

Different Approaches to Art

Written by By Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent
Friday, 07 August 2015 03:39



Part 3 of 3 of Series on Art

Art, of and by itself, is a form of many and varied disciplines. Artists are vigorously independent, combining their talents and needs rarely with artists of other talents and needs. Any approach mentioning art must be aware of these divergencies, recognizing all without disrespecting others.

Attempts to form coalitions of artists almost always bump into what another artist might deem to be their territory. These usually fail at an alarming rate simply because of these differences.

A thought had occurred initially to this writer that a series of interviews – hopefully with direct and meaningful responses – would be a fitting conclusion to this series. The more these thoughts expanded, the more conflicting they became. How would it be possible for a small town like Gallup to operate a venue containing all of the different forms of art into an attraction that would bring in thousands of visitors each day and keep them coming back for more. I even went as far as actually talking to some of those involved and had set up tentative talks with others when it was decided in my mind that the resulting confusion and clashes in focus would be self-defeating.

Not even a building the size of Disney World could possibly hold the continuing works of artists in this community, and still there would be those on the outside – unable or unwilling to join the centralized location, using their own independence as a badge of honor.

Yet some sense of control, assignment, purpose and integration is surely needed, and working with state programs, business leaders, and promotional advisors is also necessary. Should the

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city take control of these entities, forming a department to handle the different aspects, instead of relying on a mish-mash of other programs – mostly self-centered – to operate a little more efficiently? Or will life in arts continue as before in the haphazard manner we too easily accept?

I always thought Arts Crawl was a great idea, except when the weather interferes. But disputes too quickly arose between the organizers and the business community, who always seek the black and white of financial statements as proof of success.

Not that money is not important, but some leeway needs to be given – in writing, specifically – and even additional help offered to the often financially inadequate organizers that just want to provide residents and visitors with a showcase of what Gallup can offer, at least once a month.

In short, attempting to put the blame on one person, or one group is just not acceptable. If the central idea is to promote, attract, and encourage a growth in local arts, communication must be better established, by demand if there is no other way.

There is some talk about establishing an Arts Expo in Gallup that could become a rival for the Santa Fe Market, but that plan will never see the light of day without a great deal more communication mandated through a centralized controlling authority, not just an advisory board that will be ignored on any whim.

The Arts Crawl is growing in numbers; Nitasha Manning has done a great job in the organization and assignments of this monthly event. More is needed, though, much more.

If the city is content with the 'as is,' fine! If not, put up or shut up, and yes I'm talking about financial help for starters, but there is more. Encouraging landowners and businesses in the downtown area to participate in one way or the other is certainly not out of the question. Not all businesses are for the arts, I know, but being able to use their parking areas and convincing employees and visitors to use available city and county parking lots not excessive either.

Although I am not a fan of increasing government, this case could be an exception unless one of my readers has a better solution. As Mayor Jackie McKinney expressed to me recently, "If

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you don't have a solution, don't bring me the problem." Or something to that effect but you get the point, I'm sure.