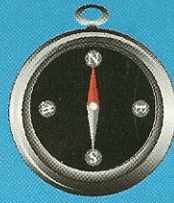


JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006

25 NORTH

Magazine for Northern Colorado



WHY FLY?

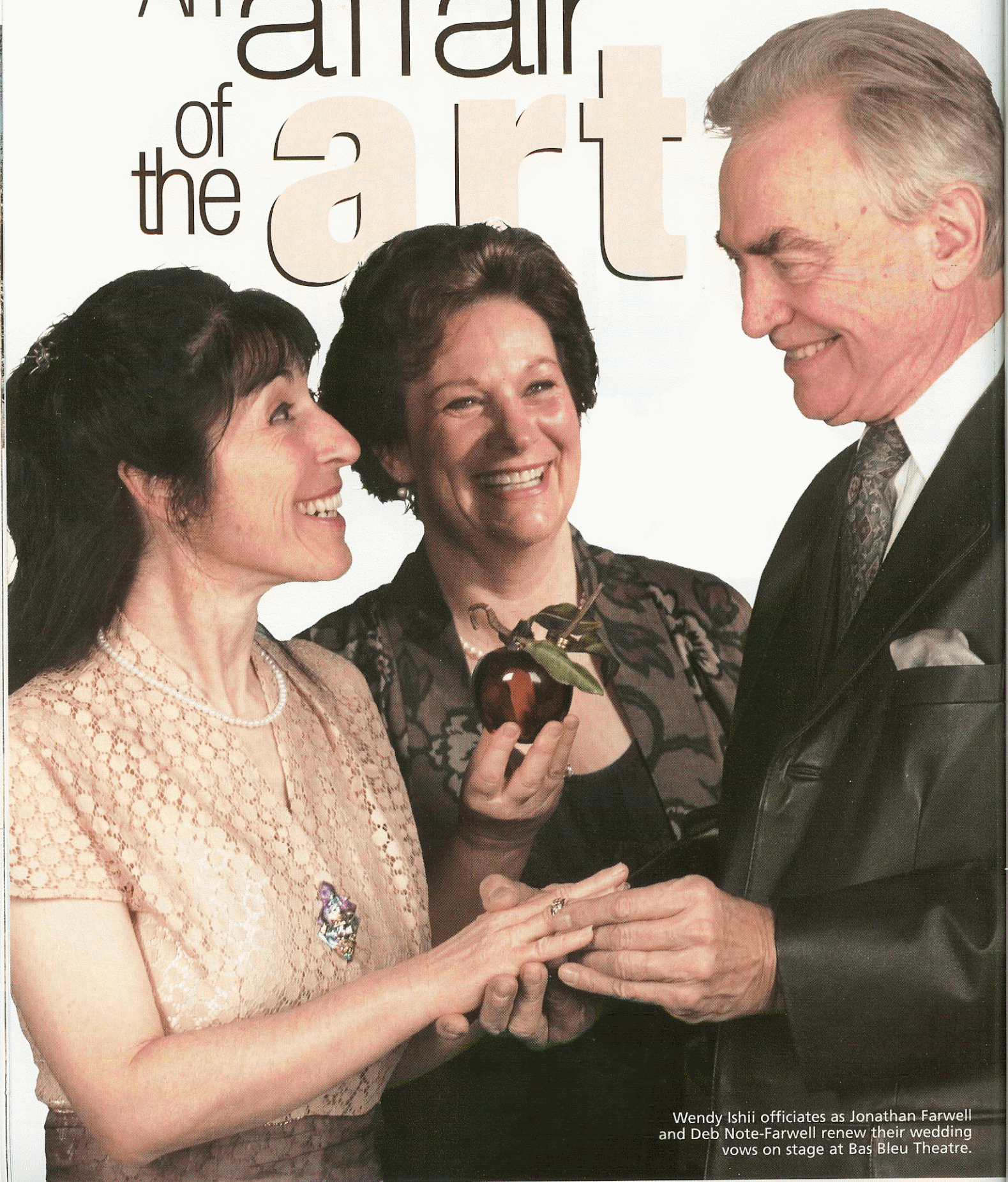
Adventure fuels
local pilots' lifestyle

YOUR PERFECT VALENTINE'S DAY

Rediscover romance in our region

Northern Colorado
homeowners find
solar solutions

An affair of the art



Wendy Ishii officiates as Jonathan Farwell and Deb Note-Farwell renew their wedding vows on stage at Bas Bleu Theatre.

Cultural vibrance lures acting couple to region

By Maryjo Faith Morgan
Photos by Peter Heacox

Cupid soon took center stage when actors Deb Note and Jonathan Farwell met in 1994 at the initial rehearsal of William Nicholson's "Shadowlands" in Ashland, Ore.

The following June, they recited their marriage vows — for real, albeit onstage — after a matinee performance. Both had just moved to Ashland and didn't know many people, so they invited the audience to be their wedding guests.

Ten years later they renewed their vows as they first took them — onstage after a performance of the same play that brought them together — at the Bas Bleu Theatre in Fort Collins. Wendy Ishii, the theater's artistic director and Jonathan's longtime friend, led the ceremony. This time the Farwells invited their new friends and neighbors in Fort Collins to join them in the celebration and in the start of another "stage" in their lives.

Artistic collaboration in the community and plans for a cultural center downtown played a role in bringing the dynamic couple to Fort Collins.

"Arts in the community are really booming now," Deb says. "Arts Alive is a wonderful alliance with people who are doers. When it comes to fruition, it will support and complement every small arts group. It promotes all the arts, not just theater arts."

Arts Alive is a collaboration of theaters, art galleries, music venues, museums and other organizations in the com-

munity. Ishii, a supporter of the group, has been promoting artistic collaboration in Fort Collins since moving to the city in the mid-1980s. She arrived shortly after a gig on the soap opera "All My Children" alongside Jonathan.

"My character was a noble lawyer," Ishii says with mock chagrin. "Jonathan played the part of an evil judge (Martel) who ruled against me. I lost my case."

But Ishii has prevailed in her efforts to persuade her colleague to move to Fort Collins.

She says it started as sort of a joke. Each time Jonathan came to town, she would ask when he was moving to Fort Collins. Jonathan says he was always impressed with the area. He brought Deb to Fort Collins on their honeymoon,

and they performed "A Miscellany of Music and Monologues" at Bas Bleu. In August 2004, he and Deb came to celebrate Bas Bleu's move to its new location and perform in the old theater's "Last Hurrah." When they returned to attend the grand-opening of the new venue in October, they gave in to Ishii's request and staked their claim in Clydesdale Park, south of East Mulberry Street.

Downtown revival

The Farwells say they are invigorated by a renewed interest in the arts, particularly downtown. They say they feel an energy in Fort Collins they haven't experienced in a long time.

The newcomers are eager to see what unfolds with the Downtown

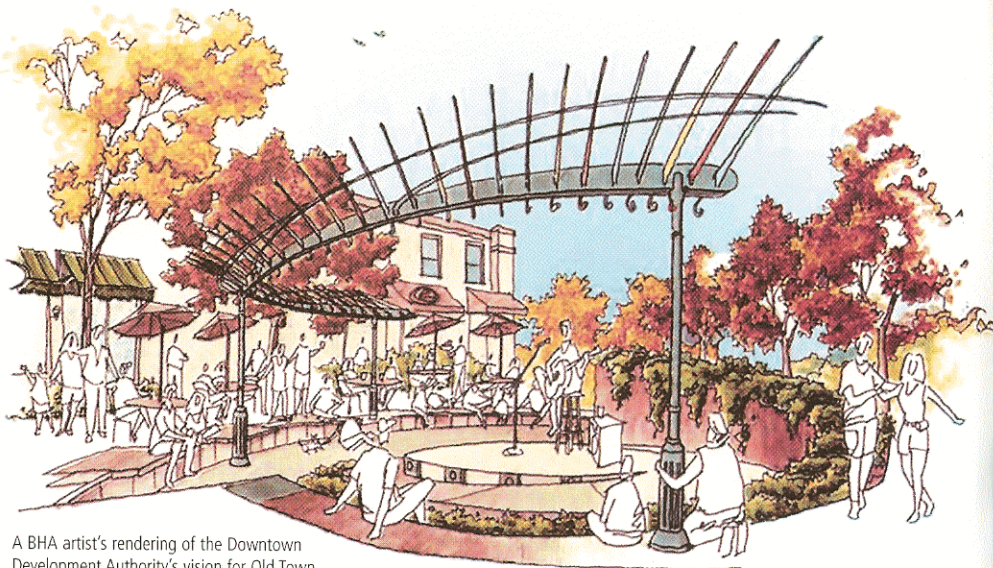


Jonathan and Deb perform in 'Shadowlands,' which ended its run at Bas Bleu Theatre earlier this month.

Development Authority's vision for a cultural center modeled after the Chautauqua Institute in New York. DDA executive director Chip Steiner hopes the area will flourish as theaters, arts organizations, recreational facilities, Colorado State University, restaurants and retailers work together toward a cultural revival.

"It will be a really rich, well-rounded experience that is similar to Chautauqua, N.Y., but with two big distinctions," Steiner says. "One is that we intend to overlay it on the existing business district; we want all of the downtown to be the campus. And secondly, we do not want to compete with existing programs; we want to partner with them to market nationally."

The DDA is putting \$560,000 into the project this year, part of a \$3 million pledge to get the cultural center started. Weekly themed programs would explore the arts, history, politics, science and more by using the talents and resources of existing businesses, organizations, artists and educators. Steiner hopes a multipurpose facility with



A BHA artist's rendering of the Downtown Development Authority's vision for Old Town

classrooms and small auditoriums, a marketplace, an amphitheater and a performing arts center will be part of the reformation, which he expects could take 10 years.

"The programming will drive the need for bricks and mortar," Steiner says. "Communities that focus on the cultural side tend to attract other creative people across the spectrum."

Steiner is delighted that talented per-

formers like Deb and Jonathan are moving to Fort Collins with this vision in their hearts. He is also reaching out to CSU for "untapped resources" that could enhance the cultural programming, including the new University Center for the Arts. Ishii teaches an acting class at Colorado State University. She says it is the balance of arts and technology, culture and education that will make the downtown vision a success.

SELECT

WOOD FLOORS INC.

New Construction • Refinishing • Repairs • Sanding

*Palo Duro Collection
Hand Scraped*

- Eco-Friendly Bamboo
- Australian Wormy Chestnut
- Engineered Flooring
- Quick-Step Laminate
- Brazilian Cherry
- Asian Mahogany
- Hickory
- Red Birch, And More

Visit our newly expanded showroom with over 50 new flooring choices

225 N. Lemay, Suite 6 - Fort Collins 970-224-1452 | 6268 W. 10th St., Unit C - Greeley 970-353-6400

Locally Owned & Operated Since 1997

'Communities that focus on the cultural side tend to attract other creative people across the spectrum.'

— Chip Steiner, DDA

A bright future

The Farwells have already started visiting schools to share with students their passion for theater. They look forward to working with the university as guest artists and collaborating with students and faculty in cultural programs downtown.

"We find it thrilling the way the university energy permeates the city with such an incredible life force," the Farwells say, speaking almost in unison and finishing each other's sentences. "Many other university cities do not have the cultural infusion into the community that we have here. In other places it sort of stays on campus, as if drama departments didn't want the students to go out into the community."

The couple is looking forward to a variety of opportunities in venues throughout Northern Colorado. Deb and Jonathan once again presented "A Miscellany of Music and Monologues" at Bas Bleu as part of this year's First Night Celebration. Deb is playing Yenta the Matchmaker in Carousel Dinner Theater's presentation of "Fiddler on the Roof," starting Jan. 26.

"Although Bas Bleu may have been the magnet that brought them here, they're artists, and they will hopefully work with all the arts organizations and educational places in town," Ishii says.

After 11 years the Farwells are still making headlines for their true love story, which in ways echoes the plot of the play that brought them together. Their passion still burns as dramatically as their art, as does their enthusiasm for Fort Collins, their chosen home. ■

Freelance writer Maryjo Faith Morgan lives in Loveland.

AWP Esthetics & Spa

*For a
New You...*

Now Offering Massage Therapy

All of our esthetic services
are 25% off, through
February 28, 2006.
Bring in this ad for discount.

Megan Duran,
Licensed Medical Esthetician

Barb Nesbitt,
Licensed Esthetician

Kaeleen Lane,
Certified Massage Therapist

1224 E. Elizabeth St.
970-221-4977

~ Other Services Offered ~
photo rejuvenation, laser hair removal,
spider & facial vein removal, customized
facials, chemical peels, waxing & tinting,
hand treatments



FRESH COLORS & STYLES

Fresh ideas. Fresh selection. Come see our
new selection of framed art & objects d'art
art, home accessories, silk botanicals,
furniture, lighting, plants, stems and other
unique items. Take your pick of fabulous
colors & stunning styles.



FLOWERS & DECORATING GALLERY

3710 Mitchell Drive, Fort Collins / 226-0200
www.PalmerFlowers.com