

Gathering to celebrate 'the sacredness of life'

Some organizers say more 'traditional' groups might be skeptical of Sunday's Interfaith festival

By CLAY EVANS
Camera Staff Writer

Virtually every "legitimate" religious and spiritual organization in Boulder received an invitation to participate in the second annual "Hearts, Hands and Voices Interfaith Festival" this Sunday.

But organizers Janet McCabe and Steve Rohrbach acknowledge that more "traditional" Jewish and Christian groups might still cast a skeptical eye on the event, which "celebrates the sacredness of life . . . while fostering a spirit of worldwide community, peace, cooperation and understanding."

"What we have found in the Boulder area is that the older, Eastern religions and some of the New Age religions are the ones who have been more receptive to this idea," said McCabe, 53, who was raised in a conservative Jewish home but has gravitated to ecumenism during her life.

At Sunday's festival in Chautauqua Park, groups as diverse as the Unitarian Universalist Church, the Sacred Mountain Ashram and the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Boulder will gather to present music, dialogue, prayer and food in the interest of promoting understand-

WHAT: Hearts, Hands and Voices Interfaith Festival, featuring interfaith panels and dialogue, information booths, music, dancing, art and food.

WHERE: Chautauqua Park

WHEN: Noon to 6 p.m. Sunday

ing between different belief systems.

To weed out fly-by-night groups or less serious enterprises, organizers invited only groups with legitimate, federal non-profit status.

"We have always tried to hold enough of a center that we can be acceptable to both traditional Christianity as well as Eckankar," said Rohrbach, a former Lutheran who now says the "Urantia Book" — a 20th Century faith that embellishes Christian beliefs with an extensive cosmology and history of alien civilizations — has had a large impact on his spiritual life.

"We've got to get to the point where we respect others for where they are, and quit trying to change them. Other-
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Photo courtesy Hearts, Hands and Voices Interfaith Festival

Members of Boulder-area religious and spiritual organizations gathered last year at the Hearts, Hands and Voices Interfaith Festival. This year's festival will be Sunday at Chautauqua Park.

Interfaith festival faces some skeptics

(From the cover)

wise, we are stuck in our own camps, and we won't get anywhere," he said.

Boulder's Betsy Serafin knows all about stretching the boundaries of her own Catholic faith to include other notions of the divine. Her recent book on mysticism, "The Rose of Five Petals," (which is selling well enough to keep Serafin traveling as far away as New York and Texas for signings) draws from such diverse sources as Hinduism and Judaism to make its point.

"I think this is going to be the thrust of the new century," said Serafin, whose panel on mysticism Sunday will include Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu and Christian per-

spectives. "We have to start looking at ourselves as a planet, we have to see ourselves as one homogeneous group of believers. There is only one god, though it might have many names."

Both McCabe and Rohrbach hope to build on the success of last year's festival, which drew about 2,000 people. Last year, however, many may have come simply to see Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary, the headline musical act.

This year's program does not feature a single, marquee entertainer, instead relying on local talent such as Tibetan musician Nawong Kechong, gospel choir Heavenly Echoes, and a group of Persian Sufi dancers.