

# Masquerade ball to get art theme rolling

Event to fund public art in Carlsbad

*By: BARBARA HENRY - Staff Writer*

CARLSBAD ---- An effort to transform downtown Carlsbad into an artistic destination kicks off Saturday with a masquerade ball.

Attendees are encouraged to come in costumes ---- but leave that old Halloween outfit in the closet. This affair calls for cocktail dresses for women, or clothing that a wealthy man of Venice might have worn centuries ago, organizers said.

"This is a Venetian Carnivale, so it's a rather elegant ball," said Dennis Paul Batt, executive director of the Museum Artists Foundation.

The foundation is working with Carlsbad's newly formed Outdoor Art Foundation to place 30 large artistic pieces in the downtown Village area. Saturday night's ball is a fundraiser for a campaign that aims to collect \$200,000 to help pay for the installation of the pieces, Batt said.

The entire project is estimated to cost \$600,000, but organizers hope to gain matching grants and possibly city funding as well, he said.

The highlight of Saturday's event will be art ---- more than 30 regional sculptures are displaying an array of subjects, including everything from realistic wild animals to modern steel pieces, Batt said.

One piece that's expected to be a crowd-pleaser is a 7-foot-tall bronze piece of a boy feeding bread to sea gulls.

"There's all different colors and shapes ---- something for everyone," Batt said.

They are for sale, and organizers want people to spend freely.

"We strongly encourage people to purchase because 50 percent goes to the artist ... and the other 50 percent goes to put sculptures in the Village," Batt said.

Art has been a contentious topic in Carlsbad. Years ago, city leaders tore down a giant beachfront piece after community members opposed its installation.

Batt said he hopes that by including all types of sculptures at Saturday's event, people will be able to see how modern art fits into the greater artistic world.

The event is set for 6 p.m. to midnight at Ocean House, the former Neimans restaurant at 300 Carlsbad Village Drive. Tickets cost \$60 a person in advance or \$75 at the door.

In addition to the sculpture show, a performance by the Small Opera of San Diego is planned. Music for dancing will be provided by the Bayou Brothers.

As of Thursday, more than 100 tickets had been sold and organizers were expecting a crowd of close to 400 people.

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