



The Arts Now More Than Ever

It seems that Hollywood is recession proof, judging by the latest box-office results.

That studios are experiencing big-ticket returns on their investments is good for anyone who needs an escape. We all need a break, and art – in all of its forms – provides that.

At the Arts Center, we certainly realize our role in providing our own “stimulus package.” Let Washington help your wallet, our job is to take care of your spirit.

Through high-quality, Broadway-style productions such as *Les Misérables* and *South Pacific*, musical artists such as Ramsey Lewis and Celtic Crossroads, Gullah storyteller Louise Miller Cohen, and through the visual arts, such as the recent *Treasures from the Telfair* exhibit, our goal is to provide you with an opportunity to escape through the arts.

Wall Street might be up and down, but the arts are a constant. It’s always there, around us, waiting to be seen, heard and experienced. The arts are needed now more than ever.

Season ticket sales were very strong for our 2008/09 “People’s Choice” Theater Series. At the *La Cage aux Folles* season opening, we had already broken all previous records with 3,500 subscriptions. However, single ticket sales since then have been inconsistent.

As most of you know, ticket sales and subscriptions are just a part of what we need to support shows like *Les Misérables*. This most requested musical simply could not become a reality through ticket sales alone. And it certainly could not be produced to the standards to which you’ve become accustomed, nor the standards we’ve set for ourselves, purely on ticket sales.

We, as artists, should try to be uncompromising in our visions. And audiences should not lower their expectations. As long as we can, the Arts Center will deliver artistry that meets our promise.

Ticket sales alone also would not cover our four free annual community events – the Community Christmas Tree Lighting, A Taste of Gullah, Youth ArtsFest and the Flag Day Festival. These are events that do more than just provide an opportunity for communal gathering, they enrich us all through diversity and a celebration of our shared culture.

Tickets alone could never pay for our education programs that provided 18,249 education services to preschoolers, children, youth, adults, special needs populations and educators last year.

Tickets alone would not cover the operation of this wonderful 45,000 sq. ft. community facility that costs more than \$400,000 annually to operate and uses not a penny from Beaufort County taxpayers.

Tickets alone would not pay for the artists – from painters and musicians, actors and carpenters, writers and dancers – employed through our performances and programs. While we may be a diversion from the economy, we are also a part of it – we provide jobs. Visiting artists also contribute to the hospitality tax, as we pay accommodation taxes to house them.

No. Ticket sales would never cover all that we do and all that you enjoy. For that, we need your continued support. The economy has caused many of our supporters to discontinue or severely reduce their contributions to the Arts Center. This will affect what we can and cannot do, as we look toward next season.

While Hollywood might be recession proof, we are not. In these tough economic times, your contribution to the Arts Center is more important than ever. We appreciate this community and all that it provides more than we can ever express.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Kathleen P. Bateson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Kathleen P. Bateson
President/CEO