

Alpha Arts Guild

Newsletter

January - February 2010

Happy New Year!

January Meeting Recap:

The Alpha Arts Guild met on Tuesday, January 5 at Fine'ally Affordable Art and Frame Outlet to begin the New Year with much to celebrate and share!

Ellen Winsor, Patricia Stimmel, Karen Cohen, Jim Lappe and Noni Royal opened the meeting showing and discussing their artworks. How fun it was to not only view their accomplished works but also to learn more about the artists and their creative process.

It also was especially fun

for the Guild to welcome members, Michael Amos and Noni Royal to their first AAG meeting.

A financial report was given by the AAG Treasurer, Jim Lappe. Jim noted that 2010 membership dues, of \$25.00 are to be collected. Anyone who wishes to be an active member is required to fill out a new membership form and mail it with \$25.00 check written to the *Alpha Arts Guild* to:

Alpha Arts Guild
C/o Danita Grant

3411 Camelot Drive
Marietta, Ga. 30062

For your convenience the membership application form is included in this newsletter. The form is also available on the AAG website, www.alphartsguild.com.

The Guild's Site-Curators, Carol Skowronek, Betty Walser and Joanne McCarthy spoke about the January scheduled AAG shows.

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Why Join AAG? By Karen Cohen

So you've heard about the Alpha Arts Guild and you're thinking perhaps that you might like to join, but you still want to know "what's in it for me?"

It's probably a good idea to first talk about who our members are and how you might fit in. Our individual members are as varied in skill level and focus as any group could possibly be. Some of us are professional artists, some are beginners. Some don't actually do art at all, but support the arts and feel a connection with artists. Some come to share their knowledge, others to learn. All of us want to be inspired by others and to bounce ideas around.

Beyond the obvious benefit of making new friends, and contacts, the organization strives to provide educational opportunities by inviting people with specific knowledge and expertise to speak at meetings give workshops or introduce new mediums and materials. And, among the members, the breadth of experience could fill volumes.

Often we begin meetings with a show and tell...meet your fellow artists and pick their brains!

Do you want to show and sell your art? AAG has a program in which we partner with local businesses to create and curate small art shows for our members. These opportunities are member directed

and administered. For a small fee that goes back to the Guild, you get some exposure, feedback, and even sales.

The Guild is a sharing place in which we consider our members' best interests as a priority. We're developing other programs to help our members reduce costs to promote their art and purchase supplies, while helping them to increase their skills and broaden their artistic scope.

Businesses and AAG Community Art Shows

In years past, the Guild hosted an annual art show, Art Beyond Borders. This year, however, the Guild membership voted not to have an annual show but concentrate on displaying art in a simpler setting and on a more regular basis. This change in venue was seen as more in keeping with one of the missions of the Alpha Arts Guild which is *to promote the arts within the community*.

The Guild has been working with some local businesses to fulfill this goal. Currently, the organization is bringing artwork to the public in a very popular, relaxed and open venue,

the neighborhood coffee house. In East Cobb/Marietta, the Guild is showcasing art at the Caribou Coffee, located at 1275 Johnson Ferry Road. In Alpharetta, one-day shows are featured at the Starbucks at the corner of Haynes Bridge and Old Milton Road.

The Guild is happy to partner with other businesses which are willing to display local artists' works. Participating businesses are asked to help provide a safe and attractive setting for art.

If interested in participating in AAG

Community Art Shows program, please contact the Guild at alphaartsguild@gmail.com.



Alpha Arts Guild One-Day Show at Starbucks

It is time to celebrate local Alpha Arts Guild artists and their art at Starbucks on January 16th. The artists will begin the day with hanging their works at 8:00 a.m. that morning. The show is from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. Note that the Guild provides 2 grids to hang art to each artist.

Those wishing to participate in the show should contact AAG Curator Carol Skowronek by e-mailing her at alphaartsguild@gmail.com.

The cost for the show is \$10.00. Checks should be made to the *Alpha Arts Guild*. All participants are required to fill out an AAG waiver and inventory document.



"The Starbucks venue is a lively, energetic site for AAG members to display and market their works. Because of the location (corner of Haynes Bridge and Old Milton) and the fact that there is no drive thru, walk-in traffic is steady, allowing for maximum exposure for the artists. The casual coffee house environment is perfect!" Carol Skowronek, Curator

Showcasing AAG Artists at Caribou

Hello artists! It is time for the next change out at the Caribou Coffee venue on 1275 Johnson's Ferry Road, Marietta. Members of the Guild will have first choice to sign up for the show. Caribou can accommodate up to 5 artists depending on size and number of submissions. Art pieces will remain at Caribou until the next scheduled show.

The show is January 30th, from 9:00 am to 4:00pm. Artists will greet guests and answer questions about the guild,

their art work, etc. We have a large beautiful space to work with, and can accommodate large artworks of all varieties, (no 3-d).

Those participating will help setup the Caribou show beginning at 7:30 on January 29th. Artists who currently

have art being displayed at Caribou are required to remove their work on the 29th. If art cannot be removed on the 29th, please contact the show curators, Betty Walser and Joanne McCarthy by e-mailing them at alphaartsguild@gmail.com to make special arrangements.

Please contact the guild at alphaartsguild@gmail.com if you are interested in being featured at the show. The cost is \$10.00; checks should be made out to the AAG.

**"We have a large beautiful space to work with, and can accommodate large artworks of all varieties."
Betty Walser, Curator**

AAG Members: Susan McLean and Patricia Stimmel

By Danita Grant

Photography by Wade Cauthen

A person may wonder "How difficult would it be for me to learn how to play the piano?" or muse "I would love to be able to paint a landscape in watercolors?" For many artists it is as simple as posing a question to themselves and then acting on it. The art student commits a huge amount of time, energy and fortitude to try to develop skills, knowledge and professional growth.

But even with a most dedicated spirit, life happens. Spirits wane, illness strikes, and personal issues present conflict. And sometimes, the vision to the goal is clouded by other interests and distractions. It is during such times that the budding artist may seek the assistance of a teacher, membership in an art organization and encouragement from friends to help shore up their spirits and keep focused. ART has become a driving force in their lives, a passion.

Two Alpha Arts Guild artists, Patricia Stimmel and Susan McLean, relate their journey in art with pride and joy even when both faced exceptionally daunting trials as they embarked on their personal artistic path.

Another person's work is what initially sparked Susan McLean's curiosity about art. "Eight years ago I saw a drawing done by a friend who was taking a class from artist Chris di Domizio. I was very impressed with her work. I had never taken art class. My friend assured me that the instructor could teach anyone to draw and paint, whether or not they had previous art training at all." Susan signed up to study at Chris di Domizio's Old World Art studio and thus began her formal art studies. Today Susan enjoys working in

representational art, using oils, pastels or watercolors to express her talents.

Patricia Stimmel happily tells that she always loved the concept of doing art. She has childhood memories of "painting on cement using water and a stick" for her brush. "Paint by Numbers" was one of her favorite childhood gifts. As long as Patricia could remember, she always loved doing art.

Although Susan and Patricia were very committed to their studies and efforts to excel at their art, each had a unique perspective about their progress. Patricia felt that her commitment grew as she saw the end results of her work. "I was finally confident enough and convinced that I had talent - art would be my life time passion". Susan too regarded herself as very committed to art but sensed that she had reached a plateau. "I had lost my focus as far as the type of subjects I wanted to paint and lacked the confidence to take chances with my art".

Their dedication to study and excel in art grew; their passion for art was very much integrated within their daily lives. But life changed dramatically for both women. November 2008, Susan was diagnosed with breast cancer. August 2008, the results of a colonoscopy revealed that Patricia had mantle cell lymphoma.



Susan McLean



Patricia Stimmel with art instructor, Chris di Domizio at Old World Art Studio.

Both put aside their art and began treatments to fight cancer. Now their fortitude and energy was focused on doctors' appointments, treatments and maintaining an energy level to meet daily responsibilities. Their art had to be put on hold. Patricia shares that her 'normal world' was "quickly overwhelmed with doctors, diagnoses, treatment centers and hospitals.'

Patricia, then a member of the Alpha Arts Guild, received support from members as they "kindly followed me thru my treatments for 7 months. She received "notes, e-mails, gifts, prayers and always encouragement that I would be back painting without a doubt."

Susan also faced rigorous treatments which meant that all her energy was concentrated on her battle with breast cancer. However, as she got stronger she returned to art classes, which Susan marks as "the beginning of "her "true healing". "For the first time in months I felt that I was going to be normal again and that I had just taken a brief hiatus from life as I had known it. I was still undergoing chemo at the time, and to this day, the class and I still get a laugh from the mistakes I made on that first painting. The laughter, the shared interest in art, and a teacher who pushes me to do better and to think about what I am trying to achieve have all been factors in helping me be a better artist and a healthier person.

As Susan and Patricia returned to their art, both realized that they had developed a deeper insight and greater appreciation about their work. Susan experienced an adjustment time of "re-learning". She points out that "it was almost as if I had to reacquaint myself with the process from beginning to end. Once I regained my confidence, my passion for art reemerged".

Patricia has taken a bolder approach to her art now days. She wants to be freer with her works and embraces mistakes. She now is open to do multiple attempts at a piece. Patricia has a new awareness that many famous artists worked tirelessly to find their own peace and satisfaction with their work. She too wants to achieve "peace in my own art".

Their journey battling cancer has not only changed how both women approach the art but also has greatly impacted their life at all levels. Patricia claims a new mantra in her life. "I respect my efforts toward new works, I apply



judgment in a positive way, recognizing more quickly if I wander into negativity or discouragement and turning that around."

This positive mindset is also echoed by Susan. She has a circle of support, her family, friends, and fellow artists. "I have focused my energy on doing things that are uplifting, fun and encouraging.

Patricia encourages others to

accept change in life, to receive and accept. She cautions not to "avoid the inevitable." "Do your homework, learn about the issue, embrace the challenge and then make a decision on how to handle what's ahead, and get going!"

"Art has limitless possibilities and I should place no limitations on my own sense of creativity." Susan McLean



The ever popular and successful Alpharetta Streetfest will be held Saturday/ Sunday, April 25th and 26th from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. This event presents the work of artists from throughout the U.S. It is a yearly celebration of the arts in the Alpharetta Historic District. The city of Alpharetta will close downtown streets and fill them with original high-quality art from artists throughout the U.S. For additional information about the Streetfest, visit www.alpharetta.ga.us or call 678-297-6000 x-1008.

Alpha Arts Guild, Inc.

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 30009

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**Mission Statement:**

To promote greater visibility and awareness of Georgia artists and their important contribution to the community by celebrating the power of Creativity and Imagination.

To provide an environment of camaraderie among artists; fostering understanding, education and appreciation.

February Meeting Date Changed

Please note that as a rule, the Guild meets on the first Tuesday of each month. However, because of scheduling conflicts for some Board members, the February meeting will be held on the second Tuesday, February 9th at 7:00 at:

Fine'ally Affordable Art and Frame Outlet
 370 Winkler Drive Suite C
 Alpharetta, Ga. 30004

We're on the Web!
www.alphaartsguild.com

Mark Your Calendar

- January 16 One Day Show at Starbucks
 11770 Hynes Bridge Road
 Alpharetta, Ga. 30009
 (770) 346-0874
- January 30 Caribou Art Showcase Opening
 1275 Johnson Ferry Road
 Marietta, Ga. 30068
 (770)971-5010
- February 9 Monthly Meeting (7:00 p.m.)
 Fine'ally Affordable Art and Frame Outlet
 370 Winkler Drive Suite C
 Alpharetta, Ga. 30004
 (770) 521-6700

