

Non-Profit Happenings

From Trash to Treasure with a new twist – legendary KZMU Radio to host legendary event

by Nancy Kurtz

The trash:

Funky, creative, whimsical – that’s how KZMU Radio’s station manager Jenna Whetzel describes the annual Moab event known as the “Trashion Show”. She intends to keep it that way, now that the radio station is partnering with the Moab Sun News to put on the runway extravaganza.

In mid-November a call came to KZMU from the Resiliency Hub’s Claire Core, the previous producer of the event. The 2024 Trashion Show last March was a labor of love; Core had been heading up the eleven year-old event for some time now and this incarnation was meant to be her last; she had only to find the right fit. “If you want it,” she told Whetzel, “it’s yours.” Core had already engaged the Moab Sun News in the mix, Whetzel said yes, and the very next day the news was out.

The show features a judged competition for the best



costumes; music and dancing, this year starring local band Sun Flood (percussion, saxophone and “heavy dance grooves”); and a free-wheeling environment that sizzles with fun, exuberance and freedom of expression.

Historically, the event goes back in time to the “aughts” when it was known as the “Wabi Sabi Annual Mardi Gras Fashion Bizarre” and the contestants modeled clothing off the racks of the local thrift store.

The updated Trashion Show added a new dimension – using recyclable materials to craft original outfits. Everything from the various and sundry manifestations of plastic to paper bags to newsprint to aluminum cans and more qualified. It was a great fit for the Resiliency Hub, whose stated mission is to support sustainability and environmental justice through things like community collaboration, gardening, permaculture and recycling.

The treasure:

Funky, creative, whimsical - It’s

November. The radio station announces in its monthly online newsletter that it will recreate this year’s annual Trashion Show on Saturday, Feb. 22. Under the headline “Station Manager Happenings,” Jenna Whetzel writes, “It has almost been half a year since I took on the role of Station Manager and I find myself wearing many hats. There is so much going on, where do I even begin?”

Flash back half a year: KZMU is a station in transition. The station manager position is vacant. Rumors abound, but the process is long and arduous. This is a small, minimally staffed nonprofit radio station with support coming from a dedicated local following that has withstood the moguls, mountains, and deep water for more than thirty years, and it is in need of new leadership. (For more background on KZMU, check out Non-Profit Happenings, April, 2023.)

Whetzel applied for the position and by summer had been hired. She calls it her “dream job” and talks about the “Kismet” that brought her back to Moab last June. But there is so much more to this story:

Locals may remember Whetzel when she lived in Moab for five years and was heavily involved both in project management with the local housing authority and in creating and performing in the radio musicals – yes, funky creative and whimsical! - that KZMU produced and performed at the downtown Star Hall theater. “I fell in love with the station,” Whetzel says; writing and performing in the plays fit in with her need to do something more creative and collaborative.

She left Moab in 2022 to, as she puts it, “shake up my life” and wound up in Charleston, South Carolina earning



a Master’s Degree in Public Administration with a focus on arts and cultural management. This was May of 2024. About a week later, the job in Moab opened up.

Whetzel moved here before even knowing if she had a job – Three weeks after she returned to Moab, KZMU made her the offer and she accepted.

“There’s a lot to learn,” Whetzel tells me. “I’ve known different realms, but this was radio, specifically.” Working with two full-time employees – Whetzel herself and news director Emily Arntsen – and Crystal Bunch, who is part time music director – a dedicated Board of Directors, a part-time engineer and a bevy of volunteer dee-jays - she oversees the administration, the daily broadcasts from the station and presides over two essential fund-raising events every year, one in April and the other in October.

To get extra help beyond volunteer assistance, Whetzel is planning to expand staff at the new year, hiring a part-time independent contractor to work on fund-raising and special events, perhaps including the Trashion Show itself– in essence, a trick bag to add to staff “when it’s most needed.”

Happy New year from Non-profit Happenings to Whetzel and KZMU, happy 2025 to fashion shows and the collaborative spirit and the partnerships and stories that keep all the Moab nonprofits going even when the going gets rough. Don’t forget to support our local community radio and be sure to mark your calendars for the 22nd of February, when the denizens of the runway will gather at Woody’s Tavern once again to reveal their inner whimsy and strut and dance to the music.

Seekhaven’s Puttin’ on the Ritz 2025

Seekhaven will be hosting the classiest event of 2025 —Puttin’ on the Ritz—on Saturday Feb. 8, at the Hoodoo Moab! Themed “Masquerade”, attendees are invited to sport their finest attire and join fellow Moabites for an evening full of first-class dining and dancing in addition to a silent auction chock-full of regional art, activities, and services. The evening begins at 6 pm, giving attendees a chance to socialize and bid on a wide array of silent auction items. The silent auction bidding and payment will be managed on the Bid Beacon app, so you can bid on your phone throughout the night, ensuring great winnings! Please note that a \$10 initial bidding registration fee does apply. Dinner will be prepared by the talented staff at Josie Wyatt’s, and served around 7 pm with dancing to follow!

Puttin’ On the Ritz helps raise funds to sustain and expand Seekhaven’s safe shelter, supportive services, and educational programs. Seekhaven is the primary advocacy program for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and is the only emergency shelter in the region serving Emery, Grand, and San Juan Counties. Over the past year, Seekhaven served a record breaking 394 people, provided nearly a quarter million dollars in financial aid to survivors, and educated at least 2,500 individuals to prevent violence before it ever occurs. Your support and participation ensures Seekhaven can continue to provide needed services in Southeast Utah!



Assembly of God 1202 South Boulder Avenue	435-259-7747
Bahá’í Faith	435-650-5778
Canyonlands Fellowship 111 East 100 North	435-260-2434
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	
First & Second Wards	435-259-5566
475 West 400 North	
Third, Fourth & Fifth Wards	435-259-5567
701 Locust Lane	

Moab Church Services Directory

Community Church 544 MiVida Drive	435-259-7319	Grace Lutheran Church 360 West 400 North	435-259-5017
Episcopal Church of St. Francis 250 South Kane Creek Blvd	435-259-5831	Jewish Interfaith Beit Moabi	435-260-0241
First Baptist Church SBC 420 MiVida Drive	435-259-7310	Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses 25 Dogwood Ave	435-259-8166
Friends in Christ Free Lutheran Church 1240 South Highway 191	435-259-4378	Moab Baptist Church 356 West Kane Creek Blvd.	435-259-8481
		Not So Churchy in Moab	970-213-8208

Quaker Meeting 239 West Center St.	775-442-1298 text only
River of Life Christian Fellowship 2651 East Arroyo Rd.	435-259-8308
St. Pius X Catholic Church 122 West 400 North	435-259-5211
Seventh Day Adventist 4581 Spanish Valley Drive	435-259-5545
The Church of Christ 456 Emma Boulevard	435-259-6690