Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council

2007 Annual Report

Submitted January 8th, 2008 by:
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A. About Us

The Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council (ABCC) was established in 1982 to promote the arts, to help develop cultural programs in the Acton and Boxborough communities and to award and administer Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) Grant funds. We are a volunteer committee appointed by the selectmen of each community, but functioning as a single entity. We accomplish our goals by:

- Reviewing grant applications from individuals, libraries, schools, and arts organizations and awarding MCC grant funds to projects that provide a local public benefit; the ABCC is one of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) that are funded by the Mass Cultural Council through an annual appropriation by the state legislature;
- Sponsoring annual cultural programs for the Acton and Boxborough communities using grant funds generously designated by the towns’ Selectmen – these funds have been used by the ABCC to present jazz and classical music concerts, vocal performances, opera, public art installations and more;
- Advocating for the arts through community outreach and publicity.

The ABCC’s Fiscal Year runs from September-June; calendar year 2007 encompasses the second half of FY07 (January-June) and the first half of FY08 (September-December). This Annual Report will detail our FY08 Grant Cycle in which we were able to support 22 individuals, schools, libraries and arts organizations using our MCC state funds. This report will also highlight the many exciting events and programs we produced for our communities in 2007 thanks to the continued financial support from our Boards of Selectmen. Finally, this report will illustrate our continued efforts to advocate for the arts on the state and local level.

B. ABCC Members

Voting Members:
- Rachel Lucas, Chair - Acton
- Nancy Gerhardt, Public Relations - Acton
- Pat Myers, Treasurer and Grants Coordinator - Boxborough
- Linda Biyun Zhu – Acton
- Padmaja Kuchimanchi - Acton
- Avril Allard – Boxborough
- Rixin Li, Co-Secretary – Acton (retired October, 2007)
- Elaine Sisler, Co-Secretary – Acton (retired October, 2007)
- Suman Adiseh – Acton (pending appointment as of December, 2007)
- Reshma Singh – Acton (pending appointment as of December, 2007)
- Barbara Estabrook – Acton (pending appointment as of December, 2007)

ABRHS Advisory Board Members (non-voting):
- Lauren Burdine
- Ai-Ai Ren
Rachel Lucas of Acton was appointed Chair in January, 2007. We sadly said goodbye to two members in 2007: Elaine Sisler and Rixin Li, both of Acton, retired in October 2007 after over four years of service.

**New Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Advisory Board:**
In 2007 we worked with ABRHS Student/Faculty Support Coordinator Kay Steeves to establish a student Advisory Board (a non-voting body). Board membership was offered to current sophomores who are interested in devoting time and effort to serving their community through promotion of the arts. Two students, Ai-Ai Ren and Lauren Burdine, began working with us in September. This new program has proven highly successful; our Advisory Board members have actively joined in our monthly meetings and have offered valuable services to the Council in the form of event support. We hope to establish the Advisory Board as a permanent addition to the ABCC.

**Recruitment:**
The Council faced a membership challenge in 2007 as several of our members were nearing retirement. We initiated a full-scale recruitment campaign in September including: placing articles in the local newspapers; writing letters to our past Grantees to alert them of our needs; advertising; sending e-mail alerts; passing out flyers; and recruiting through word-of-mouth. Several interested volunteers from Acton have stepped forward as a result of our efforts. No new volunteers have come forward from Boxborough as of this date. We are working closely with the Acton and Boxborough Boards of Selectman on our continued membership efforts.

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**Council members at India Day, a premiere event produced by the ABCC in 2007:**

Rachel Lucas, Nancy Gerhardt, Lauren Burdine.
Pat Myers, Suman Adiseh, Padma Kuchimanchi.
Linda Biyun Zhu, Avril Allard.
(Rachel Lucas), Reshma Singh.
Missing from photos: Ai-Ai Ren.
B. **Mass Cultural Council (State) Funding for FY08:**

The ABCC is one of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) that are funded by the Mass Cultural Council through an annual appropriation by the state legislature. Each fall, we are required to distribute this annual allocation through a grant process. We receive applications for two kinds of grants: 1) LCC Grants that subsidize projects by individuals and groups; and 2) PASS Grants that help subsidize the cost of cultural field trips. We review each application and award funds based on many criteria, the strongest of which is that the project must demonstrate a local benefit.

In calendar year 2007 the ABCC’s allotment was $8,000 (the same amount as our previous grant cycle). We once again did not withhold the allowed 5% of the MCC allocation and made the entire amount available for the community. Additionally, we had $24.15 in unclaimed funds from FY06 that, in compliance with MCC guidelines, we re-granted this year. The ABCC also unanimously voted to grant an additional $750 from our own Council funds. As a result, the total amount of grantable funds for FY08 was $8,774.15.

We faced our most competitive grant season ever: We worked hard to publicize the availability of grants and as a result we received 43 applications requesting a total of $27,336 in funding (more than three times the amount available). Many new applicants came forward to request funding this year. After making many difficult cuts, the ABCC was able to fund 22 worthy projects.

**FY ‘08 Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council Approved Grants:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>FY08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Longwood Opera</td>
<td>Die Fledermaus in Acton</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds of Stow</td>
<td>2007-08 Season</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian Hill Music</td>
<td>Indian Hill Big Band—A-B Council on Aging</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parker Damon Steering Committee</td>
<td>Parker Damon International Night</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sargent Memorial Library</td>
<td>Abigail Adams / Boxboro 225th Birthday Celebration</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sargent Memorial Library</td>
<td>Toe Jam Puppet Band Variety Show</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Clark</td>
<td>Shakespeare: Lunatic Lover &amp; Poet—Box COA</td>
<td>175</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitchburg Art Museum</td>
<td>73rd Regional Exhibition of Art &amp; Craft</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Network for Women’s Lives</td>
<td>V-Day 2008 Production of The Vagina Monologues</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian Hill Music</td>
<td>Indian Hill Swing Trio-Acton COA</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discovery Museums</td>
<td>Acton-Boxborough Free to Explore Weekend</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conant Elementary School PTO</td>
<td>Visiting Authors Program</td>
<td>700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acton Community Chorus</td>
<td>Winter and Spring Concerts</td>
<td>175</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acton Recreation</td>
<td>Teen Repertory Theatre: Grease, The School Version</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Repertory Theatre</td>
<td>The Crucible for ABRHS students</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acton Memorial Library</td>
<td>Robert and Helen Creely Poetry Awards</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hudson Area Arts Alliance</td>
<td>River’s Edge Participant &amp; Performance Programs</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khelmel</td>
<td>Holi! Indian Festival of Colors</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encore Dance Ensemble</td>
<td>Encore Dance/ Symphony Pro Musica performances</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Clark</td>
<td>And Now Mark Twain / Citizen’s Library of West Acton</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suman Adiseshu</td>
<td>Indian Classical Ballet performance</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of the Acton Council on Aging</td>
<td>Italian Opera Classes with Martin Segal for Acton COA</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL GRANTED: $8,765**
C. **Local Funding and Council-Initiated Events**

The ABCC was once again generously supported by both Acton and Boxborough town funds via warrant articles and line items. The dedication of the Board of Selectman in both towns is truly remarkable. Acton provided the ABCC, through a Warrant Article, with $2000.00. Boxborough provided $1,500.00 for exclusive use in Boxborough.

The level of local support we enjoy is rare among LCC’s across the state. We are extremely grateful and constantly acknowledge the support of our two towns to everyone. We are grateful also for the physical support that the two Towns provide: meeting spaces, access to the town copiers, etc. We are also thankful for the continued support from our liaisons, Acton Selectman Andy Magee and Boxborough Selectman Kristin Hilberg.

The ABCC initiated several exciting events/projects in calendar year 2007. Funding for these programs came from FY ’07 and unspent FY ’06 Acton Funds and our own fundraising revenue. We used our Boxborough allocation to fund an event at Fifer’s Day and a circus program at the Sargent Memorial Library. Following are details on Council-initiated events in 2007:

1. **FY07 Grantee Reception -- March 9, 2007**
   The ABCC held its 2nd Annual Grantee Reception at Sargent Memorial Library in Boxborough. This annual reception provides a valuable opportunity for Grantees to meet, to publicize their projects, and to network with other arts-minded individuals and groups. FY07 grantees were invited to attend, along with our state and local legislators. Each grantee received an official ABCC certificate. Representative James Eldridge, Boxborough Selectman Rebecca Neville, and MCC Representative Jennifer Shadlick spoke at the event. The *Beacon* ran a photo after the event.

   We were delighted to announce during the reception that one our grantees had received a Gold Star Award from the Mass Cultural Council. This prestigious award gives statewide recognition to one of our hometown projects and highlights the need for continued state funding of the arts. Our local Gold Star winner was the Acton Memorial Library, for the Robert Creeley Poetry Award program.

   ![](image)

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Jennifer Schadlick of the MCC (far right) and Rachel Lucas of the ABCC (third from left) present the Gold Star Award to representatives of the Acton Memorial Library; from left: Frank Flowers, Bob Clawson, Library Director Marcia Rich and Library Trustee Frank Joyner.
2. **iCircus at the Sargent Memorial Library, Boxborough -- May 14, 2007**
The ABCC brought the circus to town with a fun afternoon of acrobatics, juggling and magic at the Sargent Memorial Library. The talented iCircus troupe from Ithaca College performed to a standing-room only crowd and taught children of all ages tumbling skills, a take-home magic trick and juggling!

![iCircus performance](image1)

The ABCC sponsored a Storyteller’s Tent at Fifer’s Day for the second year in a row. We hired two costumed storytellers—Andrea Lovett (pictured below, left) and Merrill Kohlhofer (right), who brought to life original tales from the American Revolution.

![Storytelling at Fifer's Day](image2)

4. **Die Fledermaus, Presented by the Longwood Opera Company, Acton -- November 2, 2007**
For the fourth consecutive year the ABCC brought the Longwood Opera Company to Acton. This year’s performance of *Die Fledermaus* was fully costumed and staged in English with piano accompaniment. This event attracted an audience of nearly 70. Courtesy photos from the Longwood Opera:

![Die Fledermaus performance](image3)

ABCC initiated a year-long festival of cultures in 2007 called “Our World.” This series of 6 events recognizes and highlights the unique cultures right here in our towns. These events are being produced at the Acton Memorial Library in collaboration with the Library Board of Trustees; Marcia Rich, Library Director; Dean Charter, Municipal Properties; ABRHS; and the Town of Acton.

The “Our World” schedule is as follows: An Evening of Native American Traditions (September 21, 2007); Brazil Day (October 21, 2007); India Day (December 9, 2007); China Day (Feb. 9th, 2008), Russia Day (April 13, 2008) and a Grand Finale Steel Band Concert (June 11, 2008). Each event features the food, music, dance, craft and artistry of each unique culture.

In 2007 we successfully launched the first three events and the fourth event is well into the planning stages. The local Brazilian, Indian and Chinese communities have all stepped forward to offer their help in coordinating these events. We could not have anticipated the wholehearted support shown by the local cultural communities so far; we have been surprised and delighted as this participation clearly illustrates that we are serving a public need for these communities which is one of our objectives as a Cultural Council. The local newspaper, The Beacon has also recognized the value of these events to their readership and has covered each one with a front-page photo spread.

Following are photos from the first three events in the “Our World” series:

a. An Evening of Native American Culture, Sept. 21st: The Cangleska Cikala Youth Dancers performed and Lakota Medicine Man Sydney Has-No-Horses spoke about Lakota culture.
b. Brazil Day, Oct. 21st: The following photos from The Beacon highlight Brazilian storytelling and a Capoeira demonstration at Brazil Day; other events included Brazilian music and making a Carnival mask craft.
c. **India Day, Dec. 9th:** Indian ballet, traditional Indian puppetry, henna painting and sari tying were just a few of the events at India Day. The *Beacon* covered this event with a photo spread.

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**Coming Soon! China Day:** Saturday, February 9th, 2008 at the Acton Memorial Library . . . .
Welcome to CHINA DAY

Presented by the Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council

A Celebration of Chinese Art and Culture - part of the “Our World” Cultural Series at the Acton Memorial Library

Saturday, February 9, 2008 2:30 - 4:30 pm

Story Telling  Music and Dance
Martial Arts  Arts & Crafts
Paintings & Photos  Food Samples

Chinese Medicine

All “Our World” events are free to the public; nominal fee for food items only. Adults and children of all ages are welcome.

For more information please email: ahccinformation@yahoo.com

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