TENNESSEE WATERCOLOR SOCIETY
SUMMER 2015

MEDIUM

Tour of AWS Traveling Exhibition and Tullahoma Board Meeting September 12th

The scheduled tour of the American Watercolor Society Traveling exhibition at the Tullahoma Art Center will be at 10:30 on Saturday, September 12th with Harriet Howell and Pam Pate leading a discussion of the works on display. The show which was previously toured in Columbia at the Pryor Gallery has received rave reviews. Following the tour, we will adjourn to Southern Sundaes to order a la carte lunches and take them to a studio in the same location at the Coker's where we can enjoy continue with a board meeting that is open to the membership. Our thanks to Marie Kelly for arranging all of this. See tnws.org for details, addresses and directions. If you have not responded please let Marie (practicingartist@yahoo.com) know you plan to attend so the room is set to accommodate our number.

There is a $10 charge for the Tullahoma Center which TnWS will cover for members in lieu of our usual donation to the center. If you are bringing guests, please be prepared to reimburse TnWS for their fee.

The topic for the board meeting will be to review the prospectus, calendar, expenses, and plans for the 2016 exhibition in Knoxville.



2018 Exhibition - Customs House, Clarksville Lian Quan Zhen Juror and Workshop

At the spring meeting at Fall Creek Falls, the attending members nominated a number of potential Jurors, with Chinese born artist Lian Quan Zhen being voted as the first choice for 2018. He graciously accepted but requested that we give him an absolute date commitment due to the demand for his workshops.

Lian is a regular at Cheap Joes and teaches a very popular East meets West Watercolor Workshop beginning with Chinese brush and watercolor techniques and then adapting them to a more Western approach. This technique lends itself to beautiful landscapes, but his range of subject matter is very broad. You can view his work at www.lianspainting.com.

Because we had to commit to dates and be sure we could have a space for the exhibition and workshop, we contacted Chattanooga members to see if they could make arrangements and put together a committee in the short time frame we had before contracting with the artist. Since that was not forthcoming, the board made arrangements with Customs House in Clarksville, and Patsy Sharpe volunteered to chair the exhibition there.

Customs House, in addition to its beautiful gallery space, has a staff that does a great deal of the physical work required to mount an exhibition and provides a great deal of other support. Studio locations are also available in the area.

Given the issues we have throughout the state with venues, volunteers, workshop spaces, this seemed to be the best alternative and will hopefully give us a few years to work out our organizational issue.

Conversations About the Future of TnWS

We have been having discussions this year in meetings about the future of our organization, and the loss of member participation we are experiencing due to our aging membership with health issues, physical limitations, and other commitments.

This is not just our problem but is an issue most volunteer organizations are facing. For several years we have not been able to fill the board positions. We have regions that have problems getting volunteers to mount an exhibition.

Looking to the future, we have only a small number of younger members and many of them have family and work commitments that preclude devoting a significant time block to managing an organization. Those members who have not been involved in what is required to put on a Biennial Exhibition at the level of ours do not fully appreciate the amount of work that goes into that project. Additionally the awards,

Continued on Page 2

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Executive Board & Officers 2014 - 2015

President - **Barbara Jernigan**
bbjernigan@gmail.com

Vice President - **Needs Volunteer**

Secretary - **Needs Volunteer**

Treasurer - **Linda Campbell**
campbellgraham@comcast.net

Membership - **Noriko Register**
takehousenr@hotmail.com

Past President - **Tuva Stephens**
tuvart@charter.net

Committee Chairs

Arts Advocacy Rep.- **Kathleen Haynes**
kathleenhaynes@gmail.com

Historian - **Filiz Griffin**
overthewindow@aol.com

Leslie Dulin
magileslie@comcast.net

Member-at-Large - **Marilyn Brisbois**
mssbrisbois@comcast.net

By-laws - **Wendy Latimer**
has4angels@aol.com

Grant Writing - **Lillian Clinard**
johnandlil@charter.net

Communications Committee

Website Coordinator - **Nick Long**
Newsletter Editor - **Jane House**
housetn@gmail.com
Newsletter Graphics - **Dee Hoffman**
TnWatercolorsociety@comcast.net

Regional Contacts

Region I Memphis
Tuva Stephens - tuvart@charter.net

Region II Nashville
Wendy Latimer - has4angels@aol.com

Region III Chattanooga
Mark Cobbe - mark.cobbe@icloud.com

Region IV Knoxville
Lee Edge - paintingsbylee@gmail.com

Region V Tri Cities
David Kramer - david.mona@live.com

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tennessee watercolor society

Conversations About the Future of TnWS Continued

workshop and other expenses require the raising and managing of tens of thousands of dollars.

Out of the discussions so far we have a few topics which have met with pretty universal approval, and quite a number with opponents and proponents with strong opinions opposing each other. We pretty much agree that one of the main solutions is to seek the funds to hire a part time executive director. Having been president for four years and treasurer for four year prior to that, I can tell you that this is not a job for someone who is not experienced in management, cannot manage the website, has no computer skills, and no ability to deal with interpersonal difficulties. An executive director would take a great deal of work from the most difficult board positions and allow the board to set policy and advise rather than do the heavy lifting.

Beyond that we all agree that we need to attract younger members, and most of us recognize that the website is an important element in making that happen.

Both solutions agreed upon above require a large investments of our available funds, and our current budget cannot support them. To that end we are exploring the possibility of a grant from the Tennessee Arts Commission. Beyond that we get into the area that need a lot of discussion in which all members have a stake, such as proposals for increased dues and expanded membership

Here are some ideas proposed and up for discussion:

How do we attract membership from those watermedia artists who paint on alternative surfaces and still maintain one of our main purposes of preserving the rich history of watercolor on paper?

There has been an ongoing discussion about this for several years. Other watercolor societies have opened the door to watercolor board and canvas surfaces that do not require matting and framing under glass.

We have members who feel strongly that preserving paper under glass is part of our purpose. I have wondered about having an off year exhibition entitled something like Aqua Avant Garde, where we showcase works that are experimental and would not qualify for our biennial exhibits.

Should we consider some sort of reciprocity membership with members of the watercolor societies of our neighboring states?
Allowing them to have membership privileges for entry and workshops, but not allowing them to vote or hold office. The discussion about this is very lively. Some members favor it for the more regional aspect of approaching venues who do not accept shows from "local" artists, and feel it gives more weight to the exhibition. Others feel it is important to retain the Tennessee exclusion for membership, as the complications of expansion outweigh the benefits.

Should we change the name to Tennessee Watermedia Society?
This probably has more opponents than proponents. We can accomplish welcoming alternative watermedia by emphasizing it in other ways.
I cannot emphasize to you enough the importance of being a part of this discussion. At some point the proposals with the most support will hopefully be put to a referendum vote. Hopefully we can mount a membership discussion in the member's area of the website where you can publish your views.

If you don't participate in planning the future there will be no room for complaints! If you don't participate, there may be no TnWS to complain about.

FALL ArtBeat Deadline
SEPTEMBER 30, 2015
Send stories & images to Regional Contacts