

# Milestones in History

## 40 years of Arts and Cultural Development in Fort St. John

from the Meeting Minutes of the  
Community Arts Council  
1974 to 2010

Fort St. John Community



"Shaping Today, Inspiring Tomorrow"

Fort St. John  
British Columbia, Canada

printed  
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available in digital: [info@fsjarts.org](mailto:info@fsjarts.org)

# ABOUT THE CONTENTS

The information in this document has been compiled from the meeting minutes of the Fort St. John Community Arts Council from 1974 to 2010. The contents of the minutes are assumed to be correct. However, some discrepancies may occur.

The Community Arts Council minutes are available for viewing at the office of the Community Arts Council of Fort St. John.

COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL  
OF FORT ST. JOHN



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Registered Charity with Revenue Canada since January 1, 1981

The Fort St. John Community Arts Council is dedicated to

- **developing arts and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors.**
- **focusing on education and training in all creative arts.**
- **enhancing the community with artistic programs and activities.**
- **encouraging individuals to pursue his/her creative talents and skills.**

**Thank you to these people who helped with information about the activities of the Fort St. John Arts Council.**

Heather Hannaford    Judy Hawthorne    Tony Atkins  
Bertha Kirschner    Ruthann Darnall

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printed December 13, 2010

**MILESTONES IN HISTORY**  
**COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL OF FORT ST. JOHN**

**1967**

Provincial BC Centennial Planning Committee establishes Arts Fund for municipalities.  
Community Arts Council of Fort St. John established.

**1968**

Overture Concerts assists CAC in sponsoring classical concerts on tour to FSJ.

**1969**

Potters establish a pottery studio in Taylor.

**1970**

**1970's**

Fort St. John Community Arts Council registered as a BC Society.

FSJ Centennial Project Committee (Tony J. Brummet) proposes a Com. Arts Centre.

**1971**

North Peace Potter's move pottery studio to Fort St. John Hockey Arena from Taylor.

Arts Council First Annual General Meeting held at the Public Library June 2, 1971.

**1974**

Assists with the upkeep and location of the one Grand Piano in Fort St John.

First of Annual Art Fairs in June held in the hockey arena until 1977.

Building Fund established for an arts centre after discussion about unbalanced support for facilities in the community.

**1975**

First full scale musical (Oklahoma) sold out to 1500 audience for 3 nights.

Arts Council has 6 groups; Town pop. 6000, grant of \$5000 to Arts Council groups.

CAC calls public meeting to pursue formation of an Arts Centre/Library Dev. Com.

**1976**

Northern Lights College is established in Fort St. John with a mandate to include education in the arts (music, drama, painting and pottery and creative writing).

**1976-1980**

Potters and Painters Annual Show and Sale held in the foyer of City Hall, Central Dept. Store, Dalmahaghit, Hunter's Mall, and other make-shift locations.

**1977**

Stage North established at NLC with Brian Paisley as theatre teacher and director.

Community Musician's Grant of Canada Council enables CAC to hire Marianne Survis.

Concert Series separates from CAC with own budget, volunteers, and planning.

**1979/80**

Two regional referendums for a Library/Theatre complex defeated by narrow margins.

**1981**

**1980's**

Jellison Dance Studio establishes dance studio for classes in ballet, jazz and tap.

FSJ hosts first Regional Arts Council Conference establishing PL Regional Arts Council.

First (of 3) Treeline Creative Writing Book published by NLC by Maidie Hilmo.

First Street Banner Competition conducted by April Ingham.

First Regional Juried Art Show in vacant People's Drug Store on NE 100 St/10 Ave..

**MILESTONES IN HISTORY**  
**COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL OF FORT ST. JOHN**

**1982**

Alaska Highway Museum Summer Exhibit (current loc. of WW/Honey).  
NLC Academic Conference on the Building of the Alaska Highway for 40th Anniversary.  
Artspace established as first home for the Arts on NE corner of 100st/100ave.  
Com. Recovery Grt for Artspace, City Special Events, Downtown Assoc. employees.  
CAC donates funds to Historical Society to begin establishment of a museum.  
Community murals (22) painting begins by “Wall People” for BC Winter Games.

**1983**

Artspace classes established with 240 registrants on the first day.  
CAC partners with Katimavik to bring organizational workers to community associations.  
CAC moves at AGM to establish committee to work toward a Cultural Centre.  
Arts Council begins Children’s Concerts organized by Artspace Classes.

**1984**

Famous Australian Rolf Harris performs in Fort St. John in NPSS gymnasium.  
Potters establish studio at Northern Lights College.  
Peace River Zone Theatre Festival held for first time in FSJ.  
Artspace has Sports Champs Display and Artworks/Souvenir Shop for BC Winter Games.  
Fort St. John North Peace Museum opens its doors..  
Artspace funding crisis for operational funds in April. City begins \$650 month support.  
Artspace received Canada Works Grant in October. Employs three people.  
Public Library opens new and larger location in Overwaitea shopping complex.  
Economic summary of Arts Council groups have \$200,000 collective expenses resulting  
in \$501,000 impact on the community. City supports arts groups with \$5,000.  
Artsfest Event developed as an annual event for next three years.  
Artaark Summer Program established with a ‘84 Challenge Grant Summer Students.  
First Annual Art Auction by local artists.

**1985**

First Computer purchased and Arts Directory produced.  
Canada Council supported sponsorship training with dance workshops/concerts.  
Famous children performers Sharon, Lois and Bram in Fort St. John at NPSS gym.  
Partly Arts Concert Series established.  
North Peace Arts Society formed.  
CAC assisted in auditioning talent for Expo 86 Northern Showcase at BC Pavilion in ‘86.  
Expo 86 Legacy Funds \$1 million to go toward library, theatre, arts centre.  
Artspace becomes a separate group of the Arts Council but still houses the CAC office.

**1986**

Heritage Festival ‘86 organized by the CAC as an Expo 86 Fort St. John event.  
Expo 86 BC Pavilion Week has 156 performers from our region- FSJ CAC is organizer.  
Job Creation Strategy Grant received: 3 for cultural and tourism training.  
Huge Arts and Crafts Christmas sale in Bay Building, the future NPCC.

**MILESTONES IN HISTORY**  
**COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL OF FORT ST. JOHN**

**1987**

Artspace relocates downstairs in same building on 100st/100Ave NE corner..

CAC hosts "Hands Across the North" - a regional arts conference.

Hist. Soc. unveils 10,000 yr old man-made bead found at Ch. Lake Caves.

The "Before Stage" set up in the Bay building, the future NPCC.

Legacy of Christmas Cheer annual event established in "Before Stage".

**1988**

CAC assists in organizing Petro-Canada '88 Olympic Torch Relay.

Vancouver Symphony plays in Fort St. John at NPSS gym

Job Development Grant received for 3 people: Gallery/Library/Media.

CAC involved in establishing the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Construction of Alaska Hwy.

**1989**

Just Before Stage in Hamilton Basics bldg. replaces stage in the Bay Building.

Airing the Arts established as a fund raiser and an annual event for next 3 years.

Arts Directory research, compiled, and printed.

Project '92 (Alaska Highway Anniversary Celebration) FSJ office in the Artspace.

**1990**

**1990's**

CAC produces "Canadian Heritage Showcase" of local talent for NLC new students.

Conducted "Pennies for the Stage" with results of \$13,500 raised for NPCC.

Many and varied fund raisers conducted for the Arts Centre building fund.

Many meetings with NPCC architects in final planning stages.

**1991**

Potters dismantle studio at NLC due to lack of space with NLC/NBC expansion.

Transition period for Artspace to move to new NPCC.

**1992**

North Peace Cultural Centre opens Public Art Gallery, 413 seat theatre, Artspace activity and meeting area, sprung wood floor and Public Library opens.

Arts Council hands over all equipment, activities, and Artspace Classes to the NPCC management as planned.

Arts Council without an office but supports NPCC as it establishes a support base.

Arts Council organizes all Bingos for NPCC.

Children's Festival in June organized by Arts Council.

Street Banner (100 artworks) project with Airshow and 1992 Alaska Highway themes.

**1993**

Arts Council relinquishes to NPCC their share of ownership of the Grand Piano.

Planning to reactivate participation by member groups.

CAC funds purchase of mid-stage curtains for NPCC stage.

Founded the Lindsay Dumaine Scholarship Fund with donation of Ray/Liz Dumaine.

**1994**

Provincial conference of Assembly of BC Arts Councils held in Fort St. John Sept 20-Oct 2.

Cable 10 arts video project initiated for once a week airing.

## **MILESTONES IN HISTORY**

### **COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL OF FORT ST. JOHN**

CAC participation in Bi-Centennial Anniversary of FSJ.

Needs assessment of Arts conducted upon request of City Hall with the aim to pursue office and storage space for the Arts Council.

First Annual Kids Fun Art Exhibit at the Peace Arts Gallery in the NPCC.

### **1995**

Provincial conference of BC Museums Association held in Fort St. John.

Policy dev. and doc. starts with CAC membership and Finance policies.

Participation in SD #60 discussions on Impact of New Grad Requirements.

CAC first attempt to encourage City of FSJ to apply to host the BC Festival of the Arts.

Potters forced to vacate NLC due to lack of space for UNBC.

Organized the Grand Piano at Duncan Cran to go to the NPCC.

Actively pursued office, storage, and studio space in the Rotary Health Unit but Chamber of Commerce took over the building.

Partly Arts Series leave all concert sponsoring to NPCC after 10 years of success.

### **1996**

CAC conducts Doings at the Derrick for one year through a Summer Challenge Grt.

### **1997**

Art Committee established at the Fort St. John Hospital.

### **1998**

CAC takes part in the Centennial Park Planning committee.

Two goals identified at the AGM are 1. find dedicated studio space for arts groups and 2. continue to pursue the hosting of the BC Festival of the Arts.

Actively pursued the old pool as a potential arts space.

### **1999**

Another approach to the City Council to bid for the BC Festival of the Arts.

### **2000**

## **2000's**

CAC and the City of FSJ submit bid to host the BC Festival of the Arts.

Assisted in developing Communities in Bloom.

CAC established fund for future studio space.

Flower Pots program established by the request of the City of Fort St. John.

### **2001**

BC Festival of the Arts welcomes 1600 delegates to Fort St. John May 29-June 3.

Street Banners (60 handpainted artworks) "Children Celebrating Their Community".

CAC works with City Winter Lights Celebration as a part of the Com. in Bloom.

CAC organizes first snow sculpting workshop with Grade 12 students at NPSS and an ice sculpture at the arena by Peter Vogelaar.

Economic Impact Study completed on BC Fest of Arts, Airshow and Gymstrata revealing that \$1.639 million was brought to FSJ with these 3 events.

**MILESTONES IN HISTORY**  
**COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL OF FORT ST. JOHN**

**2002**

CAC works with City on Northern Lights Festival for Dec.-sponsor Air Canada.

Snow sculpting held for Valentine's Day in Feb.

July 1 Art in the Park organized by CAC upon request from City of FSJ.

Work with Econ Dev. Com and NP Film Committee to have Film contacts in NP.

**2003**

Arts Council hires first part time paid Executive Director Laurie Petrucci.

Mural program planned but grant applications rejected.

Snow sculpting competition took place in December (Ice in Jan 2004).

CAC joins the Olympic Committee and the Olympic Legacy Committees.

CAC initiates Vision of the Arts aiming for a Community Arts Policy.

**2004**

Arts Council sets up first webpage with help of Oliver Hachmeister.

Ice Sculpting takes place in Jan. –sponsors Hawk Air/ Rhyason Contracting.

CAC takes Festival of Trees (previously of NPCC) as Elves Christmas Festival.

Cultural Capitals Grant of \$250,000 rejected due to lack of Community Arts Policy.

Received Arts POD Grant to hire a consultant for a cultural assessment of the com.

First annual presentation of "The Vagina Monologues" by the FSJ Women's Centre.

City support to arts groups moves p from \$8,500 to \$15,000.

The City Water Tower painted at the request of City Hall.

**2005**

International High On Ice Competition established by the City of Fort St. John.

CAC organizes Arts Exploration Summer Camp.

Arts Umbrella of Vancouver chooses FSJ for 2 week Children's Art outreach wkshp/exh.

CAC produced Communities in Bloom magazine for the CIB program.

Rear rooms of the Sew It Yourself Shop becomes available to the CAC for temporary work space and office. City renovates part of building to make office space secure.

Taylor supports CAC with one-time grant of \$5000.

City approved \$20,000 to match Legacy Now funds for Cultural Policy development.

Cultural Scan completed by Arts Council.

"Art that Moves You" program initiated of local art panels on the City buses.

**2006**

High On Ice warm weather forced professional carving to move into the Curling Rink.

Youth-Career Focus (Skills Dev. Can. Grant)- CAC hires student (Aleisha Hendry).

Cultural Plan developed with Bob Yate is first steps to Community Cultural Policy.

CAC organizes visual arts committee for beginning artists who wish space to create.

Can-West New Play Festival hosted in FSJ by Stage North and Theatre BC Sept 14-16.

Entire Sew It Yourself Shop building becomes available to the Arts Council. Duke Energy volunteers help paint and clean up and Artspost I is established.

**MILESTONES IN HISTORY**  
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## **2007**

Russian ice carvers of High On Ice stay to sculpt ice for the Northern Winter Games.  
Snow Sculpting Competition held in conjunction with Northern Winter Games.  
Bookmarks initiated as part of the Art That Moves You Program for Arts Week.  
Exec Dir Laurie Petrucci leaves and Chandra Wong hired part time.  
Part time Aleisha Hendry let go due to financial restraints and no grant funds..  
Art of Reduction Exhibit of Art made of Recycled products.  
Quilters exhibit "Threads of Diversity" at Peace Arts Gallery.  
"Flavours of the World" introduced by Ecole Central PAC.  
Artspost II established on 94 Avenue for CAC office, arts studios.  
City Com. Development Officer to further the process of a Cultural Policy Dev.

## **2008**

CAC conducts Arts Day for Spirit of BC Olympic Committee.  
CAC organizes Crushed Grapes Wine Festival for Feb 15.  
Local ice harvesting proves successful for High on Ice and surrounding communities.  
Exec Dir. Chandra Wong leaves position and Tara O'Donnell is hired full time Mar 1.  
Stage North wins Provincial award for Best Prod in Com Theatre (The Monument.)  
Annual Regional Juried Art Show initiated Children's Journal Program by Barb Daley.  
CAC receives last of Direct Access funding of \$6,000.  
Potter's Guild conducts first annual Chilli Bowl Fundraiser during Summer Solstice.  
City hires Arts Consultant Cindy Haapenen (Vancouver) for Cultural Planning Study.  
CAC Participates in the City's Community Awards and Neighbourhood Charette.  
The First Annual Best Homemade Pies at the Fall Fair is a success

## **2009**

Arts Council has 25 groups; Pop. 18,000, City grants \$15,000 to CAC groups.  
Fort St. John North Peace Museum opens new expansion  
The Cultural Policy report to the City by Cindy Haapenen in Feb. stalls process.  
Last Elves Christmas Festival events held after 6 years of success.

## **2010**

CAC participated in the Tourism Foundation Planning  
Initiated the Community Gardens program "Art in Bloom"  
Numerous planning sessions revealed a financial shortfall and potential solutions.  
Art That Moves You panels were installed at the Enerplex Walking Track.  
Arts Council suspends full time Exec. Dir. position in Oct due to lack of funds.

## **COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL OF FORT ST. JOHN**

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