



The History of the Cultural Center of Cape Cod

In 2000, the decaying but still beautiful Bass River Savings Banks in South Yarmouth was about to undergo an amazing rebirth. Once considered an architectural treasure, the building had been vacant for seventeen years and was by now in such bad condition that it was virtually un-saleable and, increasingly, a neighborhood concern. A group of dedicated citizens therefore formed a non-profit organization in order to transform the elegant old building into a much-needed cultural center. A very generous neighbor, inspired by this monumental effort, purchased the building and donated it to the group.



So began the six years of dedicated grass roots fund raising necessary to finance extensive renovations, originally estimated at \$2.3 million. For five years, the majority of funds came from a Founding Sponsor drive, with average donations of \$50, and from many other fund raising events. These years were characterized by the determination and perseverance of the community, the board of trustees, and tireless volunteers. Finally, in 2006, the Town of Yarmouth voted to release \$400,000 in Community Preservation Act Funds to the Cultural Center so that the renovation could be completed.

Among the many initial renovation projects were significant roof repairs, removal of hazardous waste that included whole walls of decayed lead paint and asbestos ceiling tiles, removal and replacement of corroded heating and plumbing systems, forced opening of an old vault, and dismantling of the tellers' stations. After basic gutting, 1930s-inspired restrooms and a catering kitchen were installed. The interior was completely repainted in period color schemes, and a terrazzo floor featuring a compass rose was laid. The project was completed for \$700,000, less than a third of the original estimate, thanks to the outstanding efforts of volunteer workers and the extraordinarily competent leadership of the trustees, Business Administrator Patricia Garry, and Executive Director Robert Nash.



The Cultural Center of Cape Cod finally opened its doors on February 10, 2007. To celebrate and commemorate the occasion, art exhibits by local art associations and school children filled the galleries. Since then, the Center has held many events and exhibits and is well on its way to fulfilling its mission to support and embrace *All the Arts for All of Us*.