



## Leading a dynamic community that celebrates the *Arts*

### Travelling the highways and byways with Greg Pyra in the Kiwanis Gallery

Red Deer Arts Council and Red Deer Public Library are pleased to present *Highways of Alberta: Paintings by Greg Pyra*, which runs in the Kiwanis Gallery from June 20 to August 21, 2016. Pyra will be in attendance at our First Friday Red Deer, July 8 from 6 to 8 pm. Refreshments served.

For Greg Pyra, driving around Alberta isn't a journey; it's his artistic destination. Capturing places of comfort and refuge that are disappearing in small towns, like service stations, fast food joints and service vehicles, allows this Turner Valley artist to discover an inner peace. His stunningly realistic works are not simply landscapes, but images of calm solitude – not *still* life, but only just moving as a long day winds down.

Greg's artist statement integrates his thought process and his paintings:

*Travel in our vehicles throughout Alberta is a metaphor for the spiritual journey which we all undertake in life. There is no particular destination for these travels; rather, the journey itself becomes the object of destination. These oil paintings on canvas represent moments of harmony with self and the environment, and a core inner peace. To my mind, the ideal time for these moments is just after sunset when day is not yet complete and night has not yet fallen.*

*Dreams and Ambitions*  
Oil on Canvas  
Greg Pyra

First Friday Red Deer is sponsored by the Red Deer Downtown Business Association



*The Great Truckers,*  
*Oil on Canvas*  
Greg Pyra



Red Deer Arts Council is pleased to present our 2016 Scholarship Award Winners.

**The Princess Margaret Scholarship for Post-Secondary Students** of \$500.00 is awarded to the top scoring submission from a post-secondary student. This scholarship is awarded to **Cydnee Sparrow** of Innisfail, AB. Ms. Sparrow is a practicing rural Alberta artist, who is currently pursuing her Visual Art Diploma at Red Deer College and will receive her diploma this spring. In the fall, she intends to go on to the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts. At RDC, she has won numerous awards and scholarships. She is a straight A+ student in all her studio and academic courses, and at the top of her class in art history.

**The Canada Centennial Scholarship for Post-Secondary Students** of \$500.00 is awarded to the top scoring submission from a post-secondary student in a media other than that awarded to the Princess Margaret Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to **Ashley Rose Mercia** of Red Deer. Ms. Mercia is enrolled in the Theatre Performance and Creation Program at Red Deer College. She has performed with local Against the Wall Theatre and will be pursuing her improv skills at the Improv Olympic five-week summer intensive training course. Ms. Mercia is a talented actress whose résumé includes writing and creating new formats for Bull Skit as well as teaching and leading community workshops, all while attending RDC.

**The Canada Centennial Scholarship for Secondary Students** of \$500.00 is awarded to the top scoring submission from a secondary school student. This scholarship is awarded to **Kristen Soley**. Ms. Soley is currently attending Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School. She has performed with the Red Deer Royals and received two awards from this organization. She went to Italy in 2014 with the Royals, learning and experiencing Italian music. Ms. Soley recently won the Woodwind II award for the most outstanding woodwind in LTCHS's symphonic band.

**The Waskasoo Bluegrass Music Scholarship for Secondary Students** of \$500.00 is awarded to the top scoring submission from a secondary school student studying music and continuing his or her music career in a post-secondary school. This scholarship is awarded to **Lane Petrosenko**, who is the **FIRST** student to win this new award of the Red Deer Arts Council. Mr. Petrosenko is currently attending Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School. He is a dedicated student whose life revolves around music. He is part of the Symphonic Band, the Senior Jazz Band and the Percussion Ensemble at LTCHS. He is an aspiring young singer, percussionist and composer. He hopes to be accepted this fall into the Bachelor of Music in Jazz and Contemporary Popular Music Program at Grant McEwan.

### **Meat Draw Thursdays!**

Red Deer Arts Council is again at East 40th Pub on Thursdays, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. throughout July and August with a Meat Draw Raffle; it includes 6 - draws, plus one bonus draw and one gift certificate (each ticket costs \$1.00). See us on July 7, 14, 21 and 28! Makes a great date night! East 40th offers a BBQ dinner with a steak, baked potato, salad, dinner bun, fixings and a drink for all of \$13.95 - a steal of a deal and the steak is great! Thursday nights only. Come and help the Arts Council raise funds plus enjoy a night on the town! 3811 40 Ave, Red Deer - Phone:(403) 340-1844

### **Public Market 2016 Season**

**Red Deer Arts Council's Members** will be at the market in **Stall 104**, watch for our members: July 2 Primestock Theatre, July 9 Centrefest, July 16 Strive Dance Academy, July 23 Wildrose Harmonizers, July 30 Lettering Arts Guild of Red Deer, August 6 & 13 Strive Dance, August 20 Wildrose Harmonizers, August 27 Country Pride Dance Club, September 3 Wildrose Harmonizers, September 10 Let's Swing Red Deer, September 17 Centrefest, September 24 Culture Services for AB Culture Days, October 1 Lettering Arts Guild, October 8, Country Pride Dance Club.

Have bullwhip. Lessons available.

That's not on Thomas Usher's business card. But it should be.

"Doing bullwhip, there's not a lot of call for it, but it's really cool that you know how to do it," laughs the director, performer and Red Deer College instructor and certified instructor with Fight Directors Canada. Italian walking sticks and Zulu spears are just a couple of the more offbeat weapons he can wield, along with just about every type of sword and dagger that have pierced a doublet.

Thomas was born and raised in Edmonton to a father who was deputy minister of culture in the Peter Lougheed era, and a mother who was active in the local amateur theatre scene. He had done a small amount of theatre when younger but got serious at the University of Alberta, where he would leave with a bachelor of arts, bachelor of education and master of fine arts degrees. At 25, he was the youngest graduate of the masters in directing program.

While studying, he got involved with Edmonton's Second City and with Theatre Network, doing plays and improv with a focus on Canadian works from 1981 to 1990. He then went to Fort McMurray to join the faculty of the new theatre program at Keyano College.

He would spend four years in Fort McMurray before starting up a new professional theatre company with some friends called Prime Stock Theatre. Faced with a "saturated" local arts scene, the group turned to Red Deer and its first play was staged in the old Kresge's Block downtown in 1994, the first of 18 venues the troupe has used.

Since 1994, Thomas has directed more than 80 plays and acted in another 30 or so. His BARD on BOWER Shakespeare plays have drawn on the Beatles and Beach Boys to add a contemporary twist .

"We always look for ways to make our audiences feel at home with the text," he says. "We all know Hamlet. We all know the story but sometimes it's fun to make it resonate in different ways.

"This summer, it's Buddy Holly. It will be a lot of fun."

He traces his interest in stage fighting to 1990 and was in at the beginning of Fight Directors of Canada.

"I got in on the ground floor and I've been with them ever since. I enjoy it. It's creative and it's fun and it's so safe. Our job is to make it look dangerous ... but nobody wants to get hurt or to hurt anybody so you go out of your way to practise great technique."

He knows it sounds a little cliché to credit the students for bringing him back every year – but it's true. Their enthusiasm to learn new things is infectious.

"You just love being able to open windows and turn the lights on."

# I am the Arts



Thomas Usher, 2016

I share stories of our Alberta experience, through a global awareness of where art can take us.

I grow most by encouraging those around me to express themselves.

I choose to inspire where I live to become richer through creating opportunity.

I am Thomas Usher; director, instructor, stage combat enthusiast and new husband.

I am proud to call Red Deer my creative home.

Join me in discovering the best our city has to offer.

### Upcoming Exhibit in the Kiwanis Gallery:

August 23 to October 16

Geospace: Acrylic Paintings by Susan Delaney



CentreFest  
Street Performer's  
Festival

Central Alberta's most outrageous street performer's festival! Fun for the whole family! Fire eaters, sword swallowers, contortionists, jugglers, street circus. They also have Axiom Architecture Circus World for the kids, 100.7 Cruz FM Music World, Food World and so much more!

Downtown Red Deer, 50th Street & 49th Avenue on July 30 & July 31. For more information call 403-872-3361 or email [info@centrefest.ca](mailto:info@centrefest.ca) or go to the website <http://centrefest.ca>

### Red Deer Arts Council

[www.reddeerartscouncil.ca](http://www.reddeerartscouncil.ca)

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Thanks to the City of Red Deer for all its support through Culture Services!