

# a fine **FACTA**



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# MADD About Town

## *Editorial*

### *Hands On, Minds Turned On, Hearts Plugged In*

Bonnie Cohoe



As I reviewed the articles for this issue of *A Fine Facta*, I was struck by the passion of the teachers and the engagement of hands and minds of the students in these various projects and activities. They raised my hopes that the delays in getting this issue ready for publication will be

compensated for by the quality and diversity of the articles. They also point to an important cycle in arts education.

We begin with looking ahead to this fall's Fine Arts Council conference on "Fear No Art" and the review of the drama part of last year's conference. Presenting students with opportunities to engage in the arts begins with ideas, passion and strategies. Annual conferences allow educators to explore new ideas, refresh their passions, make connections and have fun. This year's

conference will be combined with the Canadian Society for Education through Art Conference, October 25–27, 2012, in Edmonton.

The remaining articles report on projects and activities in music and visual art connecting history, communities and a surprising variety of media. As you peruse these articles, I hope you will be inspired to report on arts education where you are or suggest contacts for possible articles.

Next year is the Fine Arts Council's 50th anniversary. As we move toward this marker of the ongoing contributions of hundreds of arts educators over the years and the tremendous support of ATA staff, we are thankful for their many gifts to arts education. We celebrate the increasing membership of this council. Our confidence in the future of the arts swells as we observe the growing support in communities for the arts as evidenced by the growing diversity of galleries, theatres and other public offerings in all communities from rural villages to large cities.

As summer approaches, take time to practise the three Rs: relax, refresh and revere the wonder and beauty of the world through the arts.

# *Conference 2012*

## *"Fear No Art"*

Karly Lagore

This year, the Fine Arts Council (FAC) is proud to partner with the Canadian Society for Education through Art (CSEA) to offer its 49th annual conference, in Edmonton. The "Fear No Art" conference will be held October 25-27, 2012, with an opening reception hosted by the CSEA at the Art Gallery of Alberta. The conference will also feature group accommodations, FAC reception and banquet events at the Delta Edmonton-Centre, and sessions and speakers presenting at Victoria School of the Arts. We hope you will be able to join us in this year's event of creative

professional learning as together we make the choice to "Fear No Art."

David R Modler and Eric M Scott, who have been collectively known as the Journal Fodder Junkies (JFJ) since 2005, are familiar with fearless expression. In their keynote address, they'll talk about their combined 35 years of experience in education during which they have extensively used visual journals as a tool for learning in a variety of curricula, personal growth and creative development. Active as speakers and educators in the conference and workshop circuit, the JFJ also maintain



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an online presence through their website and blog ([www.journalfodderjunkies.com](http://www.journalfodderjunkies.com) and [www.journalfodderjunkies.blogspot.ca/](http://www.journalfodderjunkies.blogspot.ca/)), where they provide insights into their processes and pose creative journaling and art challenges for others.

We were delighted and overwhelmed by submissions from interested presenters. Keep your eyes out for several sessions focusing on contemporary visual journal movements in local areas. We are excited to announce that we will be offering a full conference program of seven session blocks and a keynote address. Each session block offers delegates the choice of three visual arts presentations, two drama presentations, one for each of music and dance. As well, this year we're introducing a stream of presentations we have grouped

under the theme of "integration." These FAC choices combined with the CSEA speakers will give conference delegates between 11 and 13 presentations to choose from for each session block they attend. Please note that some workshops have limited participant capacities, and interested members are encouraged to book their conference registration as early as possible because session attendance will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Early-bird registration rates are available for full conference registration from early June until July 8. Single-day registration and student rates are also available. Please see the FAC or CSEA websites to download the session description booklet and registration form.



Artwork from the keynote speakers. Images from the official website of Journal Fodder Junkies (JFJ) David R Modler and Eric M Scott, [www.journalfodderjunkies.com](http://www.journalfodderjunkies.com).

# Arts-ful Features

## *Conference 2011 Drama Report*

Natasha Joachim

The quality of professional development offered by the Fine Arts Council (FAC) astounds me each year. Where else but at FAC's annual conference can you have high-calibre, award-winning presenters, a wide range of workshops that inspire and enrich programming, new resources, new ideas, networking opportunities and an invitation to dialogue about curriculum and the future of fine arts education? It gets better every year, making the FAC

conference an annual quality professional development opportunity not to be missed! Whether you are a new teacher, generalist, specialist, veteran or fine arts enthusiast, the FAC conference provides something for everyone.

In addition to sessions on directing, musical theatre and surviving junior high drama and yoga for the performer, here are just a few of the 2011 conference highlights:



## Creating a Toolbox

**Presented by Kevin McKendrick  
(junior/senior)**

Kevin McKendrick's session showed teachers how to create a toolbox to better teach acting and directing and provided techniques to mine the play or scene for clues useful for the development of characters. The session also helped teachers break down a play into workable sections to more effectively use rehearsal time.

## Swashbuckle with Safety

**Presented by Gail Whiteford  
(junior/senior)**

A favourite of mine the year before, Gail Whiteford returned to playfully and safely take teachers through the proper technique of choreographing a swordfight.

## Stereotyping: An Acting and Improv Unit

**Presented by Andrew De Long  
(junior/senior)**

Such a powerful and inspiring session skillfully and sensitively led by Andrew De Long. The stereotyping

unit was an acting and improv unit that gave students the opportunity to explore the stereotypes that occur in their lives and break them down. Through discussion, interactive activities, photo galleries, movement and scene work, students learned how to see from another's perspective. This unit touches on many of the disciplines for the junior and senior high curricula.

*Drama teacher by day, actor by night, Natasha Joachim certainly doesn't live a dull life. Her passion for the arts led her and three of her friends to form Ellipsis Tree Collective, the only Afrocentric theatre company in western Canada. "It was created out of the need for more equal opportunity for people of colour and to expose audiences to stories they wouldn't normally hear," she says. "It's really important to reflect the cultural diversity that is Calgary, and we're really not honouring all voices by telling it from one particular perspective." One of the lessons Natasha teaches is to find value in all aspects of drama and that there are no small parts, only small actors. She uses Robin Williams and Jim Carrey as examples of actors who take small parts and breathe so much life into them that they steal the show. For Natasha, teaching drama is about working with children, teaching them about themselves and how to express love.*

*"I teach them to be proud and to own that—to explore the many facets of their personality," she says. "Drama is to do and to be; it's not about reading scripts."*

*It's these life lessons that prove to Natasha that this is exactly where she needs to be.*

*"Becoming a teacher is the best choice I ever made."*



# *Choral Fest: Okotoks Style*

Bonnie Kentch

The Foothills School Division elementary music teachers created their very own choral fest on March 15 at the Okotoks United Church. For our first choral fest, we were fortunate to have Elaine Quilichini as our adjudicator. Quilichini is the conductor and artistic director of the Calgary Girls' Choir; she has previously been the conductor of the University of Calgary Women's Choir and the Mount Royal Children's Choir. Each choir performed separately first then collaboratively for one song. Quilichini worked with each choir individually then with the following six school choirs:

1. Big Rock School, Okotoks
2. Ecole PPE School, Okotoks
3. Ecole Joe Clark School, High River
4. Turner Valley School, Turner Valley
5. Blackie School, Blackie
6. Dr Morris Gibson School, Okotoks

Our primary goals were to have our students sing for other choirs, listen to each other, respect one other's accomplishments and share a love of singing. Quilichini worked on producing a quality choral sound and focused on breathing, posture and having the larynx in the correct place to produce the best sound.

The highlight for the kids was hearing other school choirs. They were interested in where the other choirs were from and asked if they could learn the songs they heard that day. Having Elaine Quilichini work with us and our students was definitely a highlight for us. We are pleased that she wants to come back next year for the second Foothills School Division choral fest.



# *Creating a Multimedia Musical: Mozart's Magic Fantasy*

Karen Schweighardt

I teach in a fine arts school where everyone is encouraged to participate in the arts. We artists are risk takers who encourage each other in our endeavours. This was never more evident than in the making of our recent production called *Mozart's Magic Fantasy*. With nothing but a script by Classical Kids composer Sue Hammond, we embarked on the project of adapting an opera that was written for adult performers into a production for 300 children.

Although I said we had nothing but a script, I must say that the script we had was appealing and powerful and I have enjoyed using it with children over the last 15 years. It is part of the Classical Kids series by Sue Hammond that includes *Beethoven Lives Upstairs*, *Tchaikovsky Discovers America*, *Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery* and *Mr Bach Comes to Call*. I have used this series of listening CDs over the years to introduce children to the joys of classical music. They are entertaining scripts that combine a story with excerpts of some of the most famous classics. One thing I noticed while using these CDs is how actively students engage in the stories and the music. Each time I used the listening CD called *Mozart's Magic Fantasy*, I found myself and my students getting wrapped up in the fun of Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*. I had always wanted to do this script with students but was waiting for the right year and opportunity to make it happen.

This year the stars lined up and multiple voices were telling me to go for it. First, a parent volunteer accompanist was willing to work on the challenges of accompanying music straight from Mozart's *Magic Flute* piano reduction. Second, a number of students were very talented vocally, and I knew we could pull off some of the difficult pieces written for the Queen of the Night and the Princess Pamina. Third, a new parent to the school was an amazing flautist who volunteered to accompany the flute parts. I had also gone to parent council, described the project and found volunteers to provide costumes not only for each character but for every child in the school. And finally, after hearing the story and music, the school population was excited to learn that we were putting on this play.

Even though I obtained a script and permission to perform from the *Classical Kids Teaching Edition*, I did not have a musical score that was written for kids. What Mozart wrote for adults to perform in opera was never intended for children to sing. This is what I personally found most challenging. Before I even taught the music, I had to adapt it to fit children's voices. I knew I would be able to cast the roles, but I also had to create musical numbers for the classes to perform. Adapting the music to fit the children and to fit into the CD script was much like putting together a difficult puzzle. I spent many hours listening to the CD and corresponding the

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listening to the music in the score. After that, I had to figure out which ones the children could easily sing and which would have to be transposed. I knew that *The Magic Flute* is a well-known and loved opera and found opera karaoke backtracks for some of the well-known arias. We used karaoke for the Queen of the Night's famous aria, "Der Hölle Rache" and Pamina's "Ach Ich Fuhl's." Papageno's arias "The Best Birdcatcher" and "A Girlfriend" were also found on karaoke. We digitally transposed the Queen's arias down a fourth, and two singers shared the role and amazed the audience with their vocal agility. The high B-flat in Pamina's aria was sung beautifully in the original key by another equally talented student. Many of the pieces that were written for the soprano and tenor of Princess Pamina and Prince Tamino had to be transposed because they were too high for our singers. These 11-year-old performers showed so much heart in learning the roles and arias. Many of the other pieces were done in original key straight from the piano score. Initially I thought the Papageno/Papagena duet was too hard for the kids to perform, but they insisted on learning it. We went for it, and it was truly wonderful in the end.

Another complication was the fact that there were far fewer roles than students. The opera has eight main characters: a young girl named Sarah, her friend the dragon, Prince Tamino, Princess Pamina, the Queen of the Night, Papagena, Sorastro and Papagena. Twenty-eight students tried out for a main role. I wanted to give everyone a chance to say a line or sing a solo. I divided the roles so that different students would play the same role. Because Sarah and the dragon are in every scene, I cast eight of each. There were two queens, two princes, two princesses, two Sorastros and three Papagenos. I also added a scene at the beginning that introduced the play and included the new character of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. When first learning of the multicasting, the students were taken aback. They didn't understand how we could make this happen with so many Sarahs and dragons. The Sarahs and dragons were sad that they weren't princes and queens, but we forged ahead. As we did, the Sarahs and dragons realized they were indeed very busy.

Mozart's *Magic Flute* is a complicated story, but the Sue Hammond adaptation is much simpler and suited to a K-6 school. We started by teaching the play to the whole school. We played the CD in two to three music classes and had students journal the story in their visual



journals to help them understand the characters and the story. We also made colouring pages for each character, and the younger students coloured the characters after listening to part of the story each time. Each class painted a scene that was hung on bulletin boards throughout the school. Our school embraced a common theme of "fantasy" for this semester, so our bulletin boards took on the look of the Vienna Opera House. Our common listening time at 1:00 PM was filled with opera and Mozart. Coincidentally, Calgary Opera's emerging artists came and presented *The Magic Flute* to our school on a Friday afternoon in March three weeks before our production. Our students already knew the story and some of the music, and were absolutely thrilled to see and hear the excellent performances by professional singers. We started to hear kids of all ages trying the high notes of the queen in the hallways.

With the help of another teacher, we chose other Mozart pieces to supplement the existing opera. Because most of the pieces in Sue Hammond's *Magic Fantasy* are written for solo voice, we knew we would have to adapt some of them for classes and add other Mozart pieces to give each class a substantial role. I believe that if a class is going to be given a performance piece, it should be a substantial one. It should challenge

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the class and entertain the audience. All the musical numbers were therefore taken from *The Magic Flute* or other Mozart melodies. We took the supplemental pieces and created new words to fit the story, which I found to be the most creative and fun part. Here is how the class pieces were divided.

Kindergarten students, dressed as stars, sang “A Little Mozart” and were part of the scene that introduced the Queen of the Night.

Grade 1s were dressed as dragons and sang a song to the famous tune “Wiegenlied,” changed to “Dragon Song” and explained that they were afraid of the Queen of the Night. Their song had a partner melody that was sung by the Grade 6 dragons and Sarahs, who invited the Grade 1s to come along as they discovered magic along the way.

Grade 2s were dressed as birds and were invited by Papageno to join him for “The Best Bird Catcher.”

Grade 3s were dressed as soldiers and princesses. They performed as part of Papagena’s magic bells in a piece called “What Rings Out.”

Grade 4s participated in a residency with Sun Ergos, an Alberta-based residency and performing duo. In their workshops, they became animals that were enchanted by Prince Tamino’s magic flute in the song, “O Listen.”

Grade 5s were dressed as flowers and trees in the set. We adapted the words to *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* to make it seem as though the flowers and trees were arguing about who was lovelier. The Grade 5s also played Orff instruments whenever Papageno’s magic bells were to play.

And finally, the Grade 6s opened the show with a piece about Mozart’s life called “Mozart Mania.” They played all the main characters. They worked on props, sets, sound and technical details. Collaboratively we worked out all the specifics and movements on stage

and between scenes. They were amazing, as I knew they would be.

I call this a multimedia production because of our use of sound backtracks and digital sets. A talented parent made a backtrack that included the necessary sound effects in our scenes, such as dragon’s breath, orchestra tuning, bird sounds, thunder and lightning, fire and waterfalls. We made a playlist that included the trumpet calls, all the karaoke backtracks and sound effects. I took a note from all the visiting residencies that use a computer with their sound system, and we made our own backtrack ourselves. It made for a much more slick and cohesive production. We also had digital sets. Students from Grades 4–6 were each given a scene to paint. These paintings were then photographed and projected onto the screen behind the stage. When I first saw them, they took my breath away. When I saw them on stage behind the actors, they looked amazing. In one group piece, a beautiful impressionistic painting of a pathway in the forest was projected on the screen at the back, Grade 5 flowers and trees were posing on risers, and Papageno was in the middle calling on 50 Grade 2 birds. This scene was spectacular.

Our school district asked us this question, “What does it look like when the best happens?” I look back on this process, and know that I did my best. When I share my passions, people come along for the ride even though they aren’t sure what they are getting into. They put their heart and soul into the production as well, because they love our kids and want them to be their best. We encourage each other. Our kids did their best, because they were excited by the story and the learning. When you challenge yourself and your students, real learning occurs. Personally I knew full well how challenging this was going to be and went for it anyway. Sometimes our risks don’t achieve the results we want. But when they do, what a feeling!

# *Irma Performance Band and Sheldon Frissell*

John Ngo

Music and education go back a long time in Irma. In fact, Irma School was the first high school in rural Alberta to put on a concert, on April 3, 1914. In the early 1960s, the first school band was formed and is now run by Sheldon Frissell, the third music educator to run the program.

Although teaching is Frissell's current role, it wasn't his chosen career. His original path was to be a fish and wildlife officer. He eventually turned to teaching, which brought him back to Wainwright, and he hasn't looked back since.

Today, the Irma School band is composed of Grades 6-12 students, and 101 students are enrolled in the program. "Most of our music is contemporary concert band tunes varying from big band to pop," says Frissell.

He says that a lot of rewards come with being a music teacher, among them seeing the world through the eyes of youth. Also, taking on different roles to help his students grow is a big part of his job. "Teachers must wear a variety of hats to complete the task of helping parents, coaches and a community to establish a well-rounded graduate," says Frissell. "I enjoy the challenges of encouragement."



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The thing he enjoys the most, though, is showing students the valuable role they play in creating a good sound within a team. “I love sound and playing with my love of sound, and always refining it,” says Frissell. “I love dissonance, as it’s the only thing that helps us appreciate the consonance of sound.”

Working with students of all ages has also been a blessing for Frissell. Establishing a special relationship with students at the elementary level allows him to watch them grow as they spend more time together. “The unique challenges of junior high are fun to manoeuvre because we all feel awkward at times,” Frissell says. “High school allows me to share my passion for music and for the outdoors as the students begin to explore their passions.”

Music has always been a part of Frissell’s life, and he knows that there are great benefits for implementing it in a child’s life at a young age. “Fine arts promotes self-expression that can be rewarding if nurtured,” he says. “It allows students to become unique individuals with a sense of value among their peers.”

The Irma School band will begin to practise every day after the spring concert and look forward to the preparation for three upcoming parades.

*Sheldon Frissell played in various bands. He graduated from the University of Alberta in 1984 and began teaching at Irma School the same year.*



# *Ann Howell, Fine Arts Enthusiast and Innovative Leader*

John Ngo

It might not be conventional to think of hard-core hip hop artists performing with the School of Alberta Ballet, but that was Ann Howell's idea in 2006. Uniting the two uniquely different groups for what she calls an intriguing performance was just one of Howell's many career highlights.

As dean of fine arts of Bishop McNally High School, in Calgary, as well as a long-serving member on the Calgary Catholic School Board, Howell has been involved in many original dance collaborations, including an original dance featuring herself and a female hockey player. "I respect my dance students so much for taking risks and facing challenges," Howell says. "Though intent on hip hop, they gave the discipline of ballet a try and were extremely successful."

Howell has witnessed many student successes throughout the years. "From artists to gallery owners, leading North American graphic designers, photographers, art teachers, art event organizers, party planners, illustrators and more, my students have made the grade artistically," Howell says.

As an art teacher, Howell says she has the pleasure of introducing students to art forms, techniques and artists they have never heard of before. "Sometimes I know that I have made a positive difference in the lives of students who may be going through traumatic



*Ann Howell*

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situations,” she says. “Sometimes teachers are able to rescue their students. And I love collaborations between all kinds of disciplines.

While students may come both bold and shy, Howell has found satisfaction in working with all types of learners. “I enjoy the energy and openness of the young, especially those who are passionate and driven to learn as much as they can, or the ones who are timid upon attempting something they have feared, but finally give it a go and afterwards there is no stopping them,” she says.

There’s no question that the arts play an important role in a young person’s life, says Howell. “They provide

a place of refuge, a place of imagination, a source of inspiration and a stimulus to attempt, to try, to experiment and to express one’s uniqueness to the world,” Howell says.

*Ann Howell is blessed with a treasured husband and family, who, though the kids are grown, still take marvellous holidays together, usually to arts-focused destinations. Howell has degrees in art history, art and education and continues her studies in art at classical art academies throughout the world. Art permeates every aspect of her life and she has shared this passion with her students, many of whom have become artistic beacons in their communities.*



# *Monica To: Fine Arts Promoter and Connector in Vermilion and Beyond*

John Ngo

Monica To can give students interested in fine arts a unique piece of advice: Get MADD. The annual showcase of music, art, dance and drama (MADD ) for Buffalo Trail Public Schools was initiated in 2004 as a celebration of students' artistic talents. To is one of the core Get Madd planners. "The event brings to light students' often forgotten abilities and encourages lifelong learning," To says. "I get to work with innovative, energetic people within the same school division to plan the annual event, often sharing laughs and panic attacks all at the same time." From planning to setting up to taking down, the big event involves coordinating many people, schools and departments. One lesson she has taken away from her involvement with the program is the importance of teamwork. "Many hands make light work," To stresses. "So many people at J R Robson School and the school division are cooperative, helpful and enthusiastic about promoting and showing off students' talents and skills."

After graduating from the University of Alberta, To took a teaching position in Vermilion. Her intention was to teach for a year then return to Edmonton, her native city. But since her move to Vermilion in 2004, she's been welcomed and supported by staff, students and the community.



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“Their direction, guidance and friendship have powerfully influenced my teaching techniques and persona,” she says.

In To’s role as an art teacher, it’s all about the children. “Because I love kids and art, this is perfect for me,” she says. “I love how visually evident it is when a student reaches an ‘I get it!’ moment. I love spending my workday with young students and love how they teach me as much as I teach them.”

To connects with her students through honesty and transparency, empowering them to be themselves and not someone they’re not. “I can positively influence young minds and put them in a better emotional place than I was when I was their age,” To says. “By being myself and being completely honest with them, I encourage independent thinking and being true to oneself.”

Her impact as an art teacher has been noticed by her peers, particularly as of late. To was a semifinalist for the 2012 Excellence in Teaching Award and is

currently piloting a project implementing Art 10 in three remote high schools through video conferencing and Smart technology.

While it may seem like a lot to take on, it’s easier for someone who has a passion for it.

“It motivates me to get up each morning knowing that my job doesn’t feel like a job and that I have the potential to make a difference in a young person’s life,” To says.

*Monica To was born and raised in the Edmonton area with her two sisters and parents. Her family background is Chinese. She developed an interest for such artistic endeavours as cartooning and sketching, which eventually led her to illustrate two children’s books, explore industrial design, take on portrait commissions and explore paint media. She was a babysitting maniac in junior and senior high school and realized at that time that children are her favourite kind of people. It made sense to dive into the teaching profession with an art spin.*

# *What's Your Message?*

Pam Wilman

This semester, students in Art 10, 20 and 30 at École Secondaire Ste Marguerite d'Youville exhibited their work at a show called *What's Your Message?* at Latitude 53 Community Gallery, Art Gallery of Alberta and the Art Gallery of St Albert. For the show, students made messenger bags and photographed

them with the iPad app, WordFoto, to produce posters about each artist's message. My colleague Laurie Petersen, who is a fashion teacher, and I collaborated to sew the messenger bags and exhibited them in the shows. Our work was featured during the Creativity Symposium at the Art Gallery of Alberta, and have



*Teachers Pam Wilman and Laurie Petersen at their show *What's Your Message?* at the Art Gallery of St Albert, May 2012.]*

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recently sent the work to Finland to collaborate with their schools. The purpose of the project was to collaborate within our school, then the art community then the global community. The next step is to teach other students to find a reclaimed, recycled bag, create a message on the bag, then share with WordFoto in an online gallery.

*Pam Wilman's bachelor of fine arts degree includes studies at the University of Alberta and Yale University. Wilman has exhibited in 80 group exhibitions and 16 solo shows in Canada and the United States. Her work can be found in public and corporate collections and the Art Gallery of Alberta, Art Rental and Sales ([www.pamwilmanart.com](http://www.pamwilmanart.com)). She teaches Grades 7–12 art.*



# *ESSMY Mural Commemorates Work of the Grey Nuns*

Susan Jones

*The following article about student art projects in St Albert originally appeared in the December 14, 2011, edition of the St Albert Gazette. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of the Gazette. Minor changes have been made to conform to ATA style.*

Lewis Lavoie led the count-down Monday morning as students, school board representatives, teachers and representatives of the Grey Nuns unveiled a mural at Ecole Secondaire Sainte Marguerite d'Youville (ESSMY).

"We haven't seen it yet. We had a plan and we all painted the tiles, but we haven't seen the finished work yet," said Grade 12 student Lauren Henderson.

"Ten! Nine! Eight ..." everyone chanted.

The paper was ripped away to reveal the face of Sainte Marguerite d'Youville cupped by two hands, which represent the spirit of the Grey Nuns in St Albert. To complete the theme, 150 student-painted tiles depict the Sisters' work.



*Lewis Lavoie (next to painting) and art teacher Pam Wilman worked together with 120 ESSMY students to complete a mural honouring the school's patron saint, Marguerite d'Youville. The project commemorated St Albert's 150th anniversary and the work the Grey Nuns did in the community.*

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The project took more than a year of planning and research. The idea began with art teacher Pam Wilman's desire to have her students redesign and paint an existing wall mural as part of the City of St Albert's 150th anniversary celebrations. "We had a relief mural in the hallway that showed hands holding the Earth and from the Earth there was a rainbow. So we reclaimed that existing mural," Wilman said.

The school's namesake, Sainte Marguerite d'Youville was to be the focus of the new mural, which allowed the students to learn the history of the woman who founded the Sisters of Charity Grey Nuns.

"Leadership for the research was done by David Ibsen, who is with the Faith in Action Project, and by the St Albert Historical Society," Wilman said.

The Grey Nuns, the Knights of Columbus and the Canadian Parents for French Education provided funding.

Lavoie, who is known for his mural paintings, was asked to design the project and to work with the students to create the art piece. "I drew inspiration from Marguerite d'Youville. Her story can't be told enough. And the Grey Nuns did so much for St Albert. This city was built on the backs of the Grey Nuns," Lavoie said. Lavoie's portrait of the saint is true to the known portraits of the woman. Because he featured her face in the centre of the work, it's as if she is the sun and everything radiates from that. Her skin hue is warm and bright and truly beatific.

In all, 120 students painted 150 tiles for the mural. "The senior high students did the 12 tiles that told the

story of Marguerite d'Youville's life. The junior high students painted the tiles that tell the story of the Grey Nuns," said Grade 12 student Lauren Henderson.

Henderson's painted tile depicts a portrait of d'Youville caring for a patient. "I wanted to show that she really cared about people," said Henderson.

Grade 11 student Rebecca Lazarenko chose to show d'Youville receiving communion. "Even though I showed her in darkness, I also wanted there to be a glow about her," Lazarenko said.

Grade 10 student Kayla Zimmerman also chose to show light within the darkness.

"I painted the night Marguerite d'Youville died. I learned to do the shadowing on the house," Lazarenko said.

Several members of the Grey Nuns were on hand to watch the unveiling, and they were quick to point out that the work shows not just hard work and research, but also love.

"So much work went into it. So many hands contributed to such a long project that shows reflection, thought and collaboration," said Sister Madeleine Therrien, who presently volunteers at Youville Home. Therrien, who has been a Grey Nun for 62 years, was pleased to see the tribute to her own society. "This is the story of a great woman who left a great legacy. But it's like so much that we have done. You can't set out alone to accomplish things. You must work as a group. This work is like all the work the Grey Nuns have done and all that we do," she said.

# Students Set to Unveil Mural

Cory Hare

The following article about student art projects in St Albert originally appeared in the May 1, 2010, edition of the St Albert Gazette. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of the Gazette. Minor changes have been made to conform to ATA style.

A group of art students at a St Albert school are eagerly awaiting the unveiling of a new mural they've been working on for weeks. Students at École Secondaire Sainte Marguerite d'Youville were busy putting the finishing touches on their pieces Thursday. The students completed 10 scenes on poster-sized panels, each depicting a St Albert landmark. The work is a special



Taylor Bengert, a Grade 10 student, works on her piece relating to the St Albert Children's Festival.

project that will be displayed at Servus Credit Union Place during the Alberta 55-Plus Winter Games next February.

"It's not that often we get to do something this big so it's pretty exciting," said student project leader Thomas Fenton, 14.

The art will be on display at Profiles Art Gallery starting May 6 then move over to Servus Place in June. Images include the clock tower, St Albert Centre, Seven Hills and the Father Lacombe Chapel.

"We just really want to show what a unique place St Albert is," Fenton said.

"I liked that the places we painted are places that we know," said Grade 10 student Alix Malloy, who painted the Children's Festival with classmate Taylor Bengert.

The project was very challenging because the students had to paint on clear acrylic panels in such a way that their completed scenes would be displayed through the underside rather than the painted surface.

"It's difficult because you have to paint backward," said art teacher Pam Wilman. "When you put your first colour down, when you blend, it's opposite to what you normally would do."

"That was really challenging because it really messed with your mind," agreed artist Danielle Pertschy, 16.

She painted a scene depicting the trestle bridge over the Sturgeon River. She's excited to have her work displayed in such a public venue. "It makes me really happy that people can see what high school students can really do, not just professional artists," she said.

## Arts-ful Features

The project has also made her more interested in the games themselves. “I’m curious what it is now and I might go check it out,” she said.

With the 10 panels completed, the students will now spend the next couple of months working on another part of the mural, a large landscape that will show the 13 sports included in the games.

The mural project is an attempt by organizers to get the city’s young people involved in the games. “We

didn’t want the focus to be strictly on the over-55 age group. We wanted to show that the community can work well together,” said games chair Sandra Fenton, Thomas’s mom.

She’s getting all four St Albert high schools involved. Last fall Bellerose students helped the games with its website. Fenton is still working on ways to get involvement from students of Paul Kane and St Albert Catholic High School.



# Mural Speaks of Students' Travels

Scott Hayes

The following article about student art projects in St Albert originally appeared in the St Albert Gazette. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of the Gazette. Minor changes have been made to conform to ATA style.

There is some new art up at École Secondaire Ste Marguerite d'Youville (ESSMY) and it changes more than just the view.

I Change the World; the World Changes Me is a two-panel mural painting depicting flags and photographs of locations around the world like Costa Rica, Vatican City, Guyana, Switzerland, France and Liechtenstein where the school's students have travelled over the last decade. Some of the photographs were taken by the students themselves.



JEREMY BROADFIELD/St. Albert Gazette

École Secondaire Ste Marguerite d'Youville students and artists Jenna Musiowsky (left) and Nicole Liesner show off their mural creation I Change the World; the World Changes Me. The piece, which took two years to put together, illustrates the impact international travel has had on both students, as well as their classmates.

## Arts-ful Features

The project was the brainchild of Grade 12 students and artists Jenna Musiowsky and Nicole Liesner. In 2006 they travelled to Italy as part of an ESSMY school group. The trip was very meaningful to them personally. When asked what they thought of the experience, they both replied, “amazing” in unison. “That trip had a major impact on my life. It changed a lot of what I thought I knew about myself,” Liesner said. “Travelling is such an honour and very few people actually get the chance to experience it.”

Musiowsky explained, “We wanted the mural to have meaning to us and to the school and community. So we decided to show how travelling affects us and changes our perspectives as we are exposed to different cultures and ways of life.”

Using the theme of change, and composed in a fashion similar to a scrapbook painting, Liesner and

Musiowsky also added a page of writing that elaborates on the theme and the importance of travel to broadening one’s horizons.

Teacher Pam Wilman helped the students with the administrative aspect of getting a suitable space at ESSMY for the artwork. In the end an act of vandalism created an opportunity for a suitable spot.

“The reason we made the mural in that location is that the windows were vandalized from the outside,” Wilman explained. “To prevent further damage, two eight-foot sheets of plywood had to cover the windows. The idea for the mural in that location was a solution to cover up the plywood boards.”

As for future travel plans, Liesner said that she is already scheduled to go to Paris in a few weeks. “There’s so much culture in the world and so many different groups of people to meet and learn from.”

# *St John Fine Arts School: 25 Years and Moving On with Cheryl McInnes*

John Ngo



Almost a full century has passed since St John School began instructing students in 1915, and this year, the storied Calgary school is celebrating 25 years since becoming its district's first fine arts program for students in Grades 4–6.

Principal Cheryl McInnes has received tremendous feedback from parents who have seen first-hand the positive effect the school has had on students. “Over the years, families have commented on how the fine arts program has truly benefitted their child and how

much they appreciate a school where students' passions are a part of everyday learning,” McInnes says. The school offers an integrated arts program for students who have an interest in the subject.

And the effect hasn't been just on students—the school is an important part of the neighbourhood as well. “The students have presented their artwork at local stores and restaurants, carolled on street corners and hosted Christmas bazaars where local artists showcased their work,” McInnes says. “We've also celebrated mass at nearby seniors' residences and used the local church for various events and activities.”

To celebrate their 25th anniversary as a fine arts school, an annual production and art show was held at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. Students presented Disney's *Aladdin Jr.* Every student was involved in acting, singing, dancing or playing instruments. Art was on display in the main lobby, and a special logo was designed by the school's art teacher.

And while the memories have been ones to cherish, exciting times are ahead as well. The fine arts program along with many of the current students will be moving to St Dominic School, which is located more centrally in the communities in which the students live. “The decision was made by all stakeholders over a two-year period of discussion,” McInnes says. “It makes sense to

reduce travel time and relocate the program to a much larger and newer facility.”

Another benefit of the move, she says, is the ability to offer the program to K-6 students, which will expand the school population. McInnes has high hopes for the relocation. “We’re looking forward to offering this program to more students of different age groups,” she says. “We’re always looking for new ways to integrate the arts to bring the best of what we’ve done at St John Fine Arts to the teachers and students at St Dominic Fine Arts School.”

*Cheryl McInnes is the principal of St John Fine Arts School and will be moving to St Dominic Fine Arts School to continue this programming in the northwest communities of Calgary. This is her first year as a school principal and fifth year in school-based administration. Prior to this she developed and implemented the Calgary Catholic School District’s character education program, Catholic Community of Caring, which continues to be implemented in all 104 schools across the district. McInnes has a busy family life; two young children, ages three and eight, keep her young at heart and in tune with her creative side.*



# *Réseau d'éducation artistique—Arts Education Network*

Katherine Deren

Arts educators have long recognized the need to connect with other like-minded people. While various organizations exist in Alberta to provide support for dance, drama, music and visual arts teachers, educators who teach these arts disciplines in French have additional challenges that increase their need to network and share. Connections to colleagues in these established organizations may not be able to help French-speaking educators find answers to questions they often ask:

- “Where will I find resources in French that will engage the students in my K-12 school?”
- “Which French-speaking artists could I collaborate with or refer to as role models for budding artists?”
- “I found a great idea at an arts conference—when will I find time to either translate materials to French or find alternative repertoire that develops the same concept?”
- “I have all this arranged music and ideas from past concerts sitting in my filing cabinet—who might be able to put them to use instead of them gathering dust?”

To help French-speaking arts educators find answers to these and other questions a new arts education network has come together in Alberta: le Réseau

d'éducation artistique (RÉA). RÉA is affiliated with Le Conseil français, a specialist council of the Alberta Teachers' Association. Le Conseil français works to support professional practice of teachers in French language education programs (both francophone and French immersion), by offering professional development in French; sharing information on current research, methodology and resources; and facilitating the exchange of ideas between educators. A face-to-face organizational meeting was held in Edmonton and a virtual meeting took place on Skype to discuss how Le Conseil français can support educators who teach the arts in French. On February 8, 2012, le Réseau d'éducation artistique was born.

Le Réseau d'éducation artistique (RÉA) was formally ratified by the Le Conseil français at a general meeting in Edmonton on May 12, 2012. RÉA supports the professional practice of educators who guide arts learning in French by providing teachers with opportunities to develop their artistic competence and pedagogy, find new tools and strategies, connect with colleagues, keep informed of current research, facilitate identity construction through artistic learning and learn about the history of each arts discipline.

As with any other network, the strength of le Réseau d'éducation artistique depends on the participation of

its members. Each arts educator has at least one treasure in his or her chest that is worthy of sharing: a powerful personal story, a trusted resource, a favourite website, a back-up plan for the substitute teacher who might not feel comfortable wearing their shoes for the day and so on. Sharing our experiences and needs as arts teachers working in French, whether beginning or

experienced, will prevent a constant reinvention of the wheel in isolation from our colleagues, fuel us with new ideas and inspire new possibilities.

Visit the webpage of Le Conseil français at <http://cf.teachers.ab.ca> to find more information about le Réseau d'éducation artistique, both on the homepage and under Les régionales et réseaux.



*(L–R): Joanne Lamoureux, Sandrine Coronat, Katherine Deren, Rachel Jean and Mélanie Armand*

# *The Priority Boxes Art Project*

What would you do if you received a box in the mail labelled “Fragile: Contains Peace?” How would you use it? Would you give it to someone else? Would you sell it? Would you just throw it away?

Such a box is exactly what painter Franck de Las Mercedes has been sending since May 2006 to anyone who asks him, anywhere in the world, for free.

The Priority Boxes Art Project is a public art series that seeks to provoke thought, to make people reconsider their ability to influence change, communicate through art and make art accessible to people from all walks of life.

Each box is the canvas for a unique abstract painting and is dedicated with a fragile message. The project, which started as an initiative to promote peace, quickly evolved into an art movement with boxes containing a wide spectrum of emotions and abstract attributes such as freedom, love and justice.

By using a box format painted on the outside, sent by mail, de Las Mercedes aims to have people interact with a work of art, from the person who requests the box, to the people in various post offices that handle the boxes, all the way to the receiver. By holding and observing a box, the recipient can consider what the box suggests it contains, realize the fragility of what they are holding and in doing so become aware or activate their ability to take action and influence change. The boxes must be free to reinforce and remind us that things like peace and hope are free, and that they are a priority.

The series is funded by the artist, shop sales, commissions, contributions and “Handle with Care” T-shirt sales.

To request a Priority Box, please email your name (or name of the person to whom you would like to send the box), mailing address and how you heard about the project to [fdlmboxes@fdlmstudio.com](mailto:fdlmboxes@fdlmstudio.com). Only ONE box will be sent per requester per email. You can request only once—trying again from a different e-mail is not cool.

There is currently about a four-to-eight-week waiting period for the United States. (Boxes shipped outside USA can take over 10 months.) Boxes are sent out in the order requests are received. Everyone who requests a box will definitely get one. Your patience is appreciated.

Once you receive the box, please be sure to send pictures. (From, <http://fdlmstudio.com/PriorityBoxes.html>, April 16, 2012.)

This article was submitted to spread awareness of the Priority Boxes Art Project, an international art and peace movement created by visual artist Franck de Las Mercedes. This initiative has evolved into a movement that has been embraced by schools and art educators across America, inspiring tomorrow’s creative thinkers. The artist has now sent over 10,600 abstractly painted boxes around the globe to countries in every continent with a message of peace. Here is a link to the project’s page <http://fdlmstudio.com/PriorityBoxes.html>.

Since its beginning in 2006, the project has been funded by the artist and donations and has evolved into a movement that has been embraced by popular culture, the mainstream media, schools and art educators across America. De Las Mercedes is often invited to visit schools to meet with students and discuss the power of art and one’s personal ability to effect change.

Students across the country, even from districts that don't receive arts education due to cuts in funding, also build their own boxes and put their stamp on the internationally acclaimed project.

De Las Mercedes and his work have been featured on numerous national and international television and radio shows including *NJN News*, *WMBC-TV*, *LatiNation*, *CNN En Español*, *Noticiero Telemundo* and

*Univision's Aqui y Ahora*. He's also been featured in prestigious publications including *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Selecciones Reader's Digest*, *Art Business News*, *Hispanic Magazine*, *SoulPancake*, *Cosmopolitan Greece*, *MuseumVIEWS*, *American Style Magazine* and the *Artist's Magazine*.

For more information on the boxes, go to <http://fdlmstudio.com/PriorityBoxes.html>.





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**We are there for you!**



The Alberta Teachers' Association

[www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)

Diversity • Equity • Human Rights Diversity • Equity • Human Rights

## Specialist councils' role in promoting diversity, equity and human rights

Alberta's rapidly changing demographics are creating an exciting cultural diversity that is reflected in the province's urban and rural classrooms. The new landscape of the school provides an ideal context in which to teach students that strength lies in diversity. The challenge that teachers face is to capitalize on the energy of today's intercultural classroom mix to lay the groundwork for all students to succeed. To support teachers in their critical roles as leaders in inclusive education, in 2000 the Alberta Teachers' Association established the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee (DEHRC).

DEHRC aims to assist educators in their legal, professional and ethical responsibilities to protect all students and to maintain safe, caring and inclusive learning environments. Topics of focus for DEHRC include intercultural education, inclusive learning communities, gender equity, UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, sexual orientation and gender variance.

Here are some activities the DEHR committee undertakes:

- Studying, advising and making recommendations on policies that reflect respect for diversity, equity and human rights
- Offering annual Inclusive Learning Communities Grants (up to \$2,000) to support activities that support inclusion
- Producing *Just in Time*, an electronic newsletter that can be found at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca); *Teaching in Alberta*; *Diversity, Equity and Human Rights*.
- Providing and creating print and web-based teacher resources
- Creating a list of presenters on DEHR topics
- Supporting the Association instructor workshops on diversity

Specialist councils are uniquely situated to learn about diversity issues directly from teachers in the field who see how diversity issues play out in subject areas. Specialist council members are encouraged to share the challenges they may be facing in terms of diversity in their own classrooms and to incorporate these discussions into specialist council activities, publications and conferences.

Diversity, equity and human rights affect the work of all members. What are you doing to make a difference?

Further information about the work of the DEHR committee can be found on the Association's website at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) under *Teaching in Alberta, Diversity, Equity and Human Rights*.

Alternatively, contact Andrea Berg, executive staff officer, Professional Development, at [andrea.berg@ata.ab.ca](mailto:andrea.berg@ata.ab.ca) for more information.

# Submitting to *A Fine FACTA*

Add the goal of being published to your teacher professional growth plan and submit something to *A Fine FACTA*! Submissions may include the following:

- Practical classroom tips, lesson plans and rubrics
- Resource reviews
- Movie and book reviews
- Personal reflections on classroom experiences
- Stories and poems by teachers, students and student teachers
- Student artwork

Please include a short (three- to five-sentence) biography and your address so that a copy of the issue in which your work appears can be sent to you.

Submit signed permission forms for student work or photographs of students.

Send submissions to Bonnie Cohoe, 24 Signature Place SW, Calgary, AB T3H 3A1; e-mail [b.cohoe@calgarywaldorf.org](mailto:b.cohoe@calgarywaldorf.org).

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## *Permission to Print Photograph/Student Work*

Your child has submitted a piece of work or appears in a photograph that we would like to print in the next issue of *A Fine FACTA*. *A Fine FACTA* is a journal that goes to teachers across Alberta who are members of the Fine Arts Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

By signing below, I give permission for my child's work or photograph to be considered for publication in an upcoming issue of *A Fine FACTA*. This permission form will be forwarded to the journal editor.

Parent/guardian name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_ School location \_\_\_\_\_

### Notes to teachers:

- When submitting student work, please include the Permission to Print form with all signatures completed. Send the student work/photograph and the permission form to the editor of *A Fine FACTA*, Bonnie Cohoe, 24 Signature Place SW, Calgary, AB T3H 3A1; e-mail [b.cohoe@calgarywaldorf.org](mailto:b.cohoe@calgarywaldorf.org).
- Work may be submitted electronically to [b.cohoe@calgarywaldorf.org](mailto:b.cohoe@calgarywaldorf.org). Please ensure that the permission form is mailed to the address above.

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