

SPRING 2021

Anton Art Center CENTERPIECE

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We Are The Sum Total of Our Community

by Alysa Marie Diebolt

Over the years, the Anton Art Center's membership program offered benefits not fully utilized by all who joined and unintentionally created a barrier for some who would have liked to. Membership is defined as the "State of belonging to an organization," and we had an opportunity during the COVID-19 pause to reflect on what "membership" and "belonging" meant to us.

In the end, we realized the Art Center's "membership" encompasses 100+ volunteers, more than 150 students, countless exhibiting artists, and more than 400 annual donors. This is our community and the Art Center is the sum total of its collective efforts. An annual membership fee does nothing to enhance that and, unfortunately, sometimes turns people away.

As we move forward, it is our sincere hope that you continue to support the organization by taking classes,

visiting our exhibitions, participating in our programs, volunteering, and continuing to provide financial support. The Anton Art Center is continually growing and the years of your support are appreciated as we evolve to meet the needs of our growing community.

In discontinuing the membership program, you will see streamlined registration for education classes and workshops, applications for our exhibitions will be simpler, and there will be new ways to contribute to the Art Center. We will continue to send the **Centerpiece** newsletter to and about the community we are building.

We are taking this opportunity to build on decades of success of bringing together artists, students, patrons and leaders by building a community centered around enriching and inspiring people of all ages through the arts. We are excited to share all of this with you!

Super SatARTday June 12 Will Include Online and Outdoor Events

By Mary Smith

As **Centerpiece** went to print, plans were underway for a "hybrid" **Super SatARTday** on June 12 from 11 am to 3 pm, with outdoor activities and online demonstrations. In the parking lot and grassy areas around the Art Center, activities will include upcycle art, origami, 2D drawing, sun art, bubbles, chalk art, paint projects and puppet making. Participants will be provided with free art materials

at each of the stations. Online demonstrations will include resin pouring, painting, fused glass and clay, the latter demonstrating both wheel-throwing and hand-building techniques. All events and activities are free. For those participating on site at the Art Center, face coverings and social distancing will be required. Check the Art Center's website for updates closer to the event.

WALK-INS WELCOME!

COVID-19 health and safety protocols are in place, including brief health screenings at the door, limited building occupancy, and facemasks are required.

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Colored Pencil Artwork Dazzles in Current Exhibit

By Mary Smith

From the subtle color variations in the drawing of a Mediterranean doorstep to the precise detail in the portrait of a young boy, the **Colored Pencil Society of America (CPSA), Detroit Chapter, Members Show** at the Anton Art Center highlights the diversity of a once overlooked medium.

“Colored pencil art has received more recognition over the years,” said **Phil Gilchrist**, the Art Center’s Executive Director. “You can now find colored pencil art in galleries, museums and in the homes of private collections.”

The juried exhibit opened Saturday, April 24 with 30 works of art by members of the CPSA’s Detroit Chapter. **Amy Foster**, a graduate of the College of Creative Studies and a freelance artist and art instructor with a passion for drawing the human figure, served as judge. At 2 pm during the opening, first-third-place,

honorable mention and four Artistic Achievement awards were announced via live-stream on the Art Center’s Facebook page.

The Art Center will host the CPSA exhibit in its second-floor atrium through May 20 with visitors invited to view during regular building hours or online. All work will be available for purchase throughout the exhibit.

The CPSA, Detroit Chapter, has been promoting colored-pencil art since its inception in 1993. Colored pencil is the predominant medium, if not 100 percent, used in all the artworks in the show.

“We are really excited to partner with the Colored Pencil Society of America for this brand new show,” said Gilchrist, “where all artists are using the same medium.”

Seeing Black History Through Folk-Art and Abstract Collage

by Peggy DiMercurio

During **Black History Month** in February, the Anton Art Center shined a light on a folk-art tradition as it is carried on by a group of quilters in Alabama and a fiber artist in Detroit, as well as the styles of three African American artists who set the standard in their respective mediums.

Our February **SatArtday@Home** was a wonderful “Conversation on Quilting,” featuring special guest **Jan Dolan** and her collection of the famous **Gee’s Bend Quilts** of Gee’s Bend, Alabama. Jan has been visiting and engaging with the quilters of Gee’s Bend for years and she shared stories about her experiences along with some beautiful quilts. Stella Mae Pettway, a quiltermaker in Gee’s Bend, joined by phone interview to share the significance of the quilts and what they have done for the people and economy of this predominantly African American community.

Fiber Artist **April Shipp Anue** continued the conversation by showcasing a selection of her gorgeous fine art quilts and sharing some of the inspiration that went into creating them. April finished the evening with a fantastic demo of a freeform log cabin block quilt square – sewing pieces by hand and on her trusty 1939 Singer Featherweight sewing machine, Mabel. If you missed the February SatArtday presentation, you can still view it on our YouTube channel: [antonartcenter](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8).

The kids in the **Mixed Media Workshops** were engaged by lessons on African American artists **William H. Johnson**, **Faith Ringgold** and **Romare Bearden**. Instructor **Angel Kitone** introduced each artist’s unique artwork and then led the class through mixed media projects in the art-



ists’ style. William H. Johnson was famous for landscapes and portraits in a folk-art style and the kids recreated his painting “Blind Singer.” Faith Ringgold’s American Story Quilt: “Tar Beach: Mixed Media Quilt” inspired a paper quilt with a nighttime cityscape with the kids soaring through the scene. The final project was a paper collage in the style of Romare Bearden’s “The Farmer.” The kids created their own imaginative farms using paper and paint.

Married Donors are Accomplished Artists in Their Own Right

By Maggi Gawel



Working together: Anna's watercolor winter scene as framed by Pete using barn wood.

Centerpiece frequently features a profile of one or more of our volunteers – those giving individuals who dedicate their time to the Anton Art Center. But those volunteers would have a lot of blanks on their calendars if it weren't for the businesses, foundations, community organizations and individuals who regularly support the goals and aspirations of the Art Center through their donations.

Anna and Pete Doe are among that generous group who can be counted on to help keep the doors open. As Macomb County residents for over 50 years, they know that “keeping all the programs free or affordable for our community is important, as well as doing outreach and becoming an integral part of the tri-county art community,” says Anna. The couple champions art education in the community, believing that “hands on classes promote personal creativity.”

Both Anna and Pete are retired from successful careers. Anna spent the last 27 years of her employment as a clinical social worker at Selfridge Air National Guard Base and the Detroit Arsenal in Warren. An electrical contractor, Pete owned Doe and Associates here in Macomb County for 28 years. Yet, no matter how divergent their vocations, art became an important part of both their lives.

Now, they have more time to indulge their creative urges. Anna has found her medium in watercolor painting. She

says she finds it to be “very portable,” which is a plus if you and your spouse are world travelers with a summer home on Lake Ogemaw in West Branch, as well as a residence in Chesterfield Township. The lake house is home to Pete's woodworking shop, where he spends many creative hours. He also fashions original stained-glass lamps.

The couple has passed their love of art and respect for education on to succeeding generations. Their eldest daughter Janet, one of three siblings, is an artist in California. This spring, one of their two grandsons will graduate from Laguna College of Art and Design. “Also, we have supported the college and specialized high school educations of four special young men in our lives in California and New Jersey,” Anna told **Centerpiece**.

Luckily for the Art Center, Anna and Pete were drawn into the Anton's circle by two of its dedicated supporters: their daughter, Eva Samulski, and a friend and former Art Center Trustee, Nancy Mitchell. “We enjoyed attending the Art Party and Holiday Market for many years,” according to Anna, and, over the past 10 years, the Does have become increasingly involved, as both volunteers and donors. They also contribute to the Detroit Institute of Arts, which partnered with the Anton Art Center for the recent exhibition “Visions of American Life.”

Volunteers of the Year/Lifetime Achievement Recipients (Finally) Get Their Due

by Peggy DiMercurio

Volunteers are the force that keeps the Anton Art Center humming – from working the Art Market, receiving and hanging art for the exhibits, helping in the classrooms or keeping things looking and running great. Last year’s annual meeting was canceled due to COVID-19, but at this year’s Anton Art Center Annual Meeting (held virtually on March 16, 2021), we recognized some special volunteers for their outstanding work in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The Volunteer of the Year for 2019/2020 is **Marty Borkowski**. Marty, who’s favorite saying is “Repair, Reuse, Recycle,” comes to the rescue whenever asked for help – from building cabinets and closets, to fixing the phones to mapping out the entire lower-level electrical circuits and labelling every plug and outlet to correspond with the circuit boards. Asked about his favorite memory during his longtime volunteering, Marty said, “Attending my first Art Party – all the food and entertainment were fantastic – even if we had to clean up after the event!”

In 2020, **Louise Borkowski** was chosen to receive the Thelma Ulrich Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of over 25 years of service. Louise follows John Lewis’s dictum: “If not now, when? If not me, who?” and started volunteering all those years ago when asked to help with art installations. Installing the new shows is still Louise’s favorite volunteer job, “especially the Student and Michigan Annual shows.” Louise described one of her favorite volunteering memories as, “Our first true Holiday Market after the remodel. The theme was “Christmas Wonderland” and Arlene (Breiling) made all the glittering mirrors which hung from the center and we painted branches for our forest. The results seemed magical.”

The best part of volunteering for Marty and Louise is meeting other people who volunteer because “volun-

teers are the best kind of people!” The couple also volunteers at St. Hubert’s Church and the Richmond Historical Society. Both are retired and spend a great deal of time up north at their vacation home on the Au Sable River - which is getting harder and harder to leave. Louise “dabbles” in all types of art and loves being with fellow artists at the Art Center and in her two art groups: the D2C2 and Kallstrom Kottage Club.

The 2020/2021 Volunteer of the Year is Art Market Coordinator **Nancy Garcia**. Nancy started volunteering after being invited by a good friend to check out the Art Center and loves being a part of the Art Center family and the opportunity to be creative.

Not long after taking over the position of Gift Shop Coordinator, the pandemic hit and closed it and the rest of the Art Center. Luckily, Nancy’s motto is “We can make it work!” which helped her to meet the challenges that 2020 threw at her. Nancy was an integral part of the team to get our online market launched and maintained as well as transitioning it from The Gift Shop to the Art Market. She enjoys working with the artists and volunteers, as well as seeing all the wonderful art that comes into the Art Market.

One of Nancy’s proudest moments was when her toad houses and birdbaths were accepted for sale in the Gift Shop. In addition to the Art Center, Nancy is passionate about gardening, being creative, music, reading and anything that has to do with cats! After dealing with the day-to-day stress of COVID-19, she is slowly getting back to her art. “I love working with clay - the texture and the wonderful transformation at each stage of the work. I also love working in mixed media and collage. I get to play with all the treasures I have accumulated through the year,” said Nancy.

Congratulations to all our award winners.

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Women's History Month Was a Personal Affair

By Samantha Russell



Left to Right: The Art Center Founding Mothers | Bea Wright, Gretchen Thompson and Phyllis Wickens.

Clockwise: Nancy Garcia, Art Market Coordinator | Mary Need, Office Manager | Peggy DiMercurio, Education Coordinator | Stephanie Hazzard, Exhibition Manager | Sue Durbin, Volunteer Coordinator | Samantha Russell, Grant Coordinator



March was **Women's History Month** and it was decided the Art Center would make it personal by showcasing the women that make Anton Art Center what it is, as well as a groundbreaking woman artist whose work was part of an exhibit featured at the Art Center that month.

Our first program focused on the ingenuity and hard work of the Art Center's founding mothers: **Bea Wright, Gretchen Thompson, and Phyllis Wickens**, for whom the conversion of the former Carnegie Library into The Art Center was a labor of love. It's first exhibit in 1970 was, fittingly, "Mother and Child," on loan from the **Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA)**.

Next, we explored the achievements of **Jane Peterson**, the only woman artist with work included in the "Visions of American Life: Selections from the Nancy and Sean Cotton Collection of American Art," also on loan from the DIA and on exhibit at the Art Center March 9 to April 12. Jane had an amazing life and it was inspirational to hear the Detroit Institute of Arts' docent speak about her noteworthy achievements as an artist in a live Facebook feed.

Our third and final Women's History program looked at six women currently making Art Center history. Four are staff members: **Mary Need**, Office Manager; **Stephanie Hazzard**, Exhibition Manager; **Peggy DiMercurio**, Education Coordinator; and **Samantha Russell**, Grant Coordinator; and two are volunteers: **Nancy Garcia**, Art Market Coordinator; and **Sue Durbin**, Volunteer Coordinator. Together they work hard to make sure the Art Center is a welcoming and engaging place.

Phil Gilchrist, the Anton Art Center's Executive Director, gladly stayed out of the spotlight in March to ensure women power was centerstage.

All of these programs, complete with photos, were shared on our Instagram and Facebook pages, ensuring continued engagement with our audience during the Art Center's closure.

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SPECIAL THANKS

Macomb County Secondary
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Kenneth and Patricia Hoover
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Patricia Woodstock, Grade Level
Awards

**The Anton Art Center is now open to the public from 11am - 3pm Tuesdays through Saturdays.
Call ahead (586-469-8666) or email (information@theartcenter.org)
for more information or to schedule a visit.**



Anton Art Center

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