

[The banners say so: Culture is 'COOL' in Lowell](#)

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Sunday, August 17, 2003 - Culture is cool at least in Lowell.

To that end, the Cultural Organization of Lowell, under executive director Stephanie Jones McCarthy's guidance, has had bright, colorful, new banners installed on the lightposts along Merrimack Street. These delightful flags, proclaiming "Culture is COOL" were designed by Mark Dwinell of Dracut, who was an artist in residence at Evos Arts.

COOL has launched a couple of other successful programs that have done well this summer.

One is the new Museums of Lowell Passport to Adventure program. Lowell's nine museums American Textile History Museum, Revolving Museum, New England Quilt Museum, Boott Cotton Mills Museum, Brush Art Gallery and Studios, Mogan Cultural Center, Whistler House Museum of Art, University Gallery at UMass Lowell and the National Streetcar Museum of Lowell have joined forces with a new Web site www.museumsoflowell.org, a new logo by graphics designer Joan Ross, plus a new passport program.

Eight of the museums are within walking distance of each other, allowing visitors the luxury of taking in several by strolling along the cobblestone streets.

You can pick up your "Passport to Adventure" at the Greater Merrimack Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau Center at the Chelmsford stops on Interstate 495 or at any of the museums in Lowell.

Have the passport stamped at five or more of the museums and send it to the COOL office in the Department of Planning and Development at the JFK Plaza in Lowell. You will soon find a map and T-shirt with the appealing logo in your mailbox.

"We hope people will wear the T-shirts with pride and tell their friends, family members and colleagues how to get their own Museums of Lowell T-shirt," says Jones McCarthy.

One avid visitor actually returned a passport from South Africa.

Plans include handing out T-shirts to running clubs and at Lock Monsters games in an effort to promote Lowell's museums. Who says culture and sports don't mix?

COOL has also launched a new Web site www.cultureiscool.org, designed and undergoing regular revamping by web designer Annalisa Oswald.

One feature that will remain consistent is the centralized Cultural Calendar. By accessing the COOL Web site, you'll be taken to a user-friendly calendar of events, which can be viewed in several different formats. You'll even be able to print it out and hang it on the fridge door for quick reference.

"Visitors and residents will be able to visit the site, choose an exciting event and play an entire day's worth of fun in Lowell," said Jones McCarthy.

Arts and cultural groups will be able to use the calendar as a planning tool, too, for upcoming offerings to help them avoid scheduling conflicts.

This is a welcome change, according to Diane Giarrusso, director of community outreach at the Pollard Memorial Library.

The library had maintained a cultural and community calendar for the past few years, picking up the slack after the demise of Lowell Office of Cultural Affairs, COOL's predecessor.

But, says Giarrusso, this new system is "wonderful and very user-friendly. Our calendar will now link to COOL's."