



NEWBURYPORT ART ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL MEETING, TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2012

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I. INTRODUCTION – TRANSITIONS, BEGINNINGS, AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

My first full day as the Executive Director of the Newburyport Art Association (NAA) was January 3, 2011, just a little over one year ago – on the occasion of the 2012 Annual Meeting it seems like the right moment for me to begin to deliver an Annual Report to the NAA Board of Directors and to the NAA membership. In the following pages members will find an accounting of challenges and accomplishments in the various areas of NAA operations as the Board, staff, and I experienced them in 2011.

I have joined the NAA at a very special time. While change is difficult for all of us, it can also be exhilarating, especially if managed with the proper respect for the work of those who have come before us. My hope for the NAA is that as we identify future goals – where does the NAA want to find itself in 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years? – we reach those shared goals ever mindful of where we have come from and grateful for the human and creative energy that has made our time possible.

The Executive Director enjoys a special vantage point within the Association – she enjoys a wide-angle view, if not 360 degree view, of all aspects of the workings of the NAA. The constant tension between the necessities of the day-to-day work within the Association and the external exigencies result in an ongoing study of work efficiencies and improvements, creative programming, potential revenue streams, visibility enhancement for the NAA, and on and on. The tension is one I personally enjoy; I feel deeply the interconnectedness of the internal and external workings of the Association. Every day I am struck by the need to acknowledge and respond to a richly diverse membership in ways that are genuine and lasting. My work is informed by these forces, often competing for limited time in the day and resources.

Even given these demands, I can state with confidence and clarity that the NAA has had a very good year – in measurable and immeasurable ways. Below I outline what the specific challenges and goals have been in various areas of our work and offer my view on our progress in meeting them.

II. Membership

At the core of the Newburyport Art Association is its membership – it provides the creativity, energy, momentum to make all that the Association accomplishes possible. The aspirations of the members shape in large part exhibition, education, and community outreach efforts – they are highly valued and fostered.

In 2011 the membership profile was as follows:

Artist Members	425
Artist Select	16
Artist Plus Members	100
Artist Lifetime	15
Youth Memberships	15
Individual	34
Family Memberships	18
Patrons	7
Honorary	5
Total	635

While we had hoped, some of us perhaps too optimistically, to move beyond the 700 members mark for the 2011 fiscal year, the membership numbers remained steady from 2010, not a small thing given the constraints of the larger economic context in which we all find ourselves.

Efforts to create new members through programming that might appeal to the non-artist member (e.g. NAA On The Road) did not produce immediate results, but the expectation is that interest will grow with time, ongoing marketing, and constant thinking about how to make such programs more varied and accessible.

The second focus of our efforts to build membership was on member benefits. And while changes to the benefits could not be implemented until the start of the 2012 membership drive, work was completed in 2011 to set the stage for new benefit initiatives. New member benefits announced for 2012 include the following:

- A new artist membership level – Artist Select. In addition to the Artist Membership benefits, the Artist Select membership level provides a link to your personal artist website directly from the NAA website. This Artist Select Membership is \$85 per year.
- 10% Discount on purchases from the NAA Gift Shop for all NAA Members!
- On-line Gallery – When submitting show entries online your images will be displayed in the On-line Gallery and available for sale for the duration of the show, broadening your prospective buyer audience (*Artist Memberships*)
- Senior Discount on all NAA Memberships – Our Senior Members (65 yrs+) can enjoy a 10% discount on their membership fees.

In addition, the NAA Membership still includes the following benefits:

- Discounts of NAA Classes and Workshops including the new programs *NAA on the Road* and the *Art of Business Series*
- Weekly Newsletter from the Executive Director via Constant Contact
- Special Vendor Business Partner Discounts – starting with a lunch discount card for 10 Center Street!
- Exclusive opportunity to show work in the NAA Gift Shop – Juried Process by Gift Shop Committee (*Artist Memberships*)
- Ability to join Special Interest Groups to further support artistic growth (*Artist Memberships*)
- Opportunity to host a featured artist show in the Hills Gallery or through our “Wings” program (*conditional on meeting entry criteria*). *NEW!* “Wings” venues include Oregano Ristorante, Jewett Farms, YWCA, Michael’s Harborside, 10 Center Street, The Tannery (coming soon) as well as Chase & Lunt Insurance (*Artist Memberships*)
- Many & varied opportunities to show your art work to the public at prevailing rates
- Artist Plus Members have the additional benefit of waiving two entry fees per show

As we are able and it is appropriate, we market NAA membership in various venues. A pointed example of such efforts was the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce Membership Mixer the NAA hosted in October which garnered 6 new members that same evening. All members, Board of Directors, and staff need to remember they serve as ambassadors and chief recruiters for the Association and as such need to use their voices, spheres of influence, circles of family and friends, to enlist new members at all times.

Together, we can join forces to meet the Membership Committee's goal to dramatically grow the NAA membership in 2012. We will gauge how we have done when the Annual Meeting reconvenes in January 2013.

III. Exhibitions

The NAA's foremost obligation is to its members and their work – creating opportunities wherever and whenever possible for the members to exhibit their work and grow their talents and skills. The 2011 exhibition calendar was full of such opportunity. During the course of the last 12 months, the following Open, Juried, Featured Artists, and Featured Interest Group exhibitions were sponsored by the NAA. Please review these enclosed tables for a statistical review of 2011 exhibition activity.

IV. Education

The NAA education program got off to a timid start in 2011 as a result of changes in personnel and procedures, lags in marketing as a result of the changes in staffing, and a *wait and see* attitude on the part of potential students. As the year wore on, confidence was gained on all fronts, and the education program began to find its new footing with a return of some old stand-bys and some new offerings. Below please find highlights from the Fall 2011 session as a snapshot – the fall session was the only full education session which ran successfully.

Momentum has been building since winter of 2011 (when all offerings had to be cancelled due to a lack of enrollment) as evidenced by fall enrollments and we look for the pattern of growth in class and workshop enrollments to carry over in 2012.

2011 Fall Classes

		#	Mbr	Non-mbr
Mixed Media with Paula Estey		4	2	1
Oil Painting with Julie Aioldi		7	6	1
Acrylic and Pastel with Karen Jones		6	3	3
Drawing with Bev Mitchell		4	2	2
Expressing the Fire Within with Lisa Victoria	CANCELLED	1	1	
Photoshop with Eva Timothy	CANCELLED	2	1	1
Field to Finish with Margo Pullman	CANCELLED	1	1	
Figure Sculpture with Marilyn Coon	CANCELLED	0		

2011 Fall Youth Program

Creative Explorations	Tuesday class	10	2	8
	Thursday class	9	1	8

2011 Fall Workshops

Pastel Workshop with Andrew Anderson-Bell		4	3	1
Art of Business Series				
	Marketing	7	7	
	Writing	12	12	
	Marketing Plan	11	11	
	Whole Series	6	6	
NAA on the Road: MFA	CANCELLED	3	3	
In the Works with Donald Jurney	CANCELLED	3	3	
Basic Wire Weaving	CANCELLED	1	1	
Encaustic	RESCHED	3	3	

The Executive Director, along with the Board of Directors and Program Manager, are always open to new ideas – some will succeed, others will not. But as an Association the NAA needs pride itself on remaining open to new possibilities or it will find itself stagnating over time.

One thread that educational programming will continue to integrate when appropriate is the interdisciplinary connection between the arts and other fields of endeavor. In 2011 the NAA only just started such exploration with the NAA On The Road, the Art of Business Series, and the collaboration with the creative writing program at the Newburyport High School (on the exhibition side, the Arts & Letters Show). The Executive Director hopes to grow programming that highlights such connections not just because it makes good artistic and intellectual sense, but may well, ultimately, have a bearing on our capacity to enroll new members by expanding our audiences and hence strengthening the NAA's financial position.

V. Other Programming

The NAA, in addition to its exhibition and education operations, supports programs which ensure that it delivers on its commitment to the community at-large in appropriate ways and helps to grow the NAA's visibility among its various audiences.

OpArt – In 2004, thanks to outgoing Board of Directors member Monica Welsh, the OpArt program was established in collaboration with Opportunity Works, Inc. of Newburyport. The 2011 year has been an exciting one for OpArt. As Monica was pulled away due to professional obligations elsewhere, the NAA was fortunate to identify an exceptionally well suited successor in Sara Connor. Sara is the current coordinator for the program – she serves as the instructor and overall administrator. Every two weeks Sara offers an art class for Opportunity Works Associates – their works are then included in shows across the community during the course of the year (e.g. Lowell's Boat Shop, Carry Out Café, NAA). As a result of discussions held in 2011, efforts will be made in the near future to identify more venues for the sale of OpArt works – paintings, cards, pillows, jewelry. In addition, as space and staffing become available the program may well be expanded in the Haverhill area. The NAA added a permanent spot for OpArt works in its Holiday Show & Sale. Please search out this link on YouTube for a video recently produced pro bono by Reid Media of Newburyport, <http://youtu.be/EkyI05PD8BQ>. It is worth an extra moment.

ArtLink – Each year the NAA is involved in education outreach and scholarships awards for local area students, 2011 was no different. With the support of private donors, the NAA was in a position to award 5 scholarships to graduating seniors who planned to pursue work at the college level in art and/or art education. In addition, a special opportunity was made possible with a grant from the Hemphill Family Foundation for one student to attend the 2011 Summer Studio program at the Massachusetts College of Art.

The Executive Director is pursuing possible expansions of the ArtLink program by creating a professional network for art educators in the area that might be housed at the NAA and resuscitating plans for portfolio reviews for high school students in collaboration with representatives from area colleges and universities. A possible new mentorship program for artist members and area students is also under consideration.

WINGS – 2011 has been an exceptionally busy year for the WINGS program coordinated by Board of Directors member Jay McCarthy. At the time of the new Executive Director’s arrival, the only active WINGS venue was Chase & Lunt Insurance Company. In the last few months, the NAA has enjoyed the addition of the following venues: Jewett Farms Studio, Michael’s Harborside, 10 Center Street, Oregano’s, YWCA, The Tannery, and RE/MAX On The River. The new WINGS partners create additional opportunities for the NAA artists to show their works and build their visibility.

Strem Art Contest – A totally new venture was undertaken by the ED and Mike Strem, owner and founder of Strem Chemicals, Inc. and loyal supporter of the NAA. Seeking ideas for the cover of his next product catalog, the ED suggested an art contest for NAA artist members. During the fall, the contest unfolded with 37 participants, 10 finalists – ultimately artist member Kim Litle was selected the winner. An exhibition of contest participants is planned for March 2012 when the \$500 prize will be awarded to Litle. As a wonderful epilogue to the story, Kim has donated her prize money to the award winners in the upcoming Young & Budding Artists Show.

VI. Fund Development

In 2011 the Newburyport Art Association enjoyed generous and consistent support from its historically loyal supporters. The year also saw some new support committed to the NAA.

On the *institutional* side, the NAA received the following:

Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank	\$5,000
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Institution for Savings Bank	\$5,000
Hemphill Family Foundation	\$2,000
H. Patterson Hale, Jr. Charitable Foundation	\$7,500
Arbeit Family Foundation	\$600

Note: the 2008 Community Preservation Fund award was tapped for the roof replacement in 2011; the NAA has applied to the Fund for the balance (roughly \$3,000) to be applied to the courtyard project.

New *corporate* support for 2011 included the following sources:

Strem Chemicals, Inc.	\$3,500
Newburyport Development	\$2,000

[in 2011 RE/MAX On The River committed \$2,000 for the 2012 Spring Exhibition season]

Support from *individuals* is an area of fund development that needs attention and new energy. However, in 2011 the NAA was named one of two beneficiaries of the Maria & Philip Stern bequest gift resulting in a \$165,000 gift which has been designated for an endowment fund by the Board of Directors. The principal of the bequest fund will remain invested and the investment advisors (to be identified) will be directed to seek a 5% return in support of annual operations. Obviously, the Stern gift gives the NAA some long-sought security and it plants a seed with which to grow further giving, planned or otherwise.

The 2011 Annual Fund total was \$10,580, comparable to the previous year.

Artful Feast, the NAA annual and primary fund raising event, raised \$20,000 after expenses, which was lower than in previous years mostly explained by lower percentages donated by the artists and lower prices offered by the buyers – undoubtedly the results of the current overall economic climate; expenses were level.

Goals for the 2012 include expanding the NAA’s support from institutions and corporations. Most pointedly, the Executive Director, Fund Development Committee, and the Board of Directors will be focused on a campaign to cultivate the NAA’s network of major, individual donors. Special events will be planned with this goal specifically in mind and, with the help of

the Stern Fund, cultivation will begin among potential donors who may consider including the NAA in their planned giving.

Fund development work at the NAA cannot be successful without the intimate involvement of the NAA's Board of Directors. The 2011 year has seen several Board member terms come to an end and a shift to new Board leadership – the challenge of the coming year will be to build back the Board membership and its fund raising capacities to help insure the financial security of the NAA. The (presumed) President-Elect and Executive Director have already begun plans for Board development including an early 2012 Board of Directors retreat to discuss the future directions of the NAA, identifying Board candidates, and Board participation in the Essex County Community Foundation Board Institute – all with the aim to create a shared vision for the NAA and appropriate Board support for its implementation. The Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors will be presenting its slate for elections at the January 17, 2012 Annual Meeting of the Membership. The new Board of Directors roster will be announced at that time. During the course of 2012 new candidates for Board membership will be identified and cultivated.

VII. Facilities

The NAA's historical building required some tender loving care during 2011. The following maintenance items were completed: interior painting of the entire structure, thorough cleaning of the basement and attic, cleaning of all rugs, new carpeting in the office/library, reorganization of storage of utility and other supplies, and arrangements for ongoing decorations.

Most critically, the roof was in need of being completely replaced and a grant awarded by the Community Preservation Fund in Newburyport (2008) was applied towards this project in the fall and covered all the costs – the NAA building now boasts a new roof along with some new boards which needed to be replaced under the roof surface. It is imperative to note here the critical role of volunteers in making it possible to complete the ongoing maintenance projects at the NAA, starting with the Board of Directors Building Committee and reaching out into the membership. Without the long hours of effort and energy from our volunteers, it would not be financially or logistically possible for us to stay on top of what the building requires.

The NAA did begin a new partnership in 2011 with the Old South Church on Federal Street in Newburyport. The NAA is renting their facilities two afternoons per week, for a minimal price, for the new *Creative Explorations* youth program.

The Fund Development Committee began plans to design the hardscape and landscape for the area behind the NAA building with the aim of creating a brick courtyard for multi-purpose uses (special events, classes, informal gatherings of members, rentals, etc.). The Committee hopes to have the courtyard completed in time for the 2012 Auction. A campaign has been developed to sell bricks for engraving in support of the project. A lead gift from the H. Patterson Hale, Jr. Charitable Foundation awarded in the Fall of 2011 in the amount of \$7,500 has been dedicated to the project. The NAA has also applied to have the balance on the Community Preservation Fund grant (roughly \$3,000) be repurposed towards the courtyard project.

VIII. Personnel

Upon the arrival of the new Executive Director in January 2011, the staff had experienced many changes and needed to be brought together and rebuilt as a team. Fortunately for the membership, many staff members have stayed on board and provided great assistance to the new ED as she learned the lay of the land. However, there were some management holes and the ED and Board of Directors were gratified that Annemarie Smith agreed to join forces with them in February 2011 in the newly created position of Program Manager. The ED has instituted monthly staff meetings and they continue to provide a further building block in our team's development. The 2011 staff has been comprised of the following who are expected to continue into 2012:

Elena Bachrach	Executive Director
Annemarie Smith	Program Manager
Joan Merrill	Business Manager
Sara Connor	OpArt Coordinator, Youth Program Instructor
Lily Ackerly	Gallery Associate
Paula Viera	Gallery Associate
Andrea Alukonis	Gallery Associate
Linda Dahlberg	Receptions

The staff has enjoyed and benefited from the consistent and dependable work of our dedicated intern, Alison Odle. We expect to be growing the roster of interns in a renewed collaboration with the Pentucket Regional High School (ArtLink).

IX. Financial Overview

The 2011 budget approved by the Board of Directors totaled \$169,000. The preliminary numbers for the end of 2011 indicate that the NAA will fall short of budget by roughly \$9,000. However, due to an early gift from the Stern Bequest and ongoing containment of costs, the cash position of the NAA going into 2012 is estimated to be \$10,000 (at the time of this writing, the exact figures remain to be finalized).

The NAA has shown exceptional discipline on the expense side. However, revenue streams did not produce income as the budget had projected for the following probable reasons:

- still weakened economy
- membership in an art association considered discretionary
- art purchases considered discretionary
- low education enrollment
- Auction income shortfall
- Significant major gift was not renewed and created a deficit in the fund development area from day one of 2011 without cultivation for its replacement yet in place

However, much work has been done in 2011 to lay the groundwork for better results in 2012, and prospects for a growing membership, the cultivation of major donors, and a steadier and greater stream of exhibition entries, art sales, education enrollments, and potential rental income are predicted.

X. NAA in the Community

The mission of the NAA stipulates obligations for all of us which are both internal to the NAA and external – the NAA resides in a larger community and needs to take its commitment to it very seriously. This external piece is for the most part the responsibility of the Board of Directors and Executive Director. The Directors are constantly representing the NAA in all their activities beyond the NAA. As part of her professional responsibilities, the Executive Director is obligated to position the NAA in the wider community in which it resides as appropriate – either by contributing to community endeavors because it is the right thing to do and/or by

creating greater and better visibility for the NAA. In 2011 the new ED participated in the following networks, projects, activities with the aim of positioning the NAA in its proper light.

- Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce
 - 2011 Annual Meeting of the GNCC
 - Non-Profit Sub-Group
 - Member Mixer hosted at the NAA
- Newburyport Cultural Alliance Resource Group
- ArtWalk (the NAA ED will co-chair the 2012 ArtWalk with artist member Alan Bull)
- Art Associations Network
- Newburyport Branding Working Group
- Weekly Press Releases to Media Contacts
- Weekly E-blasts to NAA Membership & Friends
- Development of new website – ongoing

This external work is critical as it serves to bolster all other NAA efforts – it is marketing of the NAA in its most genuine form and its value cannot be understated.

XI. Our Future

One of the most important reasons this ED came on board at the NAA one year ago was the prospects for its future she foresaw could be created along with the NAA leadership and membership. With a year under her belt, the ED will now have an opportunity to engage in conversations with the Board of Directors and members that will move us beyond what may be required just to keep us operating day to day, but rather test our imaginations about what the future of the NAA might look like.

Underneath all the smart and creative thinking I know we can join in together, there are strategic and concrete steps we will need to take to help strengthen the NAA so that when

opportunity presents itself, we are poised to take the leap. I see our strategic goals for the coming years as follows:

- Membership, Membership, Membership – grow the artist and non-artist memberships aiming to reach an historic high point of 800+ members
- Fund Development – build major donor & planned giving campaigns
- Creative, Interdisciplinary Programming – think boldly about visual arts programming and its relationship to the other arts and disciplines
- Exhibitions – Think fresh when possible and appropriate
- Facilities – think about how best to use existing facilities and remain open to new opportunities as they present themselves in support of creative programming & financial goals
- Revenue streams – partner with local commercial resources to explore rental opportunities

If we have our building blocks soundly in place and we share in the most entrepreneurial thinking we can muster together, I have no doubt that the future of the Newburyport Art Association will be very vibrant indeed. I am honored to have the personal opportunity to share with you this most precious enterprise.