

2015 Virginia Watercolor Society Annual Business Meeting
Saturday, May 16th, 2015

President Gwen Bragg called the meeting to order at 10:00am in Duke Hall Gallery Court, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia with welcoming remarks on the occasion of the 36th Annual Virginia Watercolor Society's Juried Exhibition. The minutes from the 2014 Annual Meeting were approved.

Karen Schwartz reported for the State Treasurer, Lynn Hosegood, in Lynn's absence. In 2014 an endowment was given to VWS and future statements will show this as a separate amount. This gift currently is being set aside to support an award for each year's exhibition. Highlights from the Treasurer's report were read and the report approved.

Membership Report was provided by Karen Schwartz. In 2014 we had 358 members and in 2015 we have 319. Karen emphasized the need for members to remember to change address and email contact information with her so that information will be sent to the correct location. She also explained the Lifetime Membership guidelines. If you feel you qualify for Lifetime Membership you should contact Karen. See below under Old Business for additional discussion and suggestions from members on improving membership enrollment.

Brenda Hounshell reported on the 2015 Exhibition. 2015 is the first year the Exhibition has been held in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The show was held at Duke Hall Gallery at James Madison University. Through the cooperation of the Department Heads of the School of Art, Design and Art History we were given permission to utilize this new space after the school year ended. Gary Freeburg, Gallery Director was instrumental in ensuring the use of the space and designed and hung the show for VWS. There were 206 artists who entered 511 images. Mark Mehaffey, juror for the show selected 97 images to be included in the exhibition. Mark also conducted a workshop as part of the exhibition week activities. We had 17 participants for the workshop. On Saturday, May 16th Mark provided Juror's Comments on the show using approximately 20 images from the exhibition. After his Juror's Comments he then conducted a demonstration of his techniques and methods that afternoon. Awards totaling \$12,500 in cash and products were awarded at Saturday evening's Awards Banquet. The exhibition dates are Monday, May 18th through Friday, June 26th. The hours for the exhibition are 9:00am until 4:00pm, Monday through Thursday and Fridays, 9:00am until noon. Art pick up dates were revised to Monday, June 29th and Tuesday, June 30th, 10:00am until 3:00pm both days.

Gwen Bragg reported on the Creasy-Johnson Fund for Susan Stuller in Susan's absence. Currently for 2014 and 2015 no requests have been made for grants using these funds. Gwen encouraged VWS members to consider ways to utilize the grant money available. A proposed change was brought forth for use of this fund. The idea was discussed to amend the grant's original intent for eligibility to include awarding up to \$1,000.00 to a student in Virginia enrolled in a water media curriculum. Several members reminded everyone that "outreach" was the intent of the founding members of this fund. Members also asked that if this change moves

forward as a potential amendment to the fund's use that we make sure that artist/teachers who use the fund are not in competition with student/support users of the fund. This reminder will be taken under advisement as this option is explored.

Old Business

Gwen announced availability of new VWS brochures. These were handed out to those who could help distribute them or use them in classrooms or organizations to highlight VWS membership advantages. A request was made to have an electronic version of this brochure available to those who could use the information in this format. Gwen will address this request and see if the document can be posted on the VWS website. Anyone who wants printed brochures sent to them should contact Gwen.

Further discussion occurred to look at ways to improve membership numbers. Multiple suggestions came forth from members in attendance. An example of efforts made in the Blacksburg area to improve membership was shared. The artists in this area started with focus on Facebook and Twitter. The decision was made to use these tools and to also make a strong effort to refresh and keep current their organization's web page. After two years they have improved membership from 80 members to 150. Other suggestions were:

- expanding the VWS membership to adjacent counties bordering Virginia with the idea being that those artists who are taking classes, for example, in Arlington but live in Maryland would be eligible to join VWS and participate in our annual exhibition
- consulting with other organizations on methods used to improve and/or expand membership numbers
- creating a Membership Committee to explore options and ideas
- utilize the Area Representatives more thoroughly to get the word out to potential members
- set up programs across the state that would be sponsored by VWS and allow artists across various regions to become familiar with VWS and its benefits
- have VWS sponsor or co-sponsor artist workshops across the state as a way to engage potential new members
- consider having our show travel across the state to other regions in other galleries to increase familiarity with VWS and its benefits

Gwen will take each of these suggestions and find ways to explore the possibility of utilizing these ideas for VWS. Several comments came forth reminding everyone that the original intent for VWS was to be an organization strictly in support of Virginia artists. These comments came from founding members or those who were familiar with the original intent of the membership guidelines for the organization.

New Business

Gwen announced volunteers Dr. William Frable and Jean Miller who agreed to become our new Waterlogue editors. Gwen thanked longtime editor Pam Ogden for her many years of exemplary service in this role and congratulated her on her well-deserved retirement from this position. The membership voted to approve Dr. Frable and Jean for our new editors.

Gwen introduced William Andersen as the chairperson for the 2016 show. Bill reported the exhibition will be held in Gloucester at Gloucester Arts on Main. The dates of the exhibition are May 20th through June 25th. The juror selected is Mel Stabin and he will also conduct a workshop as part of the 2016 exhibition. Bill pointed out that the VWS Exhibition will be installed and overlap with the Matthews Bay School's "Art Speaks" exhibition. This overlap will be a nice opportunity for VWS members to see the School's exhibition while in the area for the VWS Exhibition.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00am by vote

Minutes respectfully submitted by Brenda Hounshell
2015 Exhibition Chairperson