

2018 Visual Arts Club President's Message – President Marj Shymske

It's the time of year for looking back with appreciation at the previous twelve months and looking forward with anticipation to the new year.

My how we have grown! With 314 members, the Visual Arts Club is now one of the largest clubs on the Island. As I write this and reflect back on the year, all that we accomplished and all that we offer, it's not a surprise that so many have decided to participate. Our mission remains to offer our members creative opportunities as active participants or appreciators.

In 2018 VAC held four art exhibits and Barb Carakostas, the Exhibits Chair, initiated a new process whereby the art is judged by a local artist. The exhibits and first prize winners were: Born to be Wild – Dale Martin; Fin, Fur & Feathers - Sandy Shuster; Black & White – Sandy Morse; Off the Beaten Path – Becky Wetzel.

Our three on-going clubs, Card Club, Clay Open Studio and Mixed Media, continued to hold monthly meetings and encouraged their members to develop their skills. The clubs are ably led by Pam Farris and Dena Dardzinski (Card Club), Brooke Schuster and Janet Bura (Clay Open Studio) and Lynn Brown and Barb Carakostas (Mixed Media). And this year we were excited to add the Photography Club, led by Sandy Morse. With over 35 members, this Club meets monthly and includes both a program and a photo critique session. The club has its own blog (thanks to Bill Riski) which is linked to and can be found on the VAC website, www.datawvisualarts.com.

Both new and longstanding residents volunteered to share their talent with others. Randy and Melissa Messina held a series of Pastel Workshops, Biddie Fox and Nancy Walnes each held workshops in the finer points of watercolor, Janet Bura, Brooke Shuster and Dot Schaphorst held classes in the art and craft of clay.

Then there were additional opportunities to learn and create. Carol Luzzi taught alcohol ink techniques, Lynn Baker, Barbara Miller, and JoAnn Graham introduced us to 3 different types of jewelry making, and Marcia Driscoll held a mixed media class.

And the techniques of origami, Irish paper folding and calligraphy are not lost with Barbara Krakehl, Lynn Baker and Sue Ellen Hardmann each teaching or refreshing us. Also, Phyllis Wibby introduced many to the possibilities using the Cricut machine as her class made decorative paper wreathes.

For those club members with a strong desire to learn and grow, Barb Carakostas took students on an art appreciation journey over several months of lecture, videos and active participation.

In addition to all the educational and instructional opportunities VAC offered, we also left room for shopping and movies! The Spring Art Market chaired by Mary Marshall and Randy and Melissa Messina gave an opportunity for our artists to sell their wares, while 2 movie nights gave us a chance to learn about the life of folk artist Maude Lewis (Maude) and Vincent Van Gough (Loving Vincent).

And don't get me started about the special event we held in October – Ordinary to Extraordinary! Seven teams were given the challenge to take a bag full of 'stuff' and in 2 hours create a piece of art to the theme of Wild Kingdom. There was nothing ordinary about their creations and all the participants as well as those who came to watch and vote had an extraordinary time. Winners were the "Do Over Divas": Dena Dardzinski, Pam Farris, Ronnie Biedelman and Bobbi Weber. Kudos to all.

Holly O'Shea, who organizes the Studio Tours, presented two off-island trips this year that everyone enjoyed: Red Piano Too and Aki Kato at the Pat Conroy Center. More to come in the following months – watch for details in your emails from “VAC Publicity”.

Of course, the year wouldn't be complete without our annual extravaganza: the VAC Holiday Boutique. Mary Marshall did an amazing job organizing and the 26 vendors and multitude of shoppers enjoyed the event.

Looking ahead, our Annual Meeting and January Art Exhibit are right around the corner on January 16th. We are thrilled to have a special guest who will be our speaker at the Annual Meeting, so read your emails for the details.

No successful club can endure without the behind-the-scenes work of volunteers. VAC is fortunate to have Terry Schmitt and Judy Brown, our Volunteer Chairs, who organize all those people who said “yes” when asked if they would help by making appetizers, playing bartender, hosting and cleaning up. Thanks all!

I want to close with thanking our Board: Vice President Kathy McShane, Secretary Deb Sovern, Treasurer Bobbi Weber; also Past President Bill Tremitiere, Historian Dale Martin, Communications Lynn Baker, Technology Bill Riski, Membership Kathy Kelenski, and Exhibits Barb Carakostas. Their hard work, high energy and passion give our membership what they have come to expect in excellent programs and events.

To the Board, the artists, the teachers, the educators, the volunteers and to all of you, thank you for a grand year and I look forward to another year to create, explore and enjoy!

Marj Shymske
VAC President