Arts Trail. This will be our pilot community-based arts trail, which is aimed at helping enhance arts-based economic development and cultural tourism in one of the poorest areas of our state. The U.S. Census Bureau recently reported that 44 percent of McKinley County residents live in poverty, the worst percentage reported among smaller counties in the U.S. in 2006. At New Mexico Arts, we believe that arts-based economic development and cultural tourism efforts, such as our Arts Trails, offer great hope for fostering long term economic health and sustainability for rural New Mexico. We want to help make it possible for all New Mexicans to make a decent living wherever they happen to live in our state.

We’re continuing to develop and promote our New Mexico Fiber Arts Trails, which feature more than 300 artists at 71 sites across our state. If you are traveling the Fiber Arts Trails, we’d love to get your feedback. Feel free to either contact me or Project Manager Carol Cooper at carol.cooper@state.nm.us.

Loie Fecteau
Executive Director
Loie.fecteau@state.nm.us

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Making Connections Institutes

In June 2006 and June 2007, New Mexico Arts presented Making Connections: Movement, Performance, and Learning, a pilot project in arts education professional development. The institute focused on the latest research in neuroscience and brain development as well as developmental movement, Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process, and workshops in dance, music, and theater. The project was funded by a grant from the Dana Foundation.

Educators and teaching artists in rural New Mexico schools participated in the institutes. During the two years of this project, 33 fine art specialists in schools and 8 other teaching artists completed the institutes. We estimate the number of schools affected by the program at 96.

New Mexico Arts thanks our instructors and evaluator for the outstanding workshops: Steve Bailey of JumpStart Performance Co. in San Antonio TX for theater and Critical Response; Doug Bellen of Albuquerque for music; Dr. Eleanor Weisman of Allegheny College in Meadville PA for neuroscience, development movement, and dance; and Paula Stein of Albuquerque for the 2007 evaluation.

POETRY OUT LOUD

Once again, New Mexico Arts will present Poetry Out Loud, the national poetry recitation competition of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. The competition is open to high school students in the state-capital region, Taos to Santa Fe to Las Vegas, and all points in between.

Each participating classroom holds its own competition. Students memorize three poems from the print- or on-line anthologies. The winner of the classroom competition advances to the school competition. The top 5 from the school and the school's team compete in the state finals, which will be held on Sunday, February 24, 2008, at 1 p.m. in the auditorium of the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe.

The winner of the state competition receives $200, and an all-expense paid trip to Washington DC to compete in the national finals. The winner's school receives $500 for poetry books for the library. The runner-up receives $100, and his or her school library receives $100.

Participating schools are also eligible for either a creative writing or performance workshop by Top poet Anne MacNaughton. The number of workshops is limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information about the national Poetry Out Loud, see the web site at http://www.poetryoutloud.org/home.html.

TOADLENA/TWO GREY HILLS WEAVING

by Claude Stephens, Ph.D., New Mexico State Folklorist

The Navajo people, or Dine’ as they call themselves, will tell you that Spider Woman taught them to weave a long time ago and Spider created looms made of sky and earth, crystal, sunbeams, and lightning to weave on.

Historians and anthropologists will tell you that Navajos most likely learned to weave from some of their Pueblo neighbors, already accomplished weavers, who fled from Spanish occupation of their lands and took refuge with the Dine’. Whatever the true source, history documents from the late 18th century tell us that Catholic mendicants encountered Navajo woven products in their travels. In 1890, a fellow named Jos Wilson started a trading post at a place called Crystal on the west side of the Chukas Mountains in New Mexico. It was hardly the first such establishment on the reservation. About a dozen entering miners had already established trading posts among the Navajo beginning with a Mormon trading operation at Lee’s Ferry on the Colorado River in 1874. Wilson sold his Crystal post to J.R. Moore in 1896 and moved to the east side of the Chukas, starting the Two Grey Hills post, which was to become the most famous weaving center in the vis-à-vis geographic landmarks. Although based in Crystal, Moore is credited for encouraging the style of weaving that eventually evolved into Toadlena/Two Grey Hills.

The idea of promoting a regional style of Navajo weaving was not new at the time. Lorenzo Hubbell had already popularized the red, green, black, blue and white colors that make up the basics of a Two Grey Hills rug. Hubbell was a trader to the Navajo, and the local family had successfully marketed the multi-colored Eye-Dazzler style at Tec Nos Pos.

Unlike their more striking cousins, Crystal-style rugs used natural and naturally dyed red, blue, grey, black, and white colors. Moore was innovative in that he worked with his weavers to improve the quality and designs of their rugs. He is credited with increasing the use of “Orizal”, motifs in Navajo weaving as well as the distinctive Greek crosses and swastikas, or “whirling logs,” of the period. He also revolutionized, but did not invent, the practice of marketing specific products through advertising leaflets and catalogs. This enabled him to successfully generate income from buyers who did not have the time or ability to travel to this remote corner. In spite of his success, Moore abruptly left Crystal in 1911, under the cloud of a postal fraud scandal, and was never heard from again.

Around the time Moore left, George Bloomfield purchased the post at Toadlena, across the Chukas, and Ed Davies bought out Wilkins at Two Grey Hills. They soon discovered that local weavers did not like bright colors, especially red. Two Grey Hills weavers preferred to use the natural shades of tan, brown, black, and white. This is reflected in the style of weaving that eventually evolved into Toadlena/Two Grey Hills.

The patterns and motifs are still stunning. The patterns and motifs are still based on many of the original concepts but the complexity of the patterns has waxed and waned. Over the years, weavers in this area have employed liner and finer spun wool, and the weavings have become much tighter. Rugs have also grown smaller in dimension as the time necessary to produce a large piece with such finely spun quality can take years. These modern pieces are called tapistry weavings.

Today, the Toadlena Trading Post is owned and operated by Mark Winter, and his son Wilson owns and operates the Two Grey Hills Trading Post. Weaving is experiencing a renaissance of sorts in this area, and many Navajo women, as well as non-Native artists, are increasing amounts of exceedingly fine tapistry weavings. They are highly prized by collectors from the far-flung corners of the world to sample and purchase their exquisite work that the people of the world desire.

To learn more about Navajo weaving, trading posts, and Toadlena/Two Grey Hills weavings in particular, read Marian Rodiere’s Old Navajo Rugs, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1981; visit the Museum of Indian Art and Culture in Santa Fe; or stop by the Toadlena Trading Post Museum west of Bloomfield.

Ezra Stilman weaving, circa 1940s.

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To order your free copy of "ARTSpeak," call 505/827-4805, or stop by the Toadlena Trading Post Museum west of Bloomfield.

Lower Ranchitos • Greg Moon • Mixed Media (Watercolor, Gesso, Prismacolor) • 13” X 32”

Deming Motor Vehicle Department

Large Print

NATURAL & SWiA's LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Cora Sherman awarding circa 1990.

Cora Sherman received the Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts in 2005, and SWiA’s Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004.

Toadlena/Two Grey Hills Trading Post Museum west of Bloomfield.

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Miners’ Colfax Medical Center

The Miners’ Colfax Medical Center local selection committee selected artist Maey Torres to create the artwork for the new addition to the medical center in Raton. Torres will install artwork in five different sites in and around the hospital to include a landmark larger-than-life bronze sculpture of a miner to be located at the roadway entrance to the medical center.

The landmark sculpture will commemorate the coal miner as the unsung hero of the modern age. This theme will be repeated in the art at the other sites. The artwork will also speak to the unique history of the area.

The artwork is expected to be completed in fall 2008.

Prospectus #155: San Juan Regional Medical Center Commission Project

Receipt Deadline: 5 p.m., Thursday, February 28, 2008

The local selection committee at San Juan Regional Medical Center (SJRM) seeks to commission artwork for the Healing Garden on the campus of SJRM in Farmington. The committee would like the artwork to highlight the culture of the Four Corners region; and the connection between mind and body, art and science, and caregiver and patient, in an innovative healing environment. The core vision of the hospital is to personalize healthcare and create a sense of hope and vitality for patients, families, and staff. Additionally, the committee wishes the artwork to convey a sense of discovery, innovation, and connectedness.

Up to three finalists will be selected. This project is open to all artists who reside in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah.

Project Amount is $28,600. Artists must receive a prospectus to apply. The prospectus can be downloaded from the web site at nmarts.org. For more information, contact Ben Owen, Public Art Project Coordinator, telephone 505/827-6490, 800/879-4278 (instate), or email ben.owen@state.nm.us.

AIPP ANNOUNCEMENTS
New Mexico Symphony Orchestra Celebrates 75 years

The New Mexico Symphony Orchestra (NMSO) celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, receiving national and state honors. New Mexico's largest year-round performing arts organization reaches 130,000 people each year. Its success is measured in the cadre of renowned artists that have led the organization as well as recognition of adventurous programming featuring international and acclaimed guest artists. They have also been recognized within the state for outstanding contributions to the arts. In January 1976, Governor Jerry Apodaca proclaimed the then Albuquerque Symphony Orchestra as the State of New Mexico's largest year-round performing arts organization.

The 75th anniversary season will feature works from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; presentations by The Romero Guitar Quartet, NMSO Special Orchestra; and, nationally recognized artists including the world premiere of the del Agua Violin concerto January 18-20, 2008. For more information about the NMSO, visit the web site at www.nmso.org.

The symphony has seen notable leadership since its beginning as a volunteer orchestra known as the Albuquerque Civic Symphony. In 1912, under the directorship of Grace Thompson Edmister, head of the University of New Mexico's music department and one of the first women in the nation to lead a city orchestra, they played their first concert. Serving as director until 1941, Edmister moved from Albuquerque in 1942 and returned in 1970, where she continued to promote performance of music in the community. Many important people followed Edmister to lead the orchestra, including William Kunkel, who established the practice of featuring internationally acclaimed guest artists; Kurt Frederick; Hans Lange, who led the orchestra from amateur to professional status; Maurice Bonney; and, Yoshimi Takada.

The NMSO is currently under the leadership of Guillermo Figueroa, the symphony's tenth director, and is joined by Resident Conductor and Choral Director Roger Melone, and Principal Pops Conductor Michael Krajewski. In its long history, the symphony has received many accolades. In both 1977 and 1978, the symphony was honored by the American Society of Composers, Artists, and Performers with the Adventuresome Programming of Contemporary Music Award. The symphony was awarded third place for Programming of Contemporary Music at the American Symphony Orchestra League's annual conference in June 2007. The awards recognize American orchestras whose concert programs demonstrate a strong commitment to the works of contemporary composers.

Beginning as the Albuquerque Civic Symphony in November 1932, the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra is now the official orchestra of the State of New Mexico, serving New Mexico through its Classics, Pops, Mattice, and Symphony Under the Stars series. It serves families and students through family concerts and educational concerts. The symphony has been recognized by the Mellon Foundation for its innovative community engagement efforts.

The 75th anniversary season will feature works from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; presentations by The Romero Guitar Quartet, NMSO Chorus, and Celtic violinist Eileen Ivers; and, the world premiere of the del Agua Violin concertos January 18-20, 2008. For more information about the NMSO, visit the web site at www.nmso.org.