

**Murray Arts Advisory Board  
Minutes for October 16, 2012**

Attendance: Mildred Horton, Sharon Whitney, Jenny Simmons, Stephanie Pollei, Scott Mooy, Elaine Judd, David Christensen, Mary Ann Kirk (staff), Leesa Lloyd (Miss Murray Pageant Director, Mallory Rogers (Miss Murray 2012), Cal Jones (pageant committee and parents of former Miss Murray), Kevin Pollei (parent of former Miss Murray).

Excused: Shauna Hart

1. Minutes for September 18, 2012 were approved with a minor grammatical correction.
2. David shared a registration form for the literary workshop. David said they saved a time spot for our literary winners but will make it clearer on the registration form. Registration fees are \$10 but will include a \$5 discount to public and higher education students of any age. He will send it as a pdf file and Mary Ann will attach it on the city website. She will also send it out with the arts newsletter in early January. We can also pass out a flyer at the art show reception and spotlight the information in our social media info.
3. Jenny will help with the Haunted Tales at the library on October 29 at 6 pm. Mildred and Stephanie will help call literary winners. We will give the winners the option of reading their stories at a 6:30 or 7:30 pm session with a cap for each time slot. Mildred, Ralph, Stephanie, Scott, and Sharon can help set up the art show on November 1 at the library. Mildred, Sharon, and David will help with art checkout at the conclusion of the reception.
4. With the exception of Viewmont and McMillan, all elementary and secondary schools want to participate in storytelling residencies and festival. The Heritage Center will also include a month of weekly instruction. The first residency will begin on November 5 at Twin Peaks.
5. We are waiting for the Sorenson Foundation to make a formal commitment to the Hillcrest Jr High art facility. They are meeting on October 25.
6. Murray Arts Council has given us a five year plan for their musicals so we don't choose a show they want to produce in the near future. They are doing Twelve Dancing Princesses next year which will involve lots of older teens. Jim has suggested Oklahoma, Annie Get Your Gun, or High School Musical for next year's August slot. Jenny liked High School Musical. It isn't a great show but does involve lots of teens. Annie Get Your Gun doesn't involve lots of families and is a smaller cast but we have never produced that play before. Jim has never directed it and would like to do something new. Oklahoma could involve more families but some don't like the storyline. It has been done three times. We are producing Doo Wop which will involve full families since they are planning a children's chorus. Board members suggested Jim pick his favorite between Annie Get Your Gun and Oklahoma.

7. Miss Murray presented an overview of their pageant. They produced a Miss Murray Reunion in 2002 where they did a lot of research on Murray's local pageant and met many former Murray queens. Director, Leesa Lloyd, reviewed the history of Miss Murray which began in the 1930s and queens were selected in various ways from year to year. In the 1950s, they began producing a program. In the 1960s a judging process was initiated and it began its formal connection to the Miss America Pageant in the 1970s. This allowed our queen to participate in the Miss Utah Pageant. From 1979 to the present, our queens have gone to the Miss Utah Pageant where several were selected as runner ups. The Miss America Pageant wants a well-rounded individual that includes talent, service, inner beauty and fitness through evening gown and swimsuit, with a scholarship incentive. It is educationally focused. They must be attending college full or part time.

Leesa feels that the service component really makes our pageant credible. It is discussed in the interview section which accounts as 30% of the judging. Judges focus on the contestants past and present service and their proposed platform of how they will serve their community.

Leesa noted that she served on the Murray Arts Board when we were giving a \$500 award. Over the years, this has been increased to \$4000 and she feels that this demonstrates past commitment and how our community values the service of the pageant. The pageant has focused the city contribution on the scholarship awards, per the arts board request. The pageant is now paying Miss Murray a \$3000 scholarship because of the increase in school costs. They charge at the door to help pay for the costs of the program. This past year they made a big effort to get business sponsors to help pay for some of the queen's cost. They don't want the city to have to pay for it all. They have been increasing a regular core of volunteers from past queens and their families.

The 2012 queen, Mallory Rogers described her platform and service contributions during this past year. She was an ambassador for young women and wanted to make sure that the community remembered the work the queen does for the city. She participated in city government, business and community events, spending 10-20 hours a week. As part of her platform, she focused on physical fitness and taught classes at the Heritage Center and Park Center. She raised funds for two scholarships for girls in physical fitness and sports. She also described her interaction with Little Miss Murray as a role model and mentor and helped Little Miss Murray grow into her best "me". She went to her activities and was interested in her growth. Mallory juggled school, job, and extensive service to Murray throughout the year. She feels the pageant is about personal growth and gaining confidence which was the greatest benefit to her.

Two dads of former queens, Cal Jones and Kevin Pollei, shared how they didn't support the pageant idea at first but became believers and active supporters as they watched the impact of the pageant on their daughters. Cal said the queens also impact thousands of other children and youth who benefit from their service and role model. Cal's daughter went from a shy girl with little confidence to a professional singer who now performs in New York City. Cal now is responsible to coach the girls in interviewing techniques and

has watched them transform in presenting themselves. He serves as a judge throughout Utah and says that Murray's Pageant is one of the best. Kevin said that the girls don't do this for the scholarship money. They could have worked and made much more money. The personal growth experience far surpassed the value of money.

Stephanie reviewed questions from board member Shauna Hart who couldn't be there. Shauna wanted to know what impact the pageant had on the girls and the community for good and how it encouraged education and development for their future. This had been adequately covered. Shauna was concerned with the number of girls participating and asked about how they advertised. Leesa said they do advertise through Murray Journal and recruit through the high school. She could recruit a little more from Cottonwood High and wants to involve her committee more in recruitment. She said she recruits those with performing arts background because they have to perform on stage. Mary Ann suggested she look at talents beyond the performing arts and try to help them in presenting that talent. Leesa noted that she had 20 girls come to orientation, but many dropped out because they think it is too much work. Scott wondered if the amount of time or when the workshops were held might discourage participation. Leesa said they are only required to come to three meetings and one week of workshops in the evening before the pageant. However additional preparation takes time for something like this. If they can't commit to three meetings in the summer and one week of workshops before the pageant, they will not be able to handle the responsibility as the queen. This is not a one night pageant and the girls need to know it requires a substantial time commitment.

Shauna wondered if we would get more participation if the swimsuit was eliminated. Leesa said that the swimsuit portion receives the highest attention from the TV network because that is what advertisers are looking for. Mary Ann felt that this was a sad commentary on our society which sexualizes women and wished we could influence that attitude on a state and national level. Leesa said she makes sure that the swimsuit is not a major focus of our local pageant. Stephanie felt that our pageant has done a nice job in helping the girls look poised on stage and not provocative in any way. Mallory said the girls can choose the swimsuit they feel comfortable in and feels it celebrates women.

Mary Ann said she has administered the grant program for many years and has been supportive of the pageant. But she can understand some of the concerns about the perspective that it is just a beauty pageant. Everyone agreed that the service component needs to be highlighted better. The public never sees it because it is done in the private interviews. Jenny suggested they include more detailed info about their platform in the program. Scott said that it should include their past service. Mildred said that the printed program should also include what the judging consists of. Leesa said it is 35% talent, 30% interview/service, 20% evening gown, 15% swimsuit. Scott felt that if the service component is communicated more, that may encourage more participation. He wondered if the judges considered the relevance of each platform and asked if the committee gave some guidance to the girls. Mallory said they have some suggestions but sometimes this is a learning experience for each girl to evaluate its relevance and how she would address the issue. Elaine still felt that past service needs to be emphasized more. Mary Ann

wondered if they could give a “service” award like they do for congeniality. Stephanie and Leesa said that idea was actually implemented at the state and national level.

Shauna suggested we increase focus on congeniality. Stephanie said that Murray’s pageant has created a real comradery among the girls to help each other. They even share dresses with their competitors which is unique.

Another issue centered on whether girls are discouraged from participating because of cost. Jenny said this could be a big issue in her family. Pageant members said the local level is not expensive especially when they share clothing. It can become expensive to compete at the state level but sponsors can be obtained to cover some of those costs. Scott shared an experience about a friend who only had to buy a pair of shoes and she won a pageant with a \$5000 scholarship.

Mary Ann shared her feeling that the talent program at the Miss Murray Pageant is weak. Leesa said that the talent portion has also become weaker over the past two decades at the state level. It takes a lot of time and money to train in the arts and parents and youth are doing less of that. Leesa said that we have had some good talent at times and sometimes not as good. Scott felt that if a girl wants to participate, everyone can develop a good service project. It shouldn’t just focus on talent. Leesa stressed that judging is centered on the whole person. A candidate might not have the best talent but is an excellent speaker. The judging includes multiple categories. In the final judging process, the judges are asked to pick who they think overall would be the best person to serve as Miss America, Miss Utah, or Miss Murray.

Shauna’s last question was about the Little Miss. She wondered if drawing a piece of artwork around a theme was the best way to choose this. Leesa explained that the state pageant sets the age which changes from year to year and each pageant committee decides how to implement it. They felt that if the age is older, then an essay is appropriate. If the age is younger, then artwork seemed to be more age appropriate. This year the flyer had different ages and different due dates and different pageant dates which caused confusion among the public and the parks office. Leesa said they will make sure this is corrected for next year.

Mary Ann concluded the discussion describing where we go from here. The arts board was given the assignment by the mayor’s office several decades ago to review the grant application so there was some public input about the program and its value for city funding. Their application is not an art grant. The board may recommend that the program is or is not worth city financial support. The board may continue reviewing the grant application as in the past, or suggest the application and funding recommendations be turned over to the Mayor’s office. We will discuss these options next month.