

Perspectives



grandvalleyartists.com

June 2021



A Letter from the President

Submitted by Joanne Swann

When I accepted the job of President of this organization, I did so with the understanding that my responsibility was to guide GVA activities and events to the best of my ability and to keep our organization moving forward. No one could have predicted that 3 months later we would need to shut our doors because of a global pandemic; however, with the help of many of you, we were able to work through it by setting up Zoom critiques and parties and holding an outdoor garage sale and a tailgate party. Because the city and state shut down we also had to cancel our major fundraiser and once again many of our members stepped up and donated to keep us going.

As restrictions eased we were gradually able to reopen on a limited basis. Just when I thought we were on our way to starting up again, we were served notice that our landlord needed GVA's studio space. With 5 months to find a new location and two of our most active members suffering major medical setbacks, we had to figure out how to move ahead. Once again many of you stepped up to fill in. This is the kind of organization we are; we do our best for our fellow members to keep this organization going.

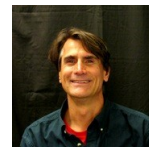
GVA's founding members met in each other's homes, then in libraries and in basements of municipal buildings. They met in any meeting space they could find. It was a transient experience until they were able to find cheap space where they could hold sketch sessions in a more permanent space. When they incorporated in 1957, there were 32 members and they could meet in small spaces. We are no longer that organization. We have 252 members who deserve a clean, well-ventilated, fairly modern facility for parties, classes, sketch sessions, gallery shows and juried prize winning shows. Individual members come from Holland and Lansing because we offer something they can't find closer to home. Other art organizations which rent our space, would have done so continually had the pandemic not stopped everything. Our current studio presented a good face to the community. The board has been working hard and is very close to securing a new facility that will allow us to continue to do so. In the last several months, the search committee with the help of our realtor, has looked at 21 locations. Some spaces would have worked for us and were within our budget if they hadn't been so far away from most of our members. We've seen locations that are cool, but are too expensive. We've seen some real dumps, some too small or too weirdly configured to work for us as a gathering place and an art studio. I have come to realize that there is not going to be a perfect location or space! We had a very short time to find an *almost perfect* space to make our own. Take a look at the article on page 4 to see how we did it. With any luck at all, we will soon have a place that fits the stature of who we are: an organization committed to the growth and development of artists and to the support that comes from gathering with friends. GVA is the oldest and longest continually running art organization in West Michigan. We are looking forward to a bright future filled with fun events. Please join me in saying, "GVA is NOT going down! Not on our watch!"

Joanne Swanne, President

Go With The Flow: an intuitive art workshop with Wes DeVries

June 19 from 2:00-5:00 pm at GVA Studios

Cost is \$30. [See details here!](#)



Members Respond to Questions About the Future

Submitted by Dana Donnell with extensive help from Terri Hanna

About 16% of our 250 members shared their thoughts concerning the future of GVA; what they hope to gain from their membership and how they plan to contribute to sustain the organization. Many respondents (68%) felt an increase in base membership dues to between \$60 and \$100 per year was reasonable. Ideas for raising or conserving money ran the gamut from securing grants to renting out studio space; from having a percentage of workshop fees go to GVA to donating basic supplies like paper towels and coffee; from holding an annual GVA Member Art Sale (garage sale style) with 40% of profits going to GVA to social fundraising like winery paint-outs. Respondents also mentioned an extended 2-day art festival, using members to model for portrait and costumed sketch sessions, and adding studio fees (like model fees) for open studio and still life or increasing live model sketch fees.

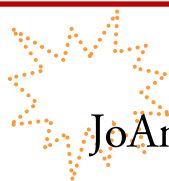
Nearly all respondents listed program, critique, sketch sessions, photography group, plein air, workshops, classes and social events as important services/activities offered by GVA. Many added that they would like to see more open studio, sketch and evening sessions. Members were willing to volunteer to keep the gallery open to the public and to support more creative offerings.

Members who answered the questionnaire were looking for a new location with plenty of space for sketch, work space for matting and framing, gallery space, tall ceilings, natural light, a central location and plenty of parking. To be frugal, they suggested partnering with colleges, churches or other arts organizations to save money on space, or finding the least expensive space for a few years while we do strategic planning and raise funds. They asked the board to increase efforts to market GVA and to make financial statements available to all members. (These statements have always been available. They are housed and clearly labeled in binders in the board room.) You can also find the full survey report [here](#).

Plein Air Paint Out at Hollister House on Saturday, May 22nd



GVA Welcomes New Members



JoAnne Gritter, Samantha Conrad, Stacie Lech and Anna Donahue

GVA Needs You!

Submitted by GVA Board of Directors

ARTISTS URGENTLY SEEKING FUNDRAISING CHAIRPERSON

The board of Grand Valley Artists is seeking an impassioned volunteer to fill the position of Fundraising Chairperson. This job involves establishing SEVERAL SUBCOMMITTEES. These subcommittees will each organize a different aspect of GVA's fundraising.

For example, one might handle an art fair, another might coordinate appeals for donations, a third might start a GVA art auction or garage sale. The Chairperson will NOT be responsible for raising all the money to support GVA! Rather, he or she will oversee several groups of hardworking volunteers who will make our financial future secure!

Please consider joining us on the board! The work of GVA is exciting and we would love to have you be part of it.

Apply by emailing our President, Joanne Swann, joswann@sbcglobal.net or calling our Secretary, Dana Donnell at 616-706-8732

Thank You!

Our Mission Is....

Submitted by Mary Helmic and Dana Donnell

The Mission of Grand Valley Artists is stated at the very beginning of its [Constitution and Bylaws](#). A strong mission statement:

- Sums up our nonprofit to the outside world
- Is concise, memorable, surprising
- Contains 3 elements:
 - our cause, our actions, our impact
- Suggests why we do what we do

A mission statements is "not supposed to tell everything about your nonprofit. It's supposed to get people interested in hearing more." The *more* is expressed through vision statements, strategic planning, programming, newsletters, social media platforms, marketing, and branding.

Essentially, we want to put in writing just how wonderful and unique this organization is! That allows those who support arts organizations with sales, donations, grants and memberships to have a better idea what they are supporting and why.

Because GVA is actively seeking grant funding, the board will be asking the membership to vote on a newly revised mission statement. So **here is the proposed Mission Statement....**

The mission of Grand Valley Artists, Inc. is to nurture excellence in the visual arts by providing opportunities for self-expression, education, and exhibition within West Michigan's dynamic cultural community.



Music and Art Across Downtown Grand Rapids

The 2021 Festival of the Arts Plein Air event will be one of the first downtown events of the summer. We will fill the streets with artists all through the weekend of June 4, 5, 6 and musicians will be performing on Saturday June 5th!

Please follow the menu below to find a map of artists and musicians, or use the chart to find where each individual artist will be! [Plein Air Festival Information](#)

Deciding on a New Home for Grand Valley Artists

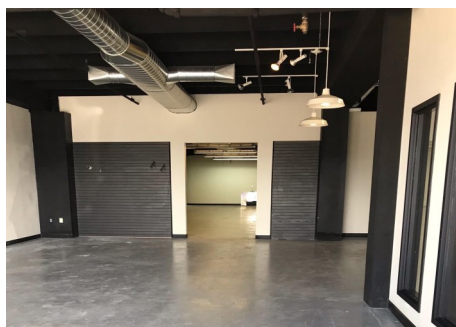
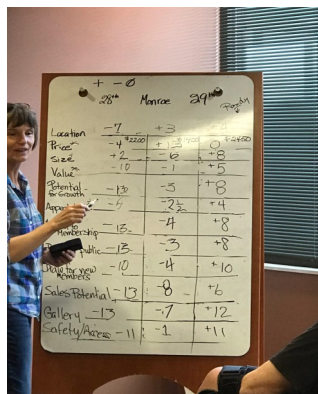
Submitted by Dana Donnell on Behalf of the Search Committee

Over the past 10 weeks, board members and those on the Facility Search Committee have worked with Realtor Michael May to find a new home for GVA. Michael, Todd Darling and Marty Klar reviewed commercial properties for lease on LoopNet almost daily. President, Joanne Swann, coordinated the analysis of potential locations and site visits with our realtor. The Search Committee looked at 21 buildings. They considered the following criteria as they evaluated each site:

- Optimal location with parking
- Safety and Accessibility
- Price, Value and Affordability
- Interior and Exterior Design
- Potential to Attract New Members, Students, Art Lovers

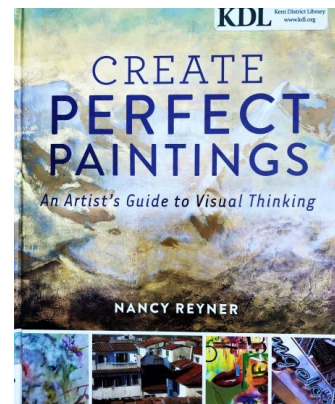
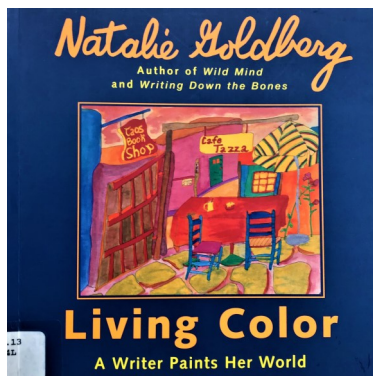
After much deliberation, the group met to vote on the 3 properties that seemed to offer the best options for GVA. Thirteen people weighed in on 12 different criteria. Secretary, Dana Donnell, recorded each person's vote as a +, -, or 0 for neutral. When the scores were tallied it was clear that 28th street Grand Plaza was no longer a contender. Of the two remaining locations, 1925 Monroe NW scored -23 and 2661 29th SE scored +80. We then opened the discussion for comments on each location. Following 45 minutes of discussion, a silent ballot was taken on the question of whether to extend a preliminary lease agreement to 2661 29th SE. The question carried with a vote of 9 in favor, 3 opposed and 1 abstention.

We think the space has great potential for GVA, and it is priced well below market rate. If you want to know more, just click [here](#). Or better yet, go visit and take a break at the Schuler Books Café!



Check It Out...Great Resources From Local Libraries

Submitted by Dana Donnell



GVA Festival of the Arts Award Goes to Kathy Bechtel

Submitted by Jim Johnson, Juror

Kathleen Bechtel's entry *Hush at Day's End* is a very simple, formally balanced composition that's beautifully painted. The artist's understanding of warm and cool colors makes me feel like I am actually *there*. I love the faint indication of a full moon off to the left. Interesting how a small detail like that can change the painting. The focal point, a round barn, is of course intriguing, but it is the emotional component of this painting that I find compelling. The painting has a calm, serene, almost sacred feeling. It comes very close to being a visual prayer.



Hush at Day's End
Kathleen Bechtel
Oil 32" X 32"

Mark Your Calendar...

June 4, 5, 6: Plein Air Painters for GR Festival of the Arts, downtown Grand Rapids

June 13: 1-3 pm, "Off the Wall Reception", Van Singel Fine Arts Center, juror talk at 2:00 pm.

June 19: 2-5 pm, Abstract Expressionism Workshop with Wes DeVries, 1695 Service Rd.

Calling All GVA Members: We Need YOU!

Submitted by Mary Baine

It might seem strange to pay your dues and then be willing to do some unpaid jobs as well. If asked why I choose to volunteer, I say, "It's how we are able to have nice things."

Grand Valley Artists is run entirely by volunteers. Somebody has to pay our bills and somebody has to prepare our taxes. Somebody has to make sure we have enough toilet paper and paper towels. Our newsletter requires time and effort. Our shows don't organize and hang themselves. Everything — including the sketch sessions, programs, and critiques so important to many — happens because dues-paying members offer to make sure these services are provided. There are little jobs as well as big jobs available. ANY of us can offer to assist at any time. Many more of us probably could and should.

Of course, there are reasons why a person really can't. A health crisis, a family emergency, or a terribly busy schedule might make this the worst possible moment to volunteer for anything extra at all. But if more members could make or find the time, the future of GVA would be that much brighter. Right now, too much is being done by too few people, and all it takes is a health crisis, a family emergency, or a suddenly busy schedule in their lives to compromise their ability to keep things going. If you are able to help in any way, large or small, now is the time to step up; our next location is expected to offer plenty of opportunities and challenges. Think of GVA as a giant canvas and every task a brushstroke; maybe it's time for YOU to leave YOUR mark.

Photo News

Photography by Russ Barneveld on display at Lowell Library until the end of June.



Don't miss the Grand Rapids Festival of the Arts Photo Entries on display
at festivalgr.org

Bliss & Vinegar

GVA has enjoyed a wonderful relationship with Bliss & Vinegar in Cascade. This upscale luncheon spot offers a great opportunity for our artists to share their work! The work of Rose Ellis is now on display. Be sure to swing by, grab a fantastic salad and check it out.

If you want to show your work at Bliss & Vinegar, you will need to share some of it in the gallery on our website, www.grandvalleyartists.com, so the owners can see what you do. They decide whose work they want to feature. Please do not contact them directly. Marty Klar coordinates this venue for us.



Rose Ellis at Bliss and Vinegar



"Show me the money!" -Jerry Maguire, 1996

Submitted by Grant Writer Dana Donnell and Treasurer Lloyd Wheeler

If you are interested in reviewing GVA's financial documents please click [here](#) or take a look at the paper copy posted in the board room at 1695 Service Rd. NE.

JUROR'S STATEMENT BY STEPHEN DUREN
GRAND VALLEY ARTISTS AT VAN SINGEL
FINE ARTS CENTER Submitted by Doug Klemm

It was a pleasure to jury this show, and I thank all of the artists for their generosity. I offer the following observations on some of the many works that stood out to me. It is always a pleasure to view my friend Jim Johnson's charming and masterfully handled watercolors. I was particularly happy that he included a piece that caused me to laugh out loud (*Cloudy With a Chance of Bricks*). Equally masterful are the plein air paintings of Kathleen Kalinowski. I look forward to seeing where she next lands as she continues to push the envelope. Dennis O'Mara's painting of a *Leelanau Barn #4* avoids cliché through the use of surprising, unexpected color. A refreshing change from the more traditional postcard palette. One of the more psychologically powerful entries was Leon Lou's watercolor portrait titled *Paul*. I was happily surprised at the quality of photographs in this show. A haunting paradox exists in the images of Rus Barneveld whose *Farm Scene* might convey a saccharin sentimentality, were it not for the surreal mystery that pervades it. A similar compelling enigma exists in the photos of Evie Carrier. The photographs of Stone Peng, Henri Droski, Diane Hayworth, and Steve Scarborough touched that side of me that responds to the power of well-placed protagonists in an austere, poetic environment. The simplest images can be the strongest, but they are also the most difficult to pull off. Mary Reusch's paintings reveal a sweet and sensuous relationship with color and surface. (I want to know the story behind her *London Tower Wall and Tree*.) Mary Serra Veneklase's small *Franciscan Fieldscape* is a fine example of sprezzatura. Free, expressive wet-into wet painting always calls for risk and courage—two key ingredients to discovery. The result in this case is a tiny piece of poetry. Doug Klemm's paintings are some of the most strikingly individualistic landscapes in the show. Their forceful, exciting compositions and strong sense of space are transporting. (I am respecting Doug's request to be recused from any awards, considering his role as the organizer of this show.) I hope that my observations will be read with the understanding that I make them without having actually viewed the art in person. Some works will have been disadvantaged by their digital reproduction, while other pieces may have experienced the reverse.



Grand Valley Artists is grateful to Stephen for his willingness to be our juror for this show!

Current Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs of GVA

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Treasurer

Lloyd Wheeler
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Secretary

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Fundraising Chair

Open Position

Communications Chair

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Publicity Chair

Open Position

GVA Gallery Show Chair

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Sketch/Model Chair

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Hospitality Chair

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Legacy Chair

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Outreach Chair

Doug Klemm
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Social Media Subcommittee

Daniel Gish
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GVA Library Subcommittee

Open Position

Art Festival Fund Raiser

Subcommittee

5 Open Positions

■ Designates Non-Voting Position

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