

**THE GUILD OF ARTISTS & ARTISANS
2008 ANNUAL MEETING
HOLIDAY INN NORTH CAMPUS
ANN ARBOR, MI
JULY 20, 2008 10 A.M.**

Meeting Minutes

Chair Chris Maher called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m.

The Credentials Committee confirmed that a quorum was present (30 voting members).

Without objection, the Chair appointed Patricia Austin as parliamentarian.

Without objection, the standing rules were adopted.

Without objection, the chair appointed Walt Pinkus and Jane Wilhelm as tellers.

Without objection, the Chair appointed Simon Tarasiewicz and Mike Baum as timekeepers.

Chair Chris Maher announced that the 2007 Annual Meeting Minutes had been approved by the Board of Directors and printed in the Guild's newsletter.

By general consent, the Chair Chris Maher appointed Marie Frost as official transcriber.

By general consent, the Chair appointed Patricia Austin, Billie Griner, Chris Maher and Max Clayton as the Minutes Review Committee.

State of the Guild

Chair Chris Maher introduced the board members and Guild staff and thanked everyone, including volunteers and summer employees, for their hard work.

Chair Chris Maher then delivered his annual report. He noted that the Guild continues to face several challenges including the problem economy in Michigan and nationwide. But, he announced that there were also positive developments, such as the merchants and city coming together and getting behind the Summer Art Fair like never before. He attributed this support to the persistence and hard work of Executive Director Max Clayton. He then encouraged Guild members to keep trying to overcome the hard times, and thanked them for their continuing efforts.

Chair Chris Maher then introduced Executive Director Max Clayton.

Ms. Clayton delivered the Executive Director's report. She thanked the Guild staff for their hard work, especially during the Summer Art Fair. She then thanked outgoing Chair Chris Maher for his extraordinary leadership and efforts to unite guild members. She also recognized outgoing members Jan Kaulins and Annette Morrin for their service and commitment.

Ms. Clayton then presented the Guild's 2007 financial report.

She announced that the Guild is maintaining its financial stability although a cautious approach to future purchases and a conservative budget are necessary to maintain that stability. She announced that the 2007 audited tax forms show a surplus of approximately \$89,000, up from the \$35,000 surplus from the previous year. She explained that about half of the 2007 surplus is due to additional sponsorship revenue; in fact, 2007 was a record-breaking year for Guild sponsorship income.

Ms. Clayton announced that 2008 sponsorship is down from 2007, due in part to the last-minute withdrawal of Lexus, Meijer and Bank of America from the Summer Art Fair, and Huntington Bank from the Crocker Park and Levis fairs. She noted, however, that new sponsors Costco, Cabinet Clinic and Ashley Terrace helped make up for some of the lost revenue. She stated that Guild staff is already working on new sponsorship commitments for 2009, the 50th anniversary of the Ann Arbor Art Fairs, although the troubled economy may depress sponsorship support.

Ms. Clayton announced that merchandise income was down in 2007, at \$32,578, partly due to decreased sales of the Cooleroos, which was likely due to the cooler temperatures of the Summer Art Fair. She thanked Guild member Doug Spalding for providing the artwork for the 2008 Summer Art Fair poster and souvenir merchandise.

Regarding Guild membership, she observed that membership was down in 2007, the third year in a row, reducing membership income by \$2,832 from 2006. She encouraged Guild members to look for prospective members, stressing that falling membership numbers could have a profound impact on the future of the Guild.

She then cited the fact that 95 percent of program income is spent on program expenses, and that those expenses are 75 percent of the total budget expenses.

Next, Ms. Clayton addressed the status of the Crocker Park, Levis Commons and Holiday art fairs.

Levis Commons, she stated, was growing steadily, with attendance reaching close to 35,000, making the fair the premiere event of the Town Center. Town Center management confirmed that during the Guild's event the Town Center businesses and restaurants were as busy or busier as a Christmas shopping weekend. This has ensured that the fair will continue. She said the Levis fair was filled for 2008, and that Levis is attracting sponsorship attention and producing income.

The Crocker Park Fine Art Fair continues to bring 100,000 fairgoers to the Westlake location. The Crocker Park management is so please with its relationship with the Guild that it has invited the Guild to be part of its new Fall Fest. The Guild has agreed to produce a fine art event for the festival which is enhancing our relationship with Crocker Park. She said that the owner of Crocker is so pleased with the event that he has stated that he is willing to contribute advertising funds in support of the event.

She announced that plans were in motion to bring back the Holiday Art Fair, and that more information would be shared as it became available. The goal being to bring back the Holiday Art Fair in 2009.

Ms. Clayton then presented challenges facing the Guild. She reiterated that the decline in membership is a growing concern. She said the change in membership structure would help this situation, and that it is important to maintain the integrity and honor of being invited into the Guild's exhibiting membership category. The second challenge she addressed is that of technology. She stressed the need for the Guild website to be re-done, and the need to modernize and digitize Guild communications. Both projects will require significant resources, but will save time, postage and other production costs. The final challenge, she stated, is marketing. She noted that the Guild is always exploring new ways of marketing, new ways of reaching both traditional fairgoers and those new to such events.

Finally, Ms. Clayton reported on the directive from the 2005 which encouraged the Guild to look into the days and times of the Ann Arbor Art Fairs. She announced that the discussion had evolved into a marketing research collaboration among the four Ann Arbor fairs, as well as other local entities such as the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, the Ann Arbor Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Ann Arbor Chamber of Commerce, the Arts Alliance and the Main Street Area Association.

On behalf of the collaboration, the four fairs had contracted with a professional marketing research firm to design and conduct a research survey to gather fairgoer information that would include Ann Arbor Art Fair attendance habits, planned spending, and other demographic information in order to understand the preferences and expectations of attendees. This information will be absolutely necessary in determining any suggested change to the days and hours of the event; it will also provide helpful marketing information when identifying sponsorship targets and developing public relations efforts. During the 2008 Summer Art Fair, 800 fairgoers were interviewed about their habits and preferences for the fair and the its schedule. She said several reports will be available once the data has been finalized and will be shared with the Guild membership.

Special Order

Chair Chris Maher announced the official results of the board elections. Returning member Paul Christopher James received 87 votes. New member Priscilla Eggen received 104 votes. New member Doug Spalding received 99 votes. New member Jane Wilhelm received 94 votes. There were 3 votes for "other." The Chair welcomed the board members, and noted that this year more people had come forward and run for the board than in previous years. Without objection, the Chair stated that the ballots will be destroyed.

New Business

Chair Chris Maher announced that no resolutions had been submitted prior to the meeting. He called for motions from the floor; there were none.

Good of the Order

Simon Tarasiewicz asked about the required width of the fire aisles on Main St. during the Ann Arbor Fair – he said he measured and found that the widths varied greatly. He also noted that some booths were near drains.

Alan Bogl confirmed that the widths of the fire aisles on Main St. do vary greatly, and that it is due to the mapping that was done years ago to accommodate for restaurant patios, etc. He noted that the old mapping also did not take drain locations into consideration. He said to re-do the mapping in that area with the fire marshal would result in less space for booths, and recommended against that.

Chair Chris Maher recommended that Simon Tarasiewicz volunteer for the mapping committee, because his insights and past experience would be of use to newer member volunteers.

Peggy Leonard said that the staff did a great job of quickly cleaning up the rain on Saturday with shop-vacs.

Chair Chris Maher concurred, and stated that the artists were given good advance notification about the approaching storms.

Gwen Bennett asked for chalk in the mapping kit, and noted that her spray can didn't work well.

Jan Kaulins noticed permanent paint on the street and questioned its legality.

Alan Bogl mentioned that he did not know who used the permanent paint, but clarified that it is indeed illegal.

Executive Director Max Clayton reaffirmed that the city does not allow permanent paint on the streets, and that the violators would be fined.

Walter Pinkus stated that he (a member of the Rules Committee) and Ruth Pinkus of the Standards Committee had received comments from members that some artists' booth content was not consistent with their signage. For example, he noted that he observed one booth labeled "ceramics" contained some wrought iron work.

Executive Director Max Clayton said that anyone who notices an inconsistency in booth signs and content should notify a Standards Committee representative, who will then contact the appropriate staff member to check an artist's content against their slides at the Guild office. She also noted that, due to the nature of the Guild's database, artists who work in multiple media will often only have one medium posted on their signs. She said she would look into whether or not there was a work-around to the database set up.

Dave DiZinno said he noticed that the number of attendees at the Ann Arbor Fair was down; he noticed more gaps in the crowd than usual. He also said there were fewer out-of-state customers than usual and that the quality of the clientele had declined.

Chair Chris Maher announced that he thought Michigan shows were down compared to other shows in the country, due to the slow economy in Michigan.

Sharon St. Mary said she also noticed that numbers were down, and was more concerned with the quality of the crowd, especially on Saturday. She stated that she did not think weather was a factor, and wondered if a three-day show wouldn't be more successful.

Stan Baker stated that he personally had a great show. He said he did notice that there were fewer people, but more of them were buyers. He said thicker crowds make it harder for people to get to your booth.

Chair Chris Maher said that every show has artists who do well, and others who do not.

Laura Barber stated that this was her first time exhibiting in the Ann Arbor show. She said she liked that the buyers weren't crowded. She announced a marketing idea – she asked if Tuesday night could be a black-tie event where certain upscale guests could be invited to the show during set-up for a preview sale.

Chris Cooper, the husband of a member, said this year he noticed fewer people in attendance from the affluent neighborhoods on the east-side of Detroit.

Jane Wilhelm said all of her customers from the 12 sales she made were not Michigan residents. She stated that many of her customers were from Chicago, and that many paid with cash.

Bonnie Greenwald said she stopped participating in the Ann Arbor show three years ago so that she could participate in a wholesale show in Atlanta instead, and she said her sales were down in Atlanta as well, by as much as 50 percent.

Executive Director Max Clayton stated that the GM announcement to lay off workers the day before the Ann Arbor Fair may have had an impact on the lack of east-Detroiters some noticed at the show.

Peggy Leonard shared that Wednesday night, her booth canopy near the corner of Main and Liberty streets blew over in the storm after she had gone home. Another artist not involved in the fair saved the canopy as best he could, found her website through Google on his iPhone, and called her to let her know what had happened. She lost three pieces of her work, but was able to take the rest home and dry it out for the following day. She expressed that she was pleased her husband had worked so hard to get her website up and running. She also thanked Guild member Stan Baker for checking in the following day to see if everything was OK.

Simon Tarasiewicz asked member Stan Baker if his positive experience at this year's Ann Arbor Fair was perhaps due to his new booth location or new work.

Stan Baker replied that yes, he did think both of those changes were factors in his success this year, however he noted that 80 percent of his sales were older pieces – not the new ones he had included for the first time.

Mike Baum announced that his sales were up the previous two years, but down this year. He said he sends out postcards, and as a result received many repeat customers, but did not get many new customers.

Chair Chris Maher said he also experienced a great response from his mailing list, and encouraged other members to collect their customers' addresses and mail to them.

Gwen Bennett encouraged members to remember that every year is different. She said that State Street had bigger booths, which were much better. She said the high-end customers often say that the Ann Arbor Fair is too hot and too crowded. She said that her brother, a fisherman, taught her to view her work as bait – smaller items draw people in, then they see the bigger pieces and sometimes go for those instead. She said it also helps to have a positive attitude and to greet booth visitors with enthusiasm.

Chair Chris Maher agreed that a positive attitude was like a superhuman power, and encouraged members to keep that in mind.

Annette Morin stated that many of her customers expressed concern about the effect that the slow economy may be having on the artists. She said she mailed to a wider geographic area of her mailing list this year, and notified them of her new location, and she noticed that the people from farther away did come and find her.

Chair Chris Maher said that he put his cards advertising the Ann Arbor show out at a Cleveland show he participated in, and they went quickly.

Chris Belleau noted that this year was the first year he did not sell one \$500 piece, and wondered if the Ann Arbor fair was losing its high-end customers.

Jane Wilhelm said she had read a blog that said big pieces were not selling in Cherry Creek, either.

Annette Morin said that she diversified her work by adding silver, and said she did not sell anything that cost less than \$300.

Doug Spalding asked if there was any chance the original fair would move back to its old spot. Executive Director Max Clayton answered that no, that was not to be expected any time soon. She said that, one day, she hopes the overall area will be reorganized.

John Fitzpatrick asked how many Guild artists participated in the fair this year. Executive Director Max Clayton said that 375 Guild artists participated in the Ann Arbor fair this year. She added that there were nearly 1,000 artists in the four partner fairs, total. She said the booth numbers at the original fair were going down over the last few years. Sylvia Pixley said that businesses and merchants on State Street offered the artists weights to help hold down their booths in the State Street area, which is very windy.

Pat Austin announced that she had enjoyed working with Chair Chris Maher and will miss him as he steps down from his position as Chair of the Guild. She also congratulated him on a job well-done.

The agenda being completed, Chair Chris Maher adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Billie Griner, Secretary
Board of Directors
The Guild of Artists & Artisans

Minutes approved on: November 12, 2008
 with corrections without corrections

Minutes reviewed by: Patricia Austin, Chris Maher, Billie Griner and Max Clayton.