

The Optimistic Citizen

A Monthly Newsletter of Positivity

So, I am learning that writing a monthly newsletter is not as easy as I thought. Since this is my first newsletter since June, clearly, I need a little more determination. But I shall persevere! Hence, the theme for this month's newsletter - Perseverance.

Good Vibes Only!

Alaine Kowal,
Editor in Chief

The Venue

One local couple who clearly possess a great deal of perseverance, is Michael and Lori Koehler. They are spear-heading the new collaborative performing arts project in High River. I had the pleasure of sitting down with Michael and Lori to discuss the positive impact this venture will have on our community.

The idea for a new performing arts space was born from a dream Michael and Lori share. They envisioned a collaborative, creative community space for High River. Through discussing and sharing their dream with friends and other members of the community, they learned they were not alone in the visualization of this project. And so, the High River Performing Arts Foundation was born, and with it, the newest theatre project - The Venue.

The plan for The Venue has amassed more than a few ideas from the cSPACE King Edward concept in Calgary. Much like cSPACE, The Venue will be "...a playground for creativity, community, and collaboration". The 3-floor building will have space not only for performing, but for creating as well.

The first floor will have a black box theatre with rake seating for up to 220 people, the backstage area will be a utility space that can be used for dressing rooms or set/prop construction, or messy art classes, like pottery. The front foyer can be used as a small concert space, art gallery, or anything the creative mind can think of. The second floor will provide room for a recording studio, band, rehearsal space, yoga classes, martial arts classes, song writers workshops, kinder music, art camps & classes, jewelry making, storage, meeting spaces... and the list goes on - in fact, the possibilities are endless. Every room will be unique and if everything goes according to Michael's plans, there will be no drywall. The pièce de résistance, at least to me, the rooftop, with 2 BnB suites and a patio where you can watch the best performance in the area - a foothills sunset.

The main theme I get from Michael & Lori, and the most beautiful piece about this project, is collaboration and cooperative. The goal is to bring creative and artistic people, from all areas of the arts, together into one space and watch the inspiring possibilities develop and flourish. The theme of community is also very strong in Michael and Lori, in addition to bringing creative minds together, they hope to be a box office for the town and sell tickets for any event - even if that event is not being held at The Venue.

See The Venue continued on page 2.

The Venue cont'd

Michael and Lori cannot talk enough about the amazing support they have received from the Town, from Our High River, and from the Okotoks Art Council. “Everyone has been so supportive and positive, which reiterates how important this project is to our area.”

Located on 5th Avenue between the High River Motel and Cuts on Fifth, the projected and hopeful completion date for the The Venue is Spring of 2021, but things are already happening onsite. Within the temporary palleted walls and wood-studded portico, you can catch performers from around the Province and from within our community, in the Summer Picnic Performance Series—stay tuned to The Venue’s website for the lineup.

The members of the HRPFAF will be holding a Reveal Party on April 5th at 7:00 pm at the Highwood Golf & Country Club where you can see drawings of the new building, enjoy entertainment, and check out the road map for fundraising. All are welcome and encouraged to come.

The goal of the HRPFAF is to design and build the building to suit. In the spirit of collaboration and cooperation, if you have an idea on how you would use the building, please share it with the HRPFAF to help them visualize any imaginable creative aspiration. You can send them an email at hrpafoundation@gmail.com, or visit the website at www.thevenuehighriver.com.



Good Vibes Only!

theoptimisticcitizen@gmail.com

People who Persevered

(Imagine if they hadn't...)

- **J.K. Rowling** had just gotten a divorce, was on government aid, and could barely afford to feed her baby in 1994, just three years before the first Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone*, was published. When she was shopping it out, she was so poor she couldn't afford a computer or even the cost of photocopying the 90,000-word novel, so she manually typed out each version to send to publishers. It was rejected dozens of times until finally Bloomsbury, a small London publisher, gave it a second chance after the CEO's eight year-old daughter fell in love with it.
- **Muhammad Ali** - *"I hated every minute of training, but I said to myself, 'Don't quit, suffer now, and live the rest of your life as a champion.'"*
- **Jim Carrey**—When Carrey was 14 years old, his father lost his job, and his family hit rough times. They moved into a VW van on a relative's lawn, and the young aspiring comedian—who was so dedicated to his craft that he mailed his resume to *The Carroll Burnett Show* just a few years earlier, at age 10—took an eight-hours-per-day factory job after school to help make ends meet. At age 15, Carrey performed his comedy routine onstage for the first time—in a suit his mom made him—and totally bombed, but he was undeterred. The next year, at 16, he quit school to focus on comedy full time. He moved to LA shortly after, where he would park on Mulholland Drive every night and visualize his success. One of these nights he wrote himself a check for \$10,000,000 for "Acting Services Rendered," which he dated for Thanksgiving 1995. Just before that date, he hit his payday with *Dumb and Dumber*. He put the deteriorated check, which he'd kept in his wallet the whole time, in his father's casket.
- **Sarah Jessica Parker**—Parker was born in a poor coal-mining town in rural Ohio, the youngest of four children. Her parents divorced when she was two, and her mother remarried shortly thereafter and had an additional four children. Parker's stepfather, a truck driver, was often out of work, so the future starlet took up singing and dancing at a very young age to help supplement her mom's teaching income and feed their 10-person family. Despite hard times and occasionally being on welfare, Parker's mom continued to encourage her children's interest in the arts. The family moved to Cincinnati, where Parker was enrolled in a ballet, music, and theater school on scholarship. When she was 11 years old, the family took a trip to New York City so Parker could audition for a Broadway play. The trip was a success—she and her brother were both cast, and the family relocated to New York. Parker continued to work hard and land roles, eventually becoming the title character of TV juggernaut *Sex and the City*.

(Source: themuse.com)

“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer.”

-Albert Einstein

10 Simple Ways to Share Kindness

1. Help clean up without being asked.
2. Use your turn signal.
3. Put your shopping cart back in its place.
4. Hold the door open for someone.
5. Say “Thank you” and “Please” all day without fail.
6. Pause before you speak and choose words with positive intention.
7. Make a donation.
8. Give someone a genuine compliment.
9. Smile.
10. Put your phone away.

In search of... stories for “*The OC*”!

If you know of positive people doing positive things, please send me an email at theoptimisticcitizen@gmail.com

*When the world says “Give up,” Hope whispers
“Try it one more time.”*

- Unknown