

Published: Mar 10, 2010 02:00 AM  
Modified: Mar 08, 2010 08:54 PM

Arts Commission celebrates a birthday

How do you make a pop-up book?

Pamela Pease, pop-up book author and publisher, gets this question often.

"I thought it would be fun to do a series to teach children and adults how it is done," Pease said.

To fund this endeavor, Pease applied to the Orange County Arts Commission.

"I thought what I wanted to do fit right in with their mission -- to bring art experiences to the community," said Pease, who was awarded a grant by the commission. The eight-part series in 2006 was a smash hit.

Pease lauds the commission's important role as a source for art events happening in Orange County and as a vital advocate for artists.

"I think they are a way of connecting people who have an interest in art," Pease said.

The Orange County Arts Commission was born 25 years ago, on Feb. 4, 1985. The group will spend this year celebrating its 25th birthday.

Moses Carey Jr., now the chairman of the North Carolina Employment Security Commission, was a member of the Orange County Board of Commissioners when it created the Arts Commission. At the time there were groups in Orange County doing things related to the arts, but Carey said there was a need for something to take center stage.

"We needed something to mobilize the community to support the arts, encourage artists, and to acquaint the county on how important the arts are in the development of people, young people especially," Carey

#### Story Tools

-  [Printer Friendly](#)
-  [Email to a Friend](#)
-  [Enlarge Font](#)
-  [Decrease Font](#)
-  [del.icio.us](#)
-  [Digg it](#)

#### More Features

- [Peace, love and Zydeco](#)
- [Arts Commission celebrates a birthday](#)
- [Cedar Ridge stages 'Wedding Singer'](#)
- [Arts Notes](#)
- [Kehillah offers new 'song-ful' service](#)

#### Advertisements

#### Most Popular

- [Stories](#)
- [Emailed](#)

#### Last 24 Hours

- [Crime Notes](#)
- [An end, and a beginning](#)
- [Goodwill drops Governors Village site](#)
- [The next challenge](#)
- [Looking gnarly](#)

#### Last 7 Days

- [Chapel Hill radical dies at 88](#)
- [An end, and a beginning](#)
- [Legal scholar Pollitt, 88](#)
- [Goodwill drops Governors Village site](#)
- [Hi-speed Internet hearing March 15](#)

#### Last 24 Hours

1. [The next challenge](#)
2. [Robinson, Jr.](#)
3. [Goodwill drops Governors Village site](#)
4. [Rockets soar to top](#)
5. [Bats heat up in cold weather](#)

#### Last 7 Days

1. [Elizabeth Goldschmidt Mallett](#)
2. [The next challenge](#)
3. [Going mobile](#)
4. [Legal scholar Pollitt, 88](#)
5. [Goodwill drops Governors Village site](#)

said. "We were so excited about creating the commission."

A prime directive of the commission was to be that it would be the distributing agent for grassroots arts funds in the county.

Signs of the commission's valuable presence in our community are everywhere. It had a hand in starting the Franklin Street Art Collective, which will open on April 9. It sponsored Peg Gignoux's fabric project hanging at the Central Orange Senior Center that citizens helped create, and it co-sponsored "Sit" and "Stay," two sculptures created by Mike Roig that stayed at public sites around the county until their permanent installation last year at the Animal Services Center at 1601 Eubanks Road.

Then there are the ideas and livelihoods that the commission has sprouted. Renee Piechocki and Tiffany Ludwig got their first grant from the commission and acknowledged the organization in their book, "Trappings: Stories of Women, Power, and Clothing."

In addition to the grants the commission awards in the fall and the spring, it also holds free workshops on grant writing and Artist's Salons that promote artistic professional development.

Carey said that helping artists thrive is an important function of the commission as Orange County works to help its residents compete not only on a local level but a state, national, and international level.

Martha Shannon is the Arts Commission coordinator. When she took the job in April 2002, she became the first full-time county employee hired for the position. While she is the commission's sole employee, there is a 15-member advisory commission, members of which are appointed by the county commissioners. Shannon pointed out that the Arts Commission is somewhat unusual in that it is a public agency, part of county government.

"About 75 percent of the councils in the United States are private non-profits," Shannon said.

The commission's budget, which is \$92,425 for the 2009-2010 fiscal year, comes entirely from taxpayer money. Shannon said that being a public agency means the commission can generally give out more money and grants for art programs in the community than a private one could.

"Public art agencies also are more stable and generally sponsor more public arts programs," Shannon said.

Shannon, whose professional background is in arts management and whose personal background includes strong ties to performance art, said that one of the newer goals of the commission came from a national conference held in Philadelphia that she attended.

"I got this idea for a public art project from the New Mexico Arts, a state agency," she said. "We called it T.I.M.E. or Temporary Installations Made for the Elements. We want to try and grow local public artists."

The first T.I.M.E. project was awarded to Cindy Newport, who will paint the Cedar Grove Park tower this spring. The commission is co-sponsoring the project with the Orange County Recreation and Parks Department.

#### **Make Less Than \$45,000/Year?**

You May Qualify for a Grant to Go Back to School.  
www.SeeCollegeDegrees.com/Grants

#### **Refinance Now at 3.4% APR**

\$160,000 mortgage under \$712/mo. Free. No Obligation. Get 4 quotes now.  
MortgageRefinance.LendGo.com

#### **Dont Buy Health Insurance**

Until You Compare Free Quotes Online - Plans From \$30 / Month  
Affordable-Health-Insurance.org

Shannon said the commission works hard to collaborate with all types of organizations to promote art. As Mary B. Regan, executive director of the North Carolina Arts Council said, "The Commission has built relationships and partnerships across the Piedmont and is well known for its financial support of arts organizations."

She also pointed out that the commission does a great job of "educating the community on how the creative energy of the arts is a key ingredient in what makes Orange County a desirable place to live."

Happy Birthday, Orange County Arts Commission. May you live forever.

Deborah R. Meyer can be contacted at 942-3252 or at [eloise@nando.com](mailto:eloise@nando.com).

© Copyright 2010, The News & Observer Publishing Company  
A subsidiary of [The McClatchy Company](#) 