

RESTON'S HERITAGE ANIMATES LAKE ANNE

By William Nicoson

In my mail last week I noticed Reston Community Center's Fall Program Guide and began casually to browse the offerings. Two hours later I was still turning its pages back and forth, no longer casually but in excited anticipation.

The Guide's big news was, of course, the extensive activities planned for RCC's new space at Lake Anne. The Grand Opening is scheduled for September 12 from 3-7 p.m. with bands, songs, dancers, clowns, jugglers, caricaturists, face painters and instructors offering classes in drawing, painting, ceramics, polymer clay, instrumental and vocal music, and computer science. Facilities to be toured include a digital lab with 12 computers, a ceramics lab with 8 pottery wheels, a mold press, slab roller and kiln, and an art gallery named in memoriam for acclaimed artist and RCC director Jo Anne Rose who died last year after leading the fight for RCC outreach to Lake Anne. The opening gallery exhibition is entitled "Sense of Community."

RCC is sponsoring 3 other events this fall in the same sense-of-community spirit in collaboration with the Reston Store Front Museum managed at Lake Anne by the Reston Historic Trust for Community Revitalization. On September 15 from 7-9 p.m., RCC at Lake Anne, the Museum and Reston Association will offer a program on "Reston's Hidden Treasures." On October 3 from 2-5:30 p.m., "a musical walk" will be conducted from the Reston Art Gallery and Studios in Heron House to the Reston Museum, to the Used Book Store, to the Baptist Church, and to the Jo Anne Rose Gallery with musical interludes along the way provided by some 5 local performing groups. Finally RCC and the Museum will sponsor 4 two-hour sessions on "The Reston Experience," drawing upon guest speakers and materials from Planned Community Archives at George Mason University. Registration for all these celebrations of community will be free of charge.

There is good news, by the way, about the Reston Museum. From its opening at Lake Anne in October, 1997, through June, 1999, some 20,600 visitors dropped by to check out items on exhibition, to greet each other, to shmooze with the Museum's indefatigable Executive Director, Sarah Larson, and to debate local issues, sometimes in a structured program, sometimes in conversational dialogue. Fairfax County Supervisor Bob Dix has been sufficiently impressed with the heritage contributions of the Museum to the community and county that he sponsored a county grant of \$20,000 to the Museum and, with the help of Board Chair Kate Hanley, convinced other supervisors to support it. There is hope that the grant may become an annual recognition of the Museum's value to community and county.

Meanwhile, when the owner of the space occupied by the Museum put the unit up for sale, ten friends of the Museum led by Reston Historic Trust Vice President, Charles Veatch, organized a company to buy the space for long-term rental to the Museum at below-market rates.

Reston was born on the shores of Lake Anne (well, town and lake were actually born together in the eye of founder Robert E. Simon who now eyes the lake from his Heron House balcony every day). The plaza at Lake Anne speaks of Reston's heritage in the voices of RCC and of the Store Front Museum, and all of Reston and all of Fairfax County benefit from that heritage and those voices.

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