



Following tradition, an evergreen is placed on top of the entrance to the new ArtsCenter in Carrboro as part of the gable raising

\$30,000 gift

ArtsCenter closes in on challenge

By **JOANNE GORDON**
Arts/Features Editor

The ArtsCenter raised a 1,500-pound steel gable above the entrance to the new center located at 300 East Main St. in Carrboro last Wednesday to herald a \$30,000 gift from Burroughs Wellcome Co.

The Gable was raised as a symbol and trademark of ArtsCenter and to announce the Burroughs Wellcome gift, which is the largest donation to ArtsCenter. "The Burroughs Wellcome gift came at a good time . . . (the gable raising) really picked up spirits around here," said Betts Wilson, communications coordinator of ArtsCenter.

With the Burroughs Wellcome gift, ArtsCenter is within \$50,000 of reaching a challenge issued in late March by an anonymous donor. By the end of this month, if ArtsCenter raises these funds, the donor will donate another \$75,000 to the completion of the facility.

The 21,000-square-foot ArtsCenter facility was scheduled to open by June, but due to insufficient funds the construction was slowed and the opening postponed until July.

According to Wilson, the ArtsCenter building will probably not be completely finished when the center opens in July, but ArtsCenter officials did not want to wait any longer.

ArtsCenter has gone through

many changes and developments since its opening. In 1974 the ArtSchool was founded by a group of local artists who felt the need for a community center which would encourage artistic development, experimentation and collaboration, and to provide a focus for cultural activities.

As interest grew, ArtSchool expanded to meet the community's needs. In 1976, ArtSchool moved from a loft in Carrboro to the Carr Mill Mall. By 1982, it was a thriving center for visual, literary and performing arts.

As the center developed, the name changed. In 1985, ArtSchool added the descriptive name Center for Visual and Performing Arts to accurately reflect its programs.

In 1986, larger audiences, an increasing number of volunteers and continued support from the community underscored the need for a larger facility. ArtSchool began a campaign to raise \$936,000 for operation, renovations and construction of the new facility.

With the new facility, ArtSchool will officially become the ArtsCenter for Visual, Performing and Literary Arts. The name "ArtSchool" will refer to the educational programs of ArtsCenter.

In keeping with its original purpose, ArtsCenter is community focused. According to Wilson, it was founded with the mission "to promote, nurture and challenge

the creative spirit of the people of Orange County and the surrounding areas and to provide for learning and participation in all the artistic disciplines."

With the expanded facility, ArtsCenter will be three times the size of its original location, and it will be branching out to reach into the community, Wilson said.

ArtsCenter presents a broad range of artistic events and opportunities, from major touring professional theatre productions to the Senior Citizens Meet Your Neighbor Club. ArtsCenter also presents monthly gallery exhibits, films, the Monday Night Live! talent showcase, and a wide variety of musical concerts including the Sunday Jazz Series and classical chamber performances.

To incorporate all of these activities under one roof, ArtsCenter will house a 350-seat theatre, a sky-lit art gallery, a video production studio, a full scale ceramic studio, a maple floored dance studio, a film theatre, a senior citizens center, classrooms, a 1,000-foot photographic studio and a darkroom donated by Burroughs Wellcome.

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