

Non-Profit Happenings

There's magic afoot, but the Grand County Education Foundation is not an illusion

by Nancy Kurtz

Melodie McCandless is chair of the 8-member Board of the Grand County Education Foundation and hard-working parent of three Grand County students. A vivacious brunette with roots in Moab, she is refreshingly candid about the nonprofit's free-wheeling profile.

If you are enrolled in any of Grand County's schools, or connected in any way, shape, or form with those same schools, you well know of the GCEF as the peripatetic patron that funds things like bus rides to sundry extracurricular events, regularly donates to Grand County Area Mentoring and other nonprofits via grant requests, provides scholarship money to at least one student every year, bolsters the bank accounts of the high school marching band and other school related activities via ticket sales, and supports a program that helps kids with vision problems by buying them free glasses.

What McCandless calls the "cherry on top" - over and above the basics covered by the school district - makes this provider of volleyball uniforms, audiovisuals and other supports to the schools - as well as to educational nonprofits such as the Canyonlands Field Institute and the Youth Garden Project -- one of those home-grown organizations that since its beginnings in '09 has quietly become a part of the community bedrock.

GCEF relies on volunteers and the students themselves to help with logistics and ticket sales to fundraising events. Bookkeeping is done on a shoestring and GCEF has no office space of its own. "We try to keep our costs really low," McCandless says, adding, "There are moments we've had zero money. We've given it all away."

While there are those, including McCandless, who would like to see the organization grow, the fact that the war chest is a moveable feat gives her and GCEF a unique sense of freedom. "We don't have to go through hoops to make a decision," she says. That allows them to suss out - often by word of mouth - ad hoc funding targets at any given moment.

"Anything that happens in the community for the kids," she emphasizes, "can ask for support from GCEF."



Funding comes from numerous sources. One of the most lucrative is a quarterly paycheck from Moab City Market's rewards program, supplemented by other donations on the website and elsewhere, while what has morphed into a frequent visit from David DaVinci, a man of magic, mystery and enchantment around this time of year is GCEF's most popular public event.

Billed a "Thrillusionist", DaVinci's dramatic "beyond reality" show is not only family-friendly, he is the perfect counterpart to the spirit of GCEF.

What started with an initial contact by local realtor Ludean Merritt has led to what has become somewhat of a GCEF staple. DaVinci, whose website boasts of a touring schedule that whisks him worldwide to six continents, will perform his lights and shadows on the stage of Grand County High School. "It's exciting," McCandless says of the show, "light and hand movements to create illusions." The idea being, she adds, "that magic is not real."



Melodie McCandless

The nitty gritty: For those wishing to volunteer, make donations, ask questions or make grant requests, McCandless can be reached at 435-259-9797. Also check out the website, grandcef.org, where there is event information and a link to GCEF's Facebook page. For those wishing to participate at a deeper level, the Board

meets the third Thursday of every month at 4 p.m. in the conference room of Moab Realty, 301 400 East.

And of course - there's the very real magic show October 4, 7 p.m. at the Grand County High School auditorium.

Be sure to mention you read about the Grand County Education Foundation in *Moab Happenings*.

Moab Clubs & Organizations

For a community to prosper and grow, its residents have to be **INVOLVED**. If you would like to participate in any club or organization, **PLEASE CALL THEM**. Many of these groups are always looking for a helping hand or two.

Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA) Triangle House 84 W. 100 S. call or text (435) 220-0646	Moab Community Theater (Kaki Hunter)(435) 259-8378
Alcoholics Anonymous(435)-625-1342	Moab Disk Golf Club(435) 259-2255
For Emergencies (24/7) 888-333-9649	Moab Family History Center.....(435) 259-5563
Alpha Rho Sorority (Bobbie Long).....(435) 259-6758	Moab Folk Festival & Free Concert Series (Cassie Paup)(435) 260-1756
American Legion Post (Ronald Irvin)(435) 719-4095	Moab Free Health Clinic (Kate Jagle).....(435) 259-1113
Arches Education Center (Trish Hedin).....(435) 260-8764	Moab Friends For Wheelin' Jeep Club (Melissa Fischer).....(435) 260-7208
Arches New Hope Pregnancy Center(435) 259-LIFE (5433)	Moab Garden Club (Tricia Scott).....(303) 880-9158
BEACON (Xandra Odland)(435) 719-4801	Moab Golf Club (Rob Jones).....(435) 259-6488
Boy Scouts of America (Mingo Gritts).....(435) 260-0871	Moab Healthcare Foundation (Beth Logan)(435) 260-8889
Canyonlands Arts Council(435) 259-2742	Moab International Film Festival (Denise Felaar).....(407) 233-8290
Canyonlands Back Country Horsemen (Steve Schultz)(435) 220-0860	Moab Masonic Lodge #30 (Gregory Klepzig).....(435) 260-1823
Canyonlands Field Institute (Jory Macomber)(435) 259-7750	Moab Museum (Forrest Rodgers)www.moabmuseum.org • (435) 259-7985
Canyonlands Rodeo Club (Kirk Pearson + Krista Wilson).....(435) 260-2222 + (435) 260-7942	Moab Music Festival (Amy Weiser).....(435) 259-7003
Colorado Outward Bound School – Moab Basecamp (Lance Plank)(719) 293-5371	Moab Rotary April Action Car Show(435) 260-1948
Community Rebuilds (Rikki Epperson).....(435) 260-0501	Moab Solutions (Sara Melnicoff).....www.moab-solutions.org ... (435) 401-4685
Daughters of Utah Pioneers (Katheryn Jackson).....(435) 259-5229	Moab Speaks (Daniel McNeil).....(435) 260-9646
Delicate Stitchers Quilt Guild (Crystal Day)(435) 260-8537	Moab Sportsmen's Club (Frank Darcey)(435) 259-2222
Friends of Arches and Canyonlands Parks (Steve Evers).....(435) 259-0108	Moab Taiko (Michele Blackburn)(435) 259-0816
Friends of Indian Creek.....info@friendsofindiancreek.org	Moab To Monument Valley Film Commission (Bega Metzner)(435)-259-4341
Friends of the Grand County Library (Jessie Magleby)(435) 259-1111	Moab Trails Alliance (Kirstin Peterson)(435) 259-5223
Girl Scouts of The U.S.A. (Melodie McCandless)(435) 259-9797	Moab Valley Multicultural Center (Rhiana Medina)(435) 259-5444
Grand Area Mentoring (Dan McNeil)(435) 260-9646	Nursing Home Abuse Support (Nicole Peters)www.nursinghomeabusesupport.com
Grand Center(435) 259-6623	Order of the Eastern Star (Fran Townsend).....(435) 259-6469
Grand County Democratic Party (Bob Greenberg).....(435) 260-9665	Plateau Restoration/Conservation Adventures (Tamsin McCormick)(435) 259-7733
Grand County Extension & 4-H (Catherine Hansen).....(435) 259-7558	Red Rock Arts Festival (Moab Arts)(435) 259-6272
Grand County Education Foundation (Melodie McCandless).....(435) 259-9797	Red Rock 4-Wheelers (Ron Brewer).....(435) 259-7625
Grand County Food Bank(435) 259-6456	Rotary Club (Melissa Stocks)(435) 220-1258
Grand County Hospice (Margy Swenson).....(435) 719-3772	Seekhaven Crisis Center (Abigail Taylor).....(435) 259-2229
Grand County Library (Jessie Magleby).....(435) 259-1111	Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (Neal Clark)(435) 259-7090
Grand County Republican Partygrandcogop@gmail.com	Trail Mix Committee (Colin Topper).....MoabTrailMix@gmail.com
Humane Society of Moab Valley(435) 259-4862	Underdog Animal Rescue & Rehab (Jackie)(435) 260-8033
KZMU Community Radio (Barbro Rakos).....(435) 259-8824	Uranium Watch (Sarah Fields)(435) 260-8384
Ladies Golf Club (Chris Woodard).....(435) 259-6488	Utah Avalanche Center.....(888) 999-4019 or (435) 259-SNOW
League of Women Voters (Carey Dabney)(801) 938-4038	Utah Conservation Corps (Sean Damitz).....(435) 797-0964 ext 8
Moab Arts Festival (Theresa King)(435) 259-2742	Utah Friends of Paleontology – Gastonia Chapter (Lee Shenton)(435) 259-2179
Moab Arts Center (Kelley McInerney).....(435) 259-6272	Utah State University Moab.....(435) 259-7432
Moab Bird Club (Nick Eason).....(435) 259-6447	Valley Voices (Marian Eason).....(435) 259-6447
Moab Chamber of Commerce (Laici Shumway)(435) 259-7814	Veterans of Foreign Wars (Fred Every)(435) 260-1277
Moab City Animal Control(435) 259-8938	WabiSabi www.wabisabimoab.org(435) 259-3313
Moab City Recreation (Patrick Trim)(435) 259-2255	Youth Garden Project (Emily Roberson)259-BEAN (2326)
Moab Community Dance Band (Miriam Graham)(516) 376-8003	Utah State University Moab(435) 259-7432
Moab Community Garden (Becky Mann).....mocomgardens@gmail.com	