

As a child I thought myself preternaturally small; a wee one waiting and always missing the puberty train. I remember my diminutive Sicilian Tsunami Mommy trying to console me in my wish to tower with the redwoods, or at least hit 6'3". The 4'11" pistol packing Pisano would prop me up, eye to eye on a step stool, and whisper, "From little acorns mighty oaks will grow". It was little comfort as I knew darn well that most of those wonderful missiles of New England autumns would either be whizzed by Sandy Koufax wannabees at just about any ole target or end up as squirrel chow.

Nonetheless, with persistence and fertile soil, kernels of thoughts like autumn acorns grow strong and take root and the forestation of dreams begins.

On Feb 17th, facing horrific budget shortfalls, the Fairfield City Council swept through Community Services like a summer scythe on fire. A twenty five year oak, the Cultural Arts Awards Program that had given shade and nourishing oxygen to thousands, was felled. Yet in the midst of the council's cultural carnage, hope remained. The Fairfield Center for the Creative Arts would remain open. Those who earned the right through the existing grant process could use it for rehearsal and performance, free.

For three years an effort smoldered to create a county wide consortium of artists sharing the understanding that the arts are a barometer and incubator of a civil society, as well as an economic engine capable of returning up to six times on investment.

On Feb 25th, in the cozy comfort of Jack and Linda's Country Café, good food was in the belly and fire was in the heart of over 40 attendees from more than two dozen major county wide arts organizations. They merged to re-invigorate the over twenty five year old 501c (3) nonprofit, state chartered Solano Arts Council, new home of the Solano Creative Arts Consortium www.solanocreativearts.com. Cats were herded and ready to roll.

A strong business model is being polished and some serious talent like Aaron Watkins, an independent marketing consultant and Monica Tipton, an arts administration educator and grants expert round out a powerful team getting down to some heavy lifting.

YOU can help. The web site, designed by Paul Fondersmith of Nvsionary Design, is improving daily. Soon there will be many ways to buy tickets to many events. The site will offer memberships with great premiums, objects d'arts for sale, a perpetual auction, a comprehensive calendar of events and auditions, discount advertising and possibly audio visual services and informative multimedia delights. The web site and the efforts of the council will be to engage the

heart, head and souls providing an E ticket multisensory ride as it entertains, educates, enthralls and enlarges our lives

A core mission for the Solano Arts Council will to pursue grants in support of outreach to K-12 and those underserved, underprivileged and undereducated in the arts. Talks with service clubs, www.kidsdayoffishing.org, Archway Recovery Services and others are underway. One of the greatest gifts we can give children is to travel leagues without transport, soar breathlessly without wings, leap the highest obstacle without leaving the ground and see into the depths of possibility with our ears as well as our eyes. Imagine pugilists refining poetry, boxers appreciating ballet and PAL patrons dabbling as playwrights. Arts are the tapestry of imagination and a fuel and fertilizer of our futures.

A renaissance of the arts is often seen in desperate economic times, lifting us up on the wings of imagination, thinking little of how far it cannot fly.

Visit the growing web site, join in the journey, comment on the blog, and make a tax deductible donation. Show up at Jack and Linda's, March 9th Monday for vittles at 6 and vital signs at 6:30 of a once little acorn stretching to be an oak.

*Kevin Ryan is a retired Colonel,
physician, musician and author who
lives in Fairfield. Reach him at
ryan_k@comcast.net.*