

Governor's Arts Award Nominations 2010

Primary Endorsements

for the

Stevensville Art & Sculpture Society



Primary Endorsers:

CAPT Melville J. Walters, III, USN (Ret)

*Former Coordinator, Montana Main Street Program, Montana Department of Commerce.
Current Vice President, Stevensville Main Street Association.*

Jeff Fuller

*President, Stevensville Civic Club
President, Rocky Mountain Bank*

Joan Prather

Director, Stevensville Main Street Association

CAPT Melville J. Walters, III, USN (Ret)

Former Coordinator, Montana Main Street Program, Montana Department of Commerce.

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Dear Selection Committee,

It is my sincere pleasure to write this letter of endorsement in support of the Stevensville Art and Sculpture Society (SASS). This organization is truly worthy of recognition through receipt of the Montana Governor's Art Award.

I moved to Stevensville eight years ago following almost fifty years in the military, twenty years with my father and thirty years in my own career. During that time, I had the incredible experience of living all over the United States and in many foreign countries. As my time to retire approached, having reviewed all we had seen and done, my wife and I decided we wanted to live in a small, but active, community away from the hustle and bustle of a large city. Seven years after retirement, we landed in Stevensville and immediately fell in love with the town, its location, and its energy.

A major component of Stevensville's attractiveness is the many small community-service organizations that work so hard to provide a community to be proud of. SASS is a leader in this effort. From "Two Left Feet Dancing Free" to "To Know Joy" to the many art shows decorating the walls of our businesses, the Society contributes greatly to the visual appeal of Stevensville. As one drives through town, one's eye cannot help but be caught by the beautiful and stirring public art on display, this in a town of less than two thousand people. Personally, I anxiously await each new project and display knowing that it will contribute even more to the vitality and image of our town.

Beyond the permanent public art and that displayed in our businesses, SASS has brought excitement to our community with the mailbox and birdhouse competitions and, especially, with the annual Scarecrow Festivals. It is difficult to describe the enthusiasm generated by the construction and display of the scarecrows. They generate excitement throughout the entire Bitterroot Valley and bring forth amazing artists of every age.

Without question, the Stevensville Art and Sculpture Society contributes greatly to community pride and spirit. I know, from my work travel, that Stevensville attracts people from all around Montana by its reputation as a small, captivating community that "gets it done." SASS is an integral and critical part of this community and that attitude. Please recognize the work of this amazing group of people with the Montana Governor's Art Award. They certainly deserve it.

Warm regards and very sincerely,

Melville J. Walters, III

Jeff Fuller

President, Stevensville Civic Club

President, Rocky Mountain Bank

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of endorsement on behalf of the Stevensville Art and Sculpture Society (SAAS). With great enthusiasm, I am recommending this outstanding organization, for the prestigious Montana Governor's Art Award.

Since 2001, SASS has been instrumental in the community through the magnificent creation and endorsement of art. Their group is composed of hardworking, thoughtful, and inspirational Stevensville residents. These fine folks represent their community and state in an exceptional manner.

As President of the Stevensville Civic Club, I can assure you these individuals are among the first to volunteer for civic duties and beautification projects. Through their art events such as the rural birdhouse contests and the scarecrow festivals, they serve as an inspiration, in the creation of public art.

Rocky Mountain Bank is pleased to display "Two Left Feet, Dancing Free" by Blackfeet artist Jay Laber; at the foot of Main Street and the bank. SASS raised local funds towards the purchase of the 6-foot sculpture. Additionally in 2008, they raised additional funding for the bronze sculpture, "To Know Joy," by Ovando artist JR Eason.

This nonprofit contemporary group has coordinated monthly art exhibits at Rocky Mountain Bank for many years. We receive compliments on a daily basis by hardworking Montanans that are able to enjoy the dazzling art. Patrons are able to take moments and reflect upon the beautiful creations of Montana's finest.

It is with great privilege that I recommend the Stevensville Art and Sculpture Society for the Montana Governor's Art Award. The following quote by Francis Bacon sums up what SASS means to our community and what the community means to SASS, "I don't think people are born artists; I think it comes from a mixture of your surroundings, the people you meet, and luck." SASS bridges the thoughts and ideas of many Montanans, draws upon the inspiration of the Bitterroot Valley, and communicates them through their wonderful organization, for all to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Jeff Fuller

Branch President

Rocky Mountain Bank

Stevensville, MT

Joan Prather

Director, Stevensville Main Street Association

Stevensville, MT

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The Stevensville Art and Sculpture Society is a very active group in the Community of Stevensville. They have a wonderful membership and are a group that works together for the beautification and cultural enhancement of Stevensville.

They have introduced the community of Stevensville to wonderful artists and sculptors. The addition of outdoor art to the street décor of Stevensville has given an added boost to the revitalization efforts that go on here. They worked hard to obtain a piece by the noted artist Jay Labor entitled “Two Left Feet Dancing Free” and another piece by famed sculptor J.R. Easton that is located on Main Street in Lange Park.

A huge accomplishment by the SASS group was the introduction of the Scarecrow Festival held on the First Friday and Saturday in October. The SASS group partners with the Stevensville Main Street Association to host the event. They have a wonderful logo, conduct all of the signups, judging and placement of the scarecrows that line the walkway bordering the highway entrance into town. From this wonderful event that they introduced on a First Friday venue, many visitors from outside of the Stevensville area come to enjoy the attraction and experience our Historic Stevensville as well. The Scarecrow Festival is a creative and artistic display and certainly a great photo opportunity.

The artists display work throughout town in restaurants, banks and library. They have conducted the Western Heritage Days Art Show and participated in the Quick Draw event. This as well was a partnership with the Stevensville Main Street Association that benefited both groups and provided a wonderful art show for the public to enjoy.

I have worked with SASS over the years and have always found them to have a true concern for the presence of art in the community and education of the public regarding art and culture. They are an active organization in our community and conduct themselves in a professional and organized manner.

In the Fall of 2009 SASS will partner with the Stevensville Main Street Association for the NorthWest HoneyFest. They will host an art show that will give the artists opportunity to display and sell their work. The art will contain bees, flowers, honey etc. and will enhance the Festival and promote the arts as well as a consciousness for the preservation of the bee colonies.

Our community is very fortunate to have such an active organization who have accomplished so much to beautify and educate their community. I do hope that they will be considered as a deserving recipient of the Governor’s Art Award.

Sincerely,

Joan Prather, Director
Stevensville Main Street