

Paper Mache for 4-4-25 by David Read

Consider this a love letter to everyone out there who writes grant applications to sustain the work of their organization. This includes programs like feeding the hungry, helping the unhoused, civic improvement programs like cleaning up urban lakes, removing debris from demolished, asbestos-laden structures, maintaining levees to ensure safety during high water events and even public art installations and art programs as well. You get the idea. These are just the tip of the iceberg. It seems that spring, in addition to being a beautiful season of renewal and rebirth, is also grant writing season. That's not to say that there aren't grant opportunities out there all year long, but they seem to load up on me this time of year. Before assuming my role as Executive Director of Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture eight years ago, I had never written a grant. Now I'm well versed in the art form.

Here's a sample of grant applications for projects that we currently have in play. We have applied for an American Association for Retired Persons Challenge America grant for a project called "Safe Streets for All Ages: Traffic Calming and Asphalt Art on 2nd Street." Think of a mural, but instead of on a wall, it's on the intersection of a busy street. Our project will transform two intersections with asphalt art at crosswalks creating safer crossings for seniors in the historic neighborhood.

We saw something a few years back about an art installation in Pueblo, CO called "Neon Alley." Basically, it's an alleyway with murals and repurposed neon signs installed to create a walk-through art experience. We have applied to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) under their Grants for Art Projects program to create a "Neon Alley" installation connecting Plumas Street to the parking area behind Creative Interiors. We have a couple of old neon signs including from the Town Pump and The Spur.

"Wings of Remembrance" is the title of a project we have imagined for some time as an addition to the Arboga Assembly Center Park. It involves three brightly colored origami style cranes made of sheet metal with 5' wing spans. They will be mounted on tall poles 6' to 10' off the ground and will spin in the breeze. The grant application is to the Arts in California Parks program.

Some of the more notable grants we have received in the past have funded projects like the Murals of Live Oak. We partnered with the City and found matching funds to create fifteen magnificent murals around town. Grant funding from the CA State Library helped us create the Arboga Assembly Center Park. The CA Arts Council funded several murals in Marysville and Sutter Yuba Behavioral Health is funding our current weekly Ceramics for Veterans program.

It's all a bit like commissioned sales which I did for over 30 years. You make the pitch, send the proposal and then you wait. Please pray that the NEA remains intact. Its paltry \$207 million budget amounts to about \$0.62 per person in the U.S. A small portion of that goes to support the CA Arts Council, which in turn supports YSAC.

Unfortunately, we have not found a grant to help us restore and open our Main Stage Theater which is the back half of the original Sutter Theater. Grants for capital projects seem to be few and far between. This 299-seat live performing arts space will bring a whole new dimension to the Yuba-Sutter region. Naming rights are still available! To learn more about the project and schedule a tour, call or text me at 301-442-4744.