

Milton Artist Guild monthly meeting

November 17, 2016

Sampler House

10 am to noon

Members attending:

Gisela Alpert, Doris Bergeron, Ann Bissonnette, Donna Blatchly, Bill Boccio, Deborah Dolby, Greg Drew, Claudette Eaton, David Lesperance, Tina Lesperance, Lorraine Manley, Raymond McClure, Linda Stech, Judy Taylor, Trine Wilson, Valerie Ugro, Jim Yolda, Ellen Young

The bank balance is \$10,776 but the bills for the Artfest have not been paid yet

**Artfest discussion** – we may not have use of the grange next year as it may be put up for sale, so we are looking for a new venue. We had about 380 visitors this year. Despite all the advertising, the number of visitors has not significantly increased. We used Facebook extensively and put ads in the newspapers.

Dave Lesperance – great job, biggest problem grange location, lack of parking, old building, navigation

Trine Wilson – echoed Dave – art is great but grange is not a quality venue, is a social event, visitors come for the free food and to socialize, need a more appealing venue

Annette Hansen – questioned advertising versus attendance

Doris Bergeron – Essex dropped the ball, Milton Independent forgot to put in the paid ad that was ordered, but put it into the calendar page by error (turned out to be beneficial to us in that it looked good, and we weren't charged).

Gisela mentioned that we had used Front Porch Forum and used Facebook extensively, and made use of paid 'boosts' which increased our coverage. Burlington Free Press would have charged us \$287 for an ad for a single day, Seven Days \$347 fee was exposure for an entire week. The Milton Independent would have charged \$102, had they run the ad, but their error putting it in the calendar section benefitted us

The average sales dollars overall of the 37 exhibitors, were \$350 - \$400 per person.

Greg Drew said that the guild's advantage over most shows is that we have a very high quality product. Schools have a 'craft show' feel. Our venue (the grange) does not portray the impression that we are trying to express.

Debra Dolby mentioned that artists need to have a 'range' of product prices to appeal to all buyers

Some local venues were mentioned; the senior center would be too small for a show, the Georgia Mountain Maples was mentioned, but as a going business, would not work as a venue. There is an empty space in the Hannaford plaza near Aubuchon Hardware (as with other unoccupied business venues), that wouldn't work for a show venue, as they would be subject to occupancy by their owners.

Members discussed renting the Essex Expo (fairground buildings), perhaps with another art group (to defray costs).

Gisela will be sending out the total \$ group sales amount and all of the advertising sites to the exhibitors.

**Rewards of Service:** members can volunteer for as much or as little as works for them. We are an all-volunteer organization and every little bit someone can help out benefits all of us. Committee formation begins in January.

Ellen Young said that in helping out and meeting people she felt a sense of community, and did not find it to be overwhelming.

Annette Hansen (exhibit committee) liked working with Linda Stech. She learned how to hang and label the art, got to make her own decisions, had autonomy, and it made her feel good.

Judy Taylor helped with last year's Barnes and Noble fundraiser (and will volunteer this year as well). She also helped the exhibition committee (on an impromptu basis).

Jim Yolda (exhibit committee) said that he enjoyed working with the other members.

Ann Bissonnette said that she appreciated the help from other members when physical limitations limit her.

It was suggested that we send out a list of things that people can volunteer for. Some tasks are a one-time only, some are of longer duration. Any help is greatly appreciated.

Annette Hansen suggested that the group start a 'skills database'.

**Fundraising: Barnes & Noble fundraiser:** Doris Bergeron mentioned that she needed a couple more volunteers for the Barnes and Noble fundraiser, but would be sending an email regarding the topic.

Gisela announced that the Milton Hannaford store has chosen the guild to be the recipient of the re-usable bag program for December; purchases of the 'Good Karma' bag will yield a \$1 donation to the MAG. It was suggested that the guild might participate in future bag designs.

Deborah Dolby had a last minute cancellation at her bed & breakfast, so her guest graciously made a donation to a charity of her choice. A check for \$150 was made to the guild from her customer. A thank you note will be sent.

Gisela read out a thank you note from the library for MAG's donation to the basket raffle.

**Holiday Dinner:** A location for the holiday festivities dinner was discussed. Members wanted a weekend date (so more could attend) and more importantly, daytime hours to make the driving easier. More information will be sent via email.

**Holiday E-Card:** The e-card winner was announced: Tawnya McDonald is the winner this year, and will receive a \$50 gift certificate of her choosing.

Gisela mentioned that from the recent survey members asked for more workshops. Having more, and well-attended, and quality workshops will help in our goal to expand the MAG. She asked the members present what workshops they would be willing to attend or teach.

Suggestions were:

- Photographing our own art

- Pricing our art
- Framing
- Writing workshop
- Figure drawing (model would be paid, and an instructor would be available for the first lesson)
- How to request a grant; grant writing
- Fluid watercolor class

**Poster project** – Gisela explained how the poster project was implemented last year and said that we were gearing up for the next round of posters in the spring of 2017. We will be soliciting ideas for poster venues. The cost to the MAG is approximately \$100, but there is no cost to the artist. In 2016, posters were distributed to 25 locations. Any member whose art was not chosen last time may submit a new image for the binder, as well as for new active members (an ‘active’ member is one who has submitted images for the MAG website). More information will be sent out.

#### **Exhibit news:**

**Cyto Expressions** – (March/April 2017) the signup sheet for the group show at Biotek was passed around. This a two month exhibition based on the artist’s interpretation of cells. The piece can be any size, any medium, one per person. No commission is taken. Please contact Gisela, [vtsnowgise@gmail.com](mailto:vtsnowgise@gmail.com), to join.

**Frog Hollow** (October 2017) will host the MAG for an exhibit with the theme ‘Off the Wall’. This is a juried exhibit and Frog Hollow takes a 50% commission on pieces sold, so price your work accordingly. Pedestals are available. There is a 12 foot wall and some smaller free standing walls available for 2-D art. Please contact Linda Stech to participate ([lstech@comcast.net](mailto:lstech@comcast.net)).

**Dealer.com:** The business designs and makes websites for car dealerships, and has about 1200 employees. They have a reputation for being very supportive to the art community, and in fact have become a resource for art lovers. The exhibit space is open to their employees only, but art displayed there routinely sells. The buyers are young & progressive in their choices. No commission is taken. Please submit work for consideration to Linda Stech, [lstech@comcast.net](mailto:lstech@comcast.net), who will be the facilitator for the site. The Dealer.com representative chooses the art displayed. She has a good eye and knows what sells. The Burlington Furniture Company will be contacted as a possible exhibit site for the MAG.

Exhibit committee news: Trine Wilson will be acting as co-chair for the exhibit committee. There will be an informational and training/re-training session for members interested in joining the exhibit committee in January.

**Path forward** – We are planning an outdoor art infusion in Milton. It will benefit the town and communities nearby. It also increases exposure of the MAG. A call for large outdoor sculptures will be sent out to all artists in the State of Vermont for a two or three month exhibit near the town offices (summer to fall). There is no specified theme. The work must be durable, and the work of transport and removal is the responsibility of the artist. Insurance for the work will be covered by the artist. Each piece will carry a plaque with the title, contact information, and price if it is for sale. The details are not yet finalized. Another project in the works is Outdoor Murals. More information will be announced.

**Email communications reminder:** the group is reminded not to hit the ‘reply to all’ button when responding to emails, unless it is appropriate. It was also requested that when starting an email thread that the sender include the topic of the email in the title, as it helps to quickly find information when looking for important information.

MAG membership for 2017 comes up on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Members who have joined in the last quarter of 2016 are covered for the next year. Please bring you \$30 dues to the January meeting, or pay via PayPal on our website [www.miltonartistsguild.org](http://www.miltonartistsguild.org) or send a check made out to the MAG to: P.O. Box 369, Milton, VT 05468

Starting in January, meetings will have an additional half hour for socializing and art. This will be done on a trial basis for 4 months. Should this new time line be conducive to incorporating business and art, we would move to vote on it at the Annual meeting in June. Morning meetings will be extended by a half hour (10 – 12:30), and evening meetings will begin a half an hour earlier (5:30 to 8). This measure was approved at the October meeting.

The next monthly meeting will be on Thursday, January 19, at Mary Ann Godin's home, from 10 to 12:30.

Respectfully submitted by Christina Lesperance