

## **Macon County Art Association Planning Process**

Last November a motivated group of members met with the Board to talk about the results of the membership survey and the direction the Art Association should take. They looked at all the results and the comments made by respondents. Then they thought about what they'd like the Association to be like in five or more years' time and what would be required to achieve that vision. In the survey members overwhelmingly approved the direction in which the Association is headed; the proposed vision and mission are therefore refinements of the present mission statement rather than radical ideas.

### **The Survey**

The survey showed that the present membership comprises both artists who are primarily interested in displaying their work in the Uptown Gallery (these "hanging" members are referred to as Gallery members in the strategic plan) and members whose primary interests are in networking with, and learning from, other artists. Although both the Association and the Gallery were rated highly in the survey, the comments accompanying the ratings had several suggestions for improvement. These were all discussed at the planning meeting.

It was also notable in the survey that members were mostly pleased with all the educational offerings. Over a quarter of the respondents attend monthly meetings. These were rated very highly. People were also pleased with the lectures, workshops and demonstrations held last year, as well as the ongoing classes. However, less than one-tenth of the responding members go to classes. They are twice as likely to attend lectures and Saturday workshops. They were split evenly on whether the Association should hold workshops with nationally recognized artists. Opportunities for painting and drawing together were popular as were social events. Any suggestions for improvement were posted and discussed at the planning meeting.

Members are satisfied that the Association is moving in the right direction. At the planning meeting the Board and Association members present tried to define and refine this direction.

They worked on where the Association should be in five to ten years' time and some of the necessary steps to get there. These form the basis of the strategic plan, and has been refined by discussions with the Board and members since the planning meeting.

### **The Intent or Vision Statement**

The first part of the plan is the Intent or vision and the purpose or mission of the Association. The intent statement is the picture of what we want the Association to look like in five (or perhaps ten) years. It is of an Association that can credibly represent itself as encompassing all two and three dimensional static visual arts, the artists in the area producing them and the supporters of these arts. It is of an Association promoting these arts throughout the community and educating the community about these arts. It is of an Association not bounded by the confines of the classroom or the Gallery but one that takes art out into the community, to people young and old.

This statement is the reference point for all that follows; if a proposed action or activity is not in keeping with the vision it should not take place, unless the Association revises the intent.

### **The Purpose or Mission Statement**

The purpose statement describes what the Association does to support the intent. The first paragraph in this section is the purpose statement; it is followed by a brief description of the present operations of the Association. These statements are useful in keeping the Association on track and in describing the Association to potential members, donors and grant awarding bodies.

### **The Goals and Objectives**

Goals are a broad statement of what needs to be done to fulfill the intent and the purpose. Objectives are the actions needed to achieve the goals. They are focused on the future so they generally do not include the present operations of the Association. If objectives need to be set for these operations, they are set using the intent statement as the guide.

After the plan is finalized down to the objectives level, the objectives will be broken down even

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further, to the actions to be taken. Then if necessary these are broken down again into steps and a date will be attached to it, saying when it will be completed. Only by finishing each step is the action done. Each action done brings the objective closer.

The long-range plan is for the Association to be an active, integral part of the community. It takes a fresh look at art education and art appreciation. The plan recognizes an increasing need to refocus on all its members and the services they want. The plan asks a permanent Gallery committee to oversee Gallery policy implementation for the Gallery, including its day-to-day operation. The committee would also be responsible for policy development, but Gallery policy would be approved by the Association Board. This would allow the Association Board to concentrate on the Association as a whole: the activities other than art sales and display plus the infrastructure to support them.

The plan is for the Association to be the organization that represents every one of the static visual artists in its service area and to be the organization to join if you are a supporter of the static visual arts.

In other words, its artists produce aesthetic works in all kinds of two- and three-dimensional media such as:  
painting, collage, drawing, photography, folk art media (most of the present Gallery members);  
clay art (we have new members who are clay artists);  
sculpture – glass, metal, wood and stone (we have members who produce art in these media);  
mobiles.

Members may be working at any level in these and similar media. They may be established artists or beginning artists. Student artists at the local colleges and university as well as senior high school students are welcome as members. The Association facilitates their participation.

To attract members working or beginning to work in some of these media may require providing workshop space and equipment for such artists. This may mean a larger workshop area. Learning from other artists is a prime reason for non-displaying artists to join the Association, so there is an emphasis on education and networking.

Another emphasis in the plan is the recognition of the need to have as members the area artists who have their own gallery or are represented by commercial galleries other than the Uptown Gallery. The future Gallery will look more like these galleries, but there is a consensus to build on the local aspect of the artist membership of the Association.

To serve the Association's members, the Gallery displays aesthetic art in various two- and three-dimensional media. It does not display crafts or utilitarian art such as wearable art. The consensus is that the Gallery should look like an art gallery, not a gift shop, but should build on the local "hometown" aspect of the artists. Three dimensional art needs more floor space than two dimensional art; the Gallery may need to be expanded to accommodate them. The location of the Gallery on Main Street is unchanged in the plan; the only way it can be made bigger is by moving the workshop space. The Association is asked to find out if moving the workshop space is feasible. It is important to have this space convenient and handicapped-accessible so using space above or below the gallery is ruled out. Whether or not the Gallery expands, its appearance is enhanced. The workshop space is optimally used.

The physical presence of the Uptown Gallery and the workshop space is one way to support art and artists and put art into Franklin, but there are other ways to foster art appreciation such as talking to classes in the schools, teaching classes at the senior centers or talking to civic clubs. The Association looks for opportunities to do these and to partner with other non-profits to bring art to their users and supporters. Increasing support from sponsors, either individual or corporate, also helps to bring art into the community. Offering open educational meetings and workshops, some for young people, brings a knowledge of art and artists' techniques to the area.

The Association recognizes the unfavorable economic conditions and that new revenue sources are required to ensure the future of the Association and the Gallery. It uses marketing to promote the Association and the Gallery and development to acquire funds to support its activities. It has a variety of memberships and donor categories to promote giving.

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The Association recognizes its members are the most important resource of all. It meets as many of their wants and needs as it can. It promotes their art and represents them on the internet, in organizations and at events as appropriate. It provides a welcoming, inspiring atmosphere and opportunities to network and socialize with other artists.

### **The Board and its responsibilities**

In the plan the goals and objectives are arranged under functional headings. These are: membership, community partnerships, education, the Gallery, marketing, facilities and development. As each of these areas of responsibility is critical to achieving the vision they are represented on the Board of the Association.

Often in organizations the most critical functions are given to Vice Presidents. In the proposed structure for the Board, the vice presidents are responsible for marketing and development and for education. The Board, with its committees and responsibilities, would look like this:

President (Board, Strategic Planning)

Immediate Past President (Historian, Parliamentary Procedures)

Secretary (Minutes, Communications, Phone Committee, Newsletter)

Treasurer (Budget, Financial Reports, Tax Returns, Audit)

VP - Education (Meeting presentations, Workshops, Classes and Interest groups)

VP - Marketing and Development (Marketing, Event Publicity, Fundraising, Grants, Internet and websites); Community Partnerships (Charitable work, Speaker's Bureau, Community Art displays).

Gallery Director (Gallery Committee - Arts Center Policy and Operations - Display, Sales, Calendar coordination, Offsite sales and shows,

Membership (Membership, Social and Meeting Refreshments, Sunshine, Library and other services to members)

Facilities (Maintenance & Development of Arts Center Gallery, Meeting Area, Workshop area, Offsite display panels)

The Board responsibilities include ongoing functions of the Association, such as the social committee and library under membership. The main differences are those arising by necessity from the plan. The Gallery committee and a few other committees are chaired by Board members but in most cases the Board members appoint chairpersons of the committees and oversee the work they do. Some chairpersons may be asked to attend Board meetings and over time it may be prudent to add some chairpersons to the Board, in particular some of those under the vice-presidents.

This is a strategic plan to be accomplished over a period of five years to ten years or more; it will not be done this year or next. Each year committees and functions have steps to accomplish rather than entire goals. However, to make the plan achievable, members need to help in the Association's work by serving on committees and by doing necessary jobs.