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City of Grover Beach Mural Program Announces First Dunite Themed Artwork!

The Dunites were people who lived in the sand dunes south of Oceano from around the time of the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1895 until 1974, when the last Dunite living in the Dunes passed away. Among the Dunites were artists, writers, poets, and philosophers, and others who enjoyed a free and easy life style with excellent climate, no rent and no taxes.

Some Dunites were associated with the Utopian Colony of “Moy Mell” which was created by Chester Alan Arthur III, grandson of U.S. President Chester Alan Arthur and was located in the dunes about two miles south of Oceano. Others were religious mystics who preferred to live alone as hermits, apart from the festivities and social atmosphere of Moy Mell. One of these hermit mystics was Elwood Decker who first came into the dunes in 1931.

In recognition of their historical, artistic and cultural influence on our area, a local group has worked with the City of Grover Beach to create a Dunite-themed mural on the north wall of the Excellent Center for Art and Culture, at 1111 Grand Avenue. The mural will commemorate Dunite art and feature elements created by Elwood Decker. Elwood was the most well-known and prolific artist in the dunes, where he lived during the 1930’s and 40’s.

Two of Elwood’s works represented include a group of dancers from a poster that he made after being inspired by a Reggae music concert he attended in the 1980s.

And a *Dune Goddess* that is from a carving that Elwood created inside a wooden bowl.

The *Goddess* will be leading the dancers and carrying bubbles that drift behind her and around the dancers as she runs across the dunes. On the backside of the wooden bowl he wrote, “A Dune Goddess, scattering bubbles of illusion to entertain and instruct children like us ___ 1939.”

It is our hope that this mural will be the first in a series that helps create awareness of the Dunites in the South County, and an appreciation of the dunes as a unique and special environment.

An artist’s concept of the mural and further information may be seen at kyxz.org

(Krista Jeffries will be coordinating other artists in the actual painting of the Mural)

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