

## **Naperville Council for Business & the Arts**

**Notes from meeting held on July 27, 2007 from 12:30-2pm**

**Recorded by Kristi Okoye, Edited by Michelle LeBlanc**

### **Panel & Discussion:**

**Mike Skarr, Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce, CEO**

**Lyle Allen, League of Chicago Theaters, Executive Director**

**Jamil Khoury, Silk Road Theater Project, Co-Founder & Artistic Director**

### **Presented by:**

**Ken Karlson, Michelle LeBlanc                      NCBA Co-founders**

### **Hosted by:**

**Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce, Suite 351**

### **Lunch Provided by:**

**Panera Bread                      Laura Guerrero, Marketing Manager                      [www.panerabread.com](http://www.panerabread.com)**

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- **Ken Karlson** from Catch 35 addressed the audience for the Naperville Council for Business & the Arts.
  - What is Business for the Arts and how does it work together.
  - Bringing theater arts to Naperville: How that will improve business
    - For example: In Chicago the Catch 35 is packed full at 5:00 p.m. All the other restaurants in the theater district are packed too.
  - There are 205 theaters (big and small) that attract people from everywhere to enjoy an evening in the beautiful city of Chicago.
  - However, it was not always this way. A great cultural arts plan was initiated and followed through upon.
  
  - **Lyle Allen**, a theater executive who works in the city of Chicago. Acknowledgement of the theater and arts community, the League of Chicago Theaters (Arts service market advocacy) a non for profit organization, helped in organizing ways to make the arts community to thrive or at least survive. Online tickets were implemented and became 35% of the weekly sales. This alone increased the weekly

audience. Chicagoplays.com has become the #1 of purchasing tickets for community theater. On this web site if one clicks onto Chicagoplays.com, one can click onto restaurants, hotels which has added to the increase in tourism throughout the city. Theater evening specials have been successful by having cocktail parties prior to the show. Actors and patrons have an opportunity to mingle with the each other.

- For small and emerging theaters who don't have the ability to have a box office, have benefited greatly by online ticket purchases. Robert Lynch (referenced), American's for the Arts states that the arts have a positive economic impact, fosters beauty, inspires, provoke, connect, create jobs, community employers, producers and consumers. To increase Cultural Awareness, \$658 million has been invested into the city of Chicago. Increasing the awareness has supported jobs, increasing revenue from local to the state government. The economic growth also increases spending by audiences even in the revenue of local parking garages.
- Robert Lynch: When arts and the businesses work together they both create economical prosperity which in turn increases and improves the quality of the community.
- **Jamil Khoury:** After 911, Muslims faced great difficulties living and working in America. Malik Gillani, Co-Founder and E.D. of Silk Road Theater Project, (and Jamil) took this crisis and is bringing about understanding through enactments in theater productions. The lack of understanding regarding differences among people creates dysfunctional relationships among the community. The idea is to create a model for multiculturalism which is represented by the "Silk Road". The Silk Road historically provides true stories that are translated giving account of the many diverse groups of people that were encountered along the way on the Silk Road. The audience becomes a part of the character involved with the travels along the Silk Road.
- Jamil addressed the fact that much theater is white and doesn't represent the diversity of the community of Chicago and surrounding areas. The idea of Global Cities connected to Global Theaters to increase understanding the diversity of the world.
- He also addressed working with churches and theater: Jesus was a Silk Road person and The Bible is about people who lived along the silk road.

- **Mike Skarr** opens his portion of discussion by having all participants introduce themselves.
  - Introductions (see sign in)
- *Mike notes* Michelle LeBlanc and Ken Karlson agree with the vision of bringing the Silk Road Production, and other such productions to the Naperville area as well as the overall support and promotion of the arts in the community, and understand the economic impact of this. *Further for example*, North Central College is building a new concert center and thrush theater which will be available to the community.
- The idea is to create a model that is similar to the Chicago cultural arts development. The hope is that Naperville may include theater, cultural performances, and visual arts in addition to all the great restaurants already established. It will take a collaboration and team effort to bring the ideas to life. In the past too many egos may have caused similar initiatives to fail.
- Whenever an arts organization has to close it is a black eye on the city.
- Mike addresses the economic impact of the arts and cultural tourism.
- This meeting was to put a “buzz” around to interested parties who would like to make it happen. The NCBA may choose to become a committee of the Chamber and would be welcome to do so; but first a core group needs to be formed and decisions have to be made.
- Meetings and collaboration of people will be needed to bring this idea to the next level.
- The mission outline of the formative 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years will require civic support.
- **Michelle** made closing statements thanking everyone who came, thanking the panelists & remarking about the audience participants and their successes.

**In attendance:**

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|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Ken Karlson      | DNA, SRTP Board            |
| 2. Lyle Allen       | League of Chicago Theaters |
| 3. Jamil Khoury     | SRTP                       |
| 4. Mike Skarr       | NACC                       |
| 5. Michelle LeBlanc | Naperville Cultural Center |

6. Michelle Delson Samahang Kapatid
7. Mariellyn Vivo Kidz Kabaret
8. Bob Bosanac Naperville Art League
9. Daniel Nigg Nigg International Consulting
10. Jim Guter Jim Guter's Music
11. Janice Guter
12. Hilary Decent Naperville Cultural Center
13. Egle Raugalaite Naperville Cultural Center
14. Brian Lynch North Central College
15. Melinda Creasy Downtown Music Together
16. Pamela Olin Olin Design Studio
17. Linda Yang Xilin Community Center
18. Laura Rivas Naperville Art League
19. Ronnie Maziarek Naperville Art League
20. Katie Wernberg City of Naperville
21. Kenn Miller City of Naperville
22. Lynette Klingbeil Naperville Development Partnership
23. Laura LeDoux Law Offices of Laura A. LeDoux, P.C.
24. Patrick Dziurdrik Crazy Horse Art Studio
25. Barbara Yokom School of Performing Arts
26. Marie Bartolotta Naperville CUSD 203
27. Patti Roberts DNA
28. Revati Natesan Think Global Arts
29. Kristi Okoye Law Title Insurance, Naperville Cultural Center
30. Laura Guerrero Panera Bread
31. Ronald Keller Naperville Municipal Band
32. Celia Whiren Private Music Instructor: Sax & Vocals
33. Bev Frier Omnia Performing Arts Council
34. Stuart Meyer Musician/Composer, World of Naperville Blog
35. George Pradel City of Naperville

~ End ~

