

VWS Meeting Minutes

DATE: July 29, 2017

LOCATION: Gifford Medical Center, Randolph, Vt.

PARTICIPANTS: Tony Connor, Martin LaLonde, Victoria Jefferies, Adrienne Fisher, Michelle, LeBoeuf, Judith Selin, Chris Sumner, Loretta Weitzel

Tony Connor opened the meeting. The first order of business was to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2017 meeting with corrections. (Attached are changes made.) Martin made a motion to accept the minutes and Chris seconded. The minutes were approved, as amended.

Treasurer's Report – Chris reported that she has continued to work on gaining access to our bank statements. At the present time, she is not receiving bank statements. VWS assets are up \$9,000 since last year. This figure reflects a 25% increase. Membership dues have declined approximately \$2,000, compared with 2016. Michelle stated that we have 152 members paid through 2017 compared to 242 members paid through 2016. Tony stated that he intends to contact the members that have not renewed. The topic of having insurance for hub activities was discussed and will be further researched. The annual federal report due in May was completed. A Vermont filing was not necessary in May 2017. The Vermont filing is due every two years. Martin reported on the profit of the Spring Workshop. A profit of approximately \$4,715 was made. \$11,510 was received; \$6,795 and \$500 (demo) were paid to Charles Reid. The Landgrove Inn received \$15 per person and did not charge VWS for the venue. There will be a slight floral cost applied to these figures. Adrienne made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and Victoria seconded. The treasurer's report was approved as submitted.

HUBS

There was no report submitted for Hubs.

EXHIBITIONS

Victoria submitted a written report (attached). The fall show, featuring 30 – 35 paintings, will be held at the Atrium Gallery at the Claremont Opera House. This is not an award show. The show will open on Friday, October 13 and run through November 19th. Please see two attached detailed reports submitted by Victoria.

Victoria reported that she is working on a venue for Spring 2018 and is in the process of firming up the dates of the December, 2018 show. The December show will take place near Keene in Swanzey, New Hampshire at Ash Hill Art Center, Pam Dexter's new gallery. Tony recommended that we consider asking for smaller

works for the December Show. He referenced a show that takes place in Bennington where the show asks artists to submit smaller works. Limiting the size of paintings will free up room to increase the number of paintings that can be accepted. Sales are expected to be good as the show is during the holidays.

PROGRAMS

Martin reported and Joey submitted a written report. The fall meeting will be held at the Middlebury Inn on October 28, 2017. Martin and Tony will coordinate a fall meeting registration form to be placed on the VWS website. The secretary read the written report submitted by Joey Bibeau. (See Report Attached)

The VWS has been soliciting items from art supply vendors for both the spring and fall VWS program meetings. Martin raised the concern that we are asking for donations for raffles, swag bags and awards for the award show and two programs from the same businesses (ie. Holbein and Cheap Joes, etc.). It was pointed out that I Can Paint currently supplies and is no longer asking for donations. Following board discussion, it was suggested that we have swag bags at the fall program meeting and for the spring meeting, it was suggested that we have a silent auction and/or raffle. Tony suggested we consider asking artists to bring a new (slightly used) item for a silent auction, with one-half of the proceeds being donated to VWS and giving artists the option of receiving the other one-half or donating the full proceeds to VWS.

Martin asked the board for recommendations on which artist he should ask to give the afternoon demo at the fall program meeting. The first suggestion was to ask Rob Sydorowich. Others suggested in no particular order: Eckhart, Huntoon, Pratt, and Parfume.

Contracts were discussed in connection with all VWS Venues. Victoria suggested that VWS have a contract file. Currently Victoria has written a letter of agreement re the Atrium Show.

The board discussed VWS' liability policy. Members' works are not covered and are the artist's responsibility. Tony stated that he maintains insurance on his paintings and holds a commercial policy. It was suggested to consider having someone come to speak about insurance at a future program.

Future meetings - The 2018 workshop will be held at Landgrove and feature Gloria Miller-Allen. The proposed spring meeting program date is May 20, 2018 and the workshop will follow. Martin asked Judith to put a save the date in the next issue of Snippets. The 2017 annual fall meeting will take place at the historic Middlebury Inn on October 28, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP

Michelle reported that 242 members paid through 2016 and 152 have paid through 2017, leaving 90 unpaid this year. Michelle suggested that VWS develop a global email. Tony stated that he plans to follow up with an email directly to all unpaid members (going back to unpaid in 2015) and giving attention to members that could potentially lose signature status for unpaid dues. It was suggested that VWS might develop a reminder, either postcard or letter by mail, regarding dues. Michelle will provide Tony and the board with a printout of membership record of dues paid. (See attached report submitted following the meeting.)

Michelle's position on the board as Membership Director will end this year. The by-laws state that board members can serve two consecutive terms and then pass the position on. Tony will appeal for a new director in the upcoming Snippets.

Martin spoke about some recruiting ideas. He recommended VWS gaining more presence by leaving postcards at events (i.e. Holbein event); having postcards available when VWS artists are teaching workshops, newspapers, art stores, etc. Tony will address getting a co-director for Judith during the afternoon session and he will address enhancing the website giving the public a better knowledge of VWS.

COMMUNICATIONS

Judith reported that she is becoming familiar with Snippets and reaching out to our membership with group email. She would appreciate some assistance with Constant Contact and sending group emails. Tony referenced mail chimp as an alternative to Constant Contact. Victoria pointed out that YouTube can provide how to answers to some of her questions. Judith reported that she is working with a variety of lists and that at least 12 members have up to three different emails. She has been cross checking the memberships and at this time it is not clear how many emails are bouncing back. At least 65 members on Constant Contact are no longer paying membership dues, and approximately 41 names should be added.

Judith reported on the suggested name changes that have come in regarding Snippets. The top four names suggested: VWS News, VWS Hot Press, The VWS Complete Wash and VWS Brushstrokes. Other names suggested in no particular order: Snippets (name remain the same), VWS News Flash, VWS Sketches, Watercolor Works, The Full Spectrum, etc. In the August newsletter, Judith will ask members to email her regarding their choice of the top four.

The afternoon session of the board meeting will discuss upcoming changes and phases regarding communications involving the website and newsletter.

VOLUNTEERS

Adrienne reported that volunteer activity takes place mainly around the

shows. Artists communicate with each other. Adrienne asked the board whether VWS should have someone with authority to reject works that are not submitted properly. Adrienne reported that some of the new members had not followed the matting and framing guidelines as put forth in the prospectus. Victoria stated that going forward she will be present, coordinating the receiving of VWS art at VWS shows that she is in charge of. Victoria by profession is an art conservator; she has also helped in the past to make framework acceptable, i.e. sealing the back of paintings, so that debris cannot enter the framed painting. The specific types of tape used to seal are archival or frame sealing tape. Brown package tape, duct tape and colored tape are not to be used. Victoria will provide guidelines in the prospectus and present a demo on how to frame at a future meeting (i.e. spring 2018). The prospectus will be clarified to show that VWS expects white or off white "single matting, no inner mat" on paintings. Victoria will write something about this for the newsletter.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Tony raised discussion with the board regarding student member concerns expressed by some of the hub leaders. Students under age 24 are free. Currently there are 18 student members; 16 Middlebury/Stowe Hub, 1 Rutland and 1 Burlington. A few of the VWS adult members are concerned and uncomfortable and do not want to hold responsibility for student VWS members that are minors when they participate in hub events. Concern was expressed re the following issues; having the ability to serve alcohol at a hub gathering, driving a minor student member to an event or activity; being solo with a student and possibly becoming accused of something inappropriate. Another concern was that if student members are permitted to participate in juried and award shows, they would be competing with adult paying members entering shows working toward achieving signature status.

The board discussed and started to formulate guidelines for student (non paying) memberships. The VWS board will propose a policy that student members (24 and under, in college) may enter non-jury shows. The policy proposes that student members do not need to be included in all hub events. Student members may participate in pleine-air shows when there is an adult (parent) taking responsibility. Student members, minors, under 21 will not be invited to hub activities that serve alcohol and activities in private homes will be at the discretion of the person holding the event. Tony will look into this further with an attorney friend or talk with person Mark has consulted with. Anyone age 18 and over can choose to be a paying member and receive full membership benefits and enter juried shows. Minor full paying members will not be able to attend hub events serving alcohol and attendance at activities in private homes will be at the discretion of the person holding the event. Student and full membership minor members will be encouraged to attend all VWS show openings and VWS program meetings. VWS offers four memberships: associate, signature, honorary and

student. The policy guidelines will be further addressed at the September board meeting.

VWS WEBSITE

Tony would like the VWS to be more visible to the outside community and world. He believes we have been internally focused and will work on changing how VWS is perceived. Tony's objective is to get more members involved in VWS hubs and activities. Hubs are not the norm with other art organizations and are rather unique. Improvements to the VWS website were proposed by Tony. The changes will be reflected on the home page; Exhibits, Classes and Workshops, Members Gallery, Community Outreach, About VWS, Contact Us. Links will be used for other sections of the current home page. Phase II of the changes will include on line forms. Tony will work with Vicky on these changes. During Phase I, the home page will continue with a slide show. Tony discussed administrative log in and members lists staying with log in, protected but giving board members access. Phase II, will be worked on by Tony, Judith, Don and Vicky. The website will be redesigned and become more modern, simplified and focus on VWS, with no slide show. Eliminating the slide show will improve and optimize search engines, leaving VWS higher on the list and not drop VWS' mobile ranking. Photos on the web will be updated. Going forward the President's letter will be dropped and redirected to VWS News. During Phase III we will have developed a contact list, incorporating a media arts calendar, and gain more social media presence. Tony discussed marketing and increasing VWS memberships with the board. Postcards about VWS should be accessible to our members and left at workshops and events. Tony made a motion for approval to proceed with Phase I, II and III regarding communications and the website. Victoria seconded and the motion was approved. (See VWS Communications Plan)

NOMINATING

Exhibitions Co-Director – Victoria will take a second term.

Communications Co-Director - New position and nominations are requested.

Membership - Nominations are requested. Michelle has completed two consecutive terms according to length permitted with VWS by laws.

Hubs – Nominations are requested. Cait is leaving this position.

VWS positions are staggered. Terms ending 2018 will be Martin, Chris, Loretta, Ric, Joey and Adrienne.

Tony will set up a Nominating Committee. Adrienne volunteered and Tony will contact others to serve.

SIGNATURE STATUS

Victoria will present her findings regarding signature status, in a small report at the September board meeting. She will compare VWS requirements for signature status versus other art organizations. Victoria asked that the board read the policy set forth on VWS website regarding signature status in preparation for discussion.

Victoria made a motion and Adrienne seconded to adjourn the meeting, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta Weitzel