

Milton Artists' Guild

February 15, 2018

Art Center

6 – 8 pm

Attending: Gisela Alpert, Melanie Bishop, Donna Blatchly, Claudette Eaton, Julie Duquette, Mary Ann Godin, Cathy LaClair, David Lesperance, Tina Lesperance, Linda Stech, Judy Taylor, Stephen Webb, Trine Wilson

Valentines Masquerade Ball Fundraiser – Recap - The event was planned to complement the Milton Winter Festival, but in doing so, no admission fee could be charged. Gisela thanked the guild and town committee members Pilar Paulsen, Julie Griffis, El Towle, Cathy LaClair, Kim Duscheneau, and Ben Nappi. The attendance was low at the Eagles Club event; 57 attended. The snowy weather may have been a contributing factor. Few members of the community participated. Expenses: \$200 for the Eagles Club venue, \$300 for the music, \$100 for the chocolate fountain, \$253 for decorations. Income: \$210 from donations at the door, \$100 from the rec department, \$123 from the raffle table (a big thank you to the donors!), and \$101 from the photo booth manned by Betsy Finstad. It was a net loss of \$329. Next time we do a project like this, we would ask that potential profit and loss be analyzed before continuing.

A thank you to the volunteers at the event: Betsy Finstad, Linda Stech, El Towle, and Donna Blatchly; and a thank you to the publicity committee. Sharon Radtke posted the event on Facebook, and arranged to have coverage from channel 3, and channel 44 live broadcast. This event was widely publicized.

Julie mentioned that we had a lack of volunteers; we could have used more. Pilar's husband Everett helped to decorate. There was a poor turnout of guild members.

Pilar agreed with Julie stating that she was happy with the public turnout, but disappointed with the low number of guild members attending.

Brainstorming comments:

- Overall, members thought that the event was worthwhile, and may try again next year.
- Mary Ann thought that the event was lovely.
- It was suggested that we increase public outreach by posting on bulletin boards of local businesses. It was posted in the Milton Independent, but many residents might not read it.
- Some guests didn't have a babysitter available; perhaps we can change the target age group. There was a mini-ball for the very young nearby, but the in-between aged children had nowhere to go.
- Calling the event a 'Ball' may have made people feel uncomfortable, perhaps we could call it a Valentines, or Sweetheart Dance.
- It was suggested that we partner with a business who might both sponsor the event and help promote it.
- Some mentioned being intimidated by the mask, and there was some confusion about the dress code.
- Perhaps we will increase the planning time to 6 – 8 months prior.
- It was suggested that we get a band rather than a DJ; however the DJ was excellent. People liked the dancing, and stayed late.

- The decorations and music were very nice. The decorations were packed up to reuse next year, but we would need balloons.
- The group voted to do the event again next year.

Member question - Julie Duquette is looking for member advice regarding the use of marijuana leaves incorporated into her art. Her current pieces on display at the gallery feature maple leaves and other plant life. She wants to make sure that her intended pieces don't offend members. She will research the legality of its use in this respect.

Workshop committee - Julie Griffis will be helping the committee by sending out notifications to other art groups, and posting workshops to the MAG calendar. We are still looking for additional volunteers.

Last month, the committee hosted the bimonthly meeting Community Arts Education Council, CAEK. It was highly recommended that the MAG add children's summer camp opportunities in addition to our regular adult enrichment workshops. It could be a profitable way to increase funding to the art center. We may need to have the children's workshop teachers vetted by the state, and will also be analyzing risks of the project, and verifying that our insurance would be adequate.

The Homeschoolers group has approached the guild about holding arts education workshops at least one day a month.

- It was suggested that we partner with the library, perhaps making an art project related to a book.
- It was suggested that we do the homeschoolers program to match the regular school year. We could do a trial one, perhaps two hours, start slow.
- Some families may need help to make the program affordable.
- Gisela will approach Gardeners Supply to do a sponsorship or make a donation towards this project.
- Mary Ann will investigate whether Vermont Arts Council can help with a kids' art program.
- It was asked if we would have to follow a state curriculum; Linda said that the art program design is open. We would need to broaden the target age group and not limit it to the 8 – 12 year olds.
- This program could be a lead-in to after school workshops.
- The homeschoolers representative was invited to the workshop committee meeting to discuss the proposal.
- We would like additional volunteers to work on the program.

Trine asked how we could better motivate members to participate and grow the guild and make it thrive – have the pride of ownership, belonging. The new membership form asks people to volunteer; there is a reminder of the reduced 25% gallery commission for those who volunteer. Dave said that growth isn't measured by the membership numbers, but of that of the percentage of participating members. Cathy asked if we've ever had an all-hands-on-deck meeting required. Perhaps another pizza party? How do we measure success? Is it when all the workshops are filled? Melanie suggested that the roles of the committee members be written down; without knowing, it's difficult to know what one is volunteering for.

Photography group – Bernhard has acquired a projector for the group. It could be used to show work, discuss software, etc. An announcement will be sent via email. The group meets every fourth Wednesday; the next meeting is February 28 from 5:30 – 7 pm.

Opening the Gallery – Gisela announced that we have a dropbox for the gallery key. It's located on the wall closer to our neighboring restaurant. The person who opens the gallery would call, text or email in for a time-limited code to access the box and retrieve the door key. With this system, we've been able to eliminate the 5 opening shifts of the key holders. Training is available for using the dropbox.

Community Outreach – Linda Moran and Barbara Pafume are interviewing teenagers to get ideas for an art project this summer. They welcome volunteers to help with this project.

Seniors Project – Trine Wilson and Linda Moran are organizing Thursday Teas, where a Senior Center is invited to visit and enjoy refreshments. It would be a formal tea party with linens, tea pots, tea cups, and perhaps a chocolate fountain. Bakers will be asked for pastry donations. Each day will have a theme, like the Red Hat Society, etc. A guest speaker will be invited to talk about art or their workshops. This would be on the 4th Thursdays of each month, from 1:30 to 3 pm, and run from March to October, then pick up again the following spring.

Art Swap - Linda mentioned that some of our visitors have asked to purchase art supplies. We will probably do the art swap again later in the spring to raise money. We can designate one person to be in charge of accepting new or gently used art supplies for this purpose.

1st Year Anniversary Party – May 5th will mark the first year in the art center. Please send ideas for the celebration to Gisela. Linda suggested that we do a theme, like the 'art of beer & wine'. Queen City Brewery will do samplers, a beer tasting. We may be able to get a winery and perhaps cheese tastings. Hells Gate distillery in Georgia makes a black currant liquor, and another local merchant is the Groenfell Meadery in Colchester.

Vermont Arts Council – the guild has become a 'member'. This will allow the guild to participate in the widely publicized Open Studio on Memorial Day weekend. More information will be forthcoming.

The next meeting of the guild will be on March 15th, from 10 to noon.

Respectfully submitted by Christina Lesperance