

# Langley Advance

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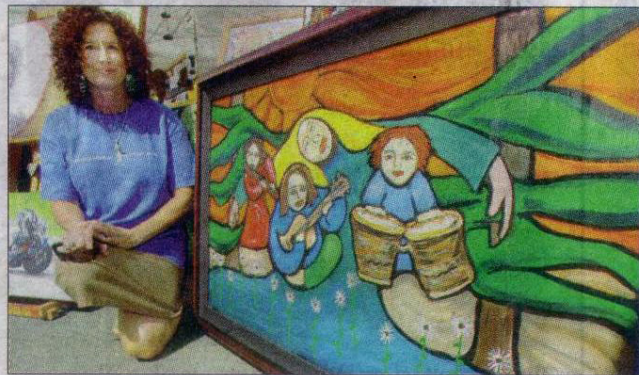
Tuesday, August 24, 2010

Your source for local sports, news, weather, and entertainment: [www.langleyadvance.com](http://www.langleyadvance.com)

Audited circulation: 41,100 - 28 pages

Arts Alive!

## Record crowds help fuel festival atmosphere



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Langley City Councillor and artist Rosemary Wallace put her acrylic painting, which she calls *Come Together in Song*, up for bids at Arts Alive!, with proceeds going to the Langley City Terry Fox Run set for Sept. 19.

Threats of rain never materialized, making for a perfect event.

by Roxanne Hooper

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It was a street party of epic proportions that attracted thousands to downtown Langley City's this weekend.

It was the annual Arts Alive!, and organizer Teri James said the huge crowds and ambience made the one-day festival the best she and others have ever seen in the event's 17-year history.

"The best part for me was that it was very much felt like a street festival,"

James said, pointing to the mix of music, exhibitors, food, activities, and buskers making an ideal combination.

"I think it went exceptionally well," said James, who has overseen the past eight Arts Alive! festivals.

In fact, arriving in the office Monday morning, she was confronted with a sea of emails. It turned out that every one of the three-dozen correspondence bore accolades, and most also contained requests from vendors wanting to sign up for next year.

"As event organizer, it's always nice to get the positive feedback," James said. "I've received nothing negative at all."

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Sheila Patzke's inspiration for her acrylic painting of a grizzly bear came from her experiences travelling through Alaska and the Yukon. Patzke is a member of the Aldergrove Art Club.



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While Arts Alive! patrons looked on, woodturner Allan Cusworth from Turned Creations sculpted a wooden bowl.

Sinclair Ibanez, 15 months, was transformed into a little bunny rabbit by face-painting aficionado Audrey Burm from Gardenia Cottage.



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Guitarist and vocalist Rick "The Devil" Dalgarno and his band The Blue Voodoo wowed visitors with their style of gritty blues music on the McBurney Lane main stage.

# Festive feel alive in the downtown

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Usually, there are a few lulls throughout the day, but James said "it was constant, constant people," estimating a record-sized crowd of at least 15,000 cruised the one-way strip of Fraser Highway on Saturday.

The fact that the weather cooperated, was also greatly appreciated by James and credited for drawing the high numbers.

With threats of rain heard during the week leading up to the festival, she received a few last minute cancellations. But the rain held off, and participants and spectators alike came out in droves.

There was, without question, also the biggest number of vendors (painters, artisans, crafters, potters, sculptures, pho-

tographers, and other artists) of any other Arts Alive!, said James, who estimated there were 150 booths.

"There's no better feeling for an event organizer to see the street full of people. What made this year special was not only the fabulous attendance, but the overall feeling of it being a street party, where everyone knows each other and is enjoying just being there. You could sense it in the air and everywhere you looked, people were having a great time," James said.

"I think the merchants were happy. I think the vendors were happy," she concluded. "I know the sponsors are delighted, so things are looking good for the 18th annual."