



ENCOURAGE - APPRECIATE - Omnes Artes - PERPETUATE - EDUCATE

Brochure On
Yakima Community
Art Center

YAKIMA COMMUNITY ART CENTER

We of the Yakima Valley Art Association extend greetings and welcome to you, members of the Washington State Drama Association. This visit to our Community Center, (still in its first stage of construction), was included in your tour, not only because it will house a Little Theatre, but because in this project we have something unique in the State of Washington and a project that can be achieved by any community that desires or needs a center of this type. At the suggestion of your convention committee we have prepared the following brochure trying to anticipate your questions on the Community Art Center, its history, its present and its future.

The story behind the Community Art Center begins with the organization of the Yakima Valley Art Association in 1945. A small group of Yakima people, keenly interested in the cultural progress of their community, formed this association which would have as its purpose: "to encourage, appreciate, perpetuate and educate in the field of all the arts". Permanent rooms were rented classes in painting and crafts were started, and art exhibits were brought to Yakima under the association sponsorship. The same year the YVAA sponsored the formation of a Little Theatre Group. By 1948 membership had grown from something under twenty-five to several hundred, and the varied activities of the Association had outgrown its small meeting rooms. At the same time the Little Theatre Group had produced seven financially successful plays, but with inadequate rehearsal space and on a rented stage which that year was no longer available to them.

It was at this crucial point that Mr. Elton Gilbert, a local fruit man, himself interested in the cultural progress of Yakima, especially in its influence on young people, donated to Yakima a large warehouse and tract of land. This donation was made by deeding the property to the YVAA with the stipulation that it was to be remodeled into a Community Art Center, and, in turn, the YVAA accepted the responsibility of raising the necessary funds to build and maintain this center.

The plans for the Community Art Center were drawn up by the Architects Association of Yakima, representing almost all local architects firms, and their services were donated to this community project. When completed, at an estimated cost of \$25,000, the Center will house:

1. Little Theatre Auditorium (for plays and community events, lectures, musical events, etc.)
2. Art Gallery
3. Workshop for theatre, metal and wood working classes
4. Workrooms for classes in painting, crafts, ceramics, children's art, sculpturing etc.
5. A large room for use of community for banquets, meetings, dances, Boy Scout and Campfire meetings, and other club groups
6. Office headquarters for YVAA

It is also of interest to note, that this land and building donated by Mr. Gilbert is part of a five acre tract, which he has given to the city for a park. Yakima Park Board plans call for maintenance of the Community Art Center surroundings when the park is built, as well as creation of an outdoor amphitheatre directly northeast of the building.

To date the Yakima Valley Art Association has raised approximately \$12,000 for its building fund. This money was raised entirely through memberships and income from Little Theatre plays.

As a first step approximately \$2,000 was spent erecting a temporary stage with lighting in the warehouse for the Little Theatre, installing a small heating plant, and in clearing and graveling a parking area.

In July of this year, 1951, actual remodeling work began, and for an approximate investment of \$8,000 basic strengthening of foundations and roof, and partial completion of the Little Theatre auditorium was done. This sum includes purchase of 245 theatre seats and all building material needed to complete the interior of the stage and cover the theatre floor.

The Building Committee estimates that an additional \$6,000 to \$7,000 will be needed to complete the upper floor of the Center and install basic heating, plumbing, and wiring. When this sum has been approximated construction will be resumed.

At present the YVAA anticipates, and hopes, that the Little Theatre will be able to present its first production on the new stage by early next summer.

In the meantime the YVAA has maintained all its activities with an increase of membership and interest each year. At present the Association has two large rooms on a permanent rental basis in the basement of the Larsen Building for classes, meetings, and rehearsals. In cooperation with the Yakima Valley Junior College, the YVAA sponsors continuous art exhibits in Yakima's new Larson Gallery. The Little Theatre has produced to date six successful plays on the temporary stage erected in the Warehouse. Their recent summer production, a melodrama, played to over 1500 people in ten nights of performance, although remodeling was in progress and it was necessary to use canvas for one wall of the auditorium, and to perform on a shaky stage two feet less in width than it had been.

Because of repeated questioning, we would again like to emphasize that all money has been raised for the Building Fund from Little Theatre profits, and from memberships.

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIPS:

1. Working: \$5.00
2. Contributing: \$25.00 and up
3. Patron: \$100 and up
4. Benefactor: \$500 and up

All memberships of \$25.00 and over include tickets to 3 Little Theatre Plays for two in a family. At present the Little Theatre is launching a drive to sell plaques for their 245 theatre seats at \$10.00 each. Until this year the YVAA had no paid employees, but this year have hired an executive secretary on a part-time basis.

Y.V.A.A. BOARD. PRESIDENT, MRS. JAMES O. LAY

LITTLE THEATRE BOARD. PRESIDENT, MRS. GREGORY WEBER

MAILING ADDRESS: 919 Larson Building
Yakima, Washington