

Local artists turn to furry friends for 'Animal House' exhibit

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It's a zoo in there. There are certainly a lot of animals at the Sacramento Fine Arts Center these days. Co-sponsored by the Sacramento SPCA and the Carmichael Recreation and Park District, the Fine Arts Center's annual Animal House show opened February 23. The animal themed art show will run through March 13 featuring paintings, sculpture, photography and mixed media, all about animals and the animal kingdom.

To invite serious artists to participate, there are \$3,000 in cash prizes to be awarded at the gala reception, March 13, which will feature a jazz band, an SPCA animal rescue operation, an Audubon exhibit, painting demonstrations, and, of course, fabulous art.

"We have over 200 entries in this juried show," said Bonnie Otto, president of the fine arts center, "but only space for the 100 to be selected." The judges

included Susan Sarback, nationally known artist, author and educator, Ann and Doug Otto, one of Sacramento's premier fine art photographers.

The March 13 reception will open at 5:30 p.m. Painting demonstrations by Rene Reyes and David Peterson will begin at 2 p.m. Dogs and cats to be rescued will be present. Both the demonstrations and the reception are free to the public. Great food and drinks will be available. And, of course, fabulous art.

The Sacramento Fine Arts Center is a non-profit community based organization dedicated to education in the arts, providing exhibit opportunities to both aspiring and accomplished artists, and sponsoring workshops and classes in a wide variety of art media. The Sacramento Fine Arts Center is located at 5330-B Gibbons Drive in Carmichael.

"We urge everyone with an interest in art or animals to come out and enjoy this show," Otto said.

Top 5 topics to talk about before saying 'I Do'

By STEVE DEBENEDETTI-EMANUEL
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If this is the year that you're finally going to put a ring on her finger, you'll get about five minutes to enjoy your new status before you need to start making seemingly infinite decisions about your wedding. As important and all consuming as this process can be, it's also crucial to set aside time to examine issues you'll face after you say, "I do."

Start by examining how well you communicate and solve problems. If she comes from a family where the arguments were loud, started with the morning coffee and continued all day long, while your family solved problems by ignoring them and hoping they went away on their own, you'll have some work to do. Commit to finding a style in which each of you feels heard and respected and solutions are agreed upon. Once you find this balance (which is different for each couple), you'll have a foundation established to discuss five crucial issues.

Physical intimacy is a good place to start. Although most couples are sexually active before getting married, it's important to anticipate that your sexual relationship will change. It's crucial to discuss issues like frequency and who initiates romantic contact.

This leads naturally into a discussion of whether or not you want children. And if so, how many do you have? If you do have children, you'll need to explore philosophies on childrearing. Are you of the "spare the rod and spoil the child camp," while she doesn't think it's ever OK to spank a child? Do you think nightly family dinners are important, while she thinks that people should eat when they're hungry and where they're comfortable? Do you want to point your child towards a college education, while he thinks children should be able to figure it out without pressure or expectations? Do you think children should have one parent stay at home, while he thinks both of you need to be working to support your lifestyle?

This leads to a conversation about money. Begin by examining your attitudes around saving and debt. Do you want to purchase a house? Who will make the big decisions on investing, and who will be responsible for paying the bills and managing the day-to-day budget?

As tedious as it may be, it's also important to discuss household duties. This is a sticking point for many couples, as one spouse (typically the man) expects to live in a house similar to that of his childhood.

Times have changed and most of the women I've talked to aren't OK with this traditional set-up. They need their spouse to pull his weight both inside and outside the home. With this in mind, it's crucial to discuss this and develop a blueprint for who's going to do what.

Finally, it is important to consider if religion and spirituality are going to be a part of your relationship. If so, will you go to church every week, or only on holidays? If you have children, how important is it to attend church regularly and as a family? Also, do you plan to pray at home?

Granted, these conversations are going to be long and challenging. However, it's crucial to talk about these and other difficult issues before your big day. If you're comfortable with your decisions, you'll be able to walk down the aisle with your eyes wide open, knowing that you've developed the skills to talk through the difficult issues that you'll face for the rest of your married life.

Steve DeBenedetti-Emanuel is a licensed marriage and family therapist based in the Sacramento area. Steve's columns appear periodically in the Valley Community Newspapers. Ask Steve your questions - e-mail him at steve@rivercitycounseling.com.

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