

VWS Meeting Minutes

DATE: April 22, 2017

LOCATION: Telephone Conference 9 – 11:30 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS; Tony Connor, Martin Lalonde, Victoria Jefferies, Ric Feeney, Caitlin Glaser, Michelle LeBoeuf, Joey Bibeau, Judith Selin, Chris Sumner, Loretta Weitzel

Tony Connor opened the meeting. The first order of business was to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2017 meeting with one correction. Cait made a motion to accept and Ric seconded. The minutes were approved as amended.

Treasurer's Report – Tony welcomed Chris Sumner to the Board. Chris advised that she will forward the board the Treasurer's Report when it is complete. Chris stated that she is in the process of having access to our account with the bank and will soon have on line banking access for handling the VWS account.

DIRECTOR OF HUBS – CAITLIN GLASER

Cait reported that she held a Hub Meeting in February. See report attached. Cait has sent hub leaders a list of the artists (non-VWS members) that are available to provide workshops. Cait expressed concern regarding youth (minor) members of VWS. There are questions about participation, dynamics and responsibilities when minors attend hub meetings and workshops. Cait feels that there is a need to address whether this poses a liability. Some adult hub members have expressed to Cait that they would prefer to have separate groups, and keep some activities among peers, adult only. Tony will follow up with Cait, Lisa Beach and Terry Hodgdon regarding this matter. Chris will inquire about our insurance coverage when involving minor members in hub activities and workshops. Tony asked Cait to ask hub directors about any activities that are set up in the near future. The matter will be further addressed at the July board meeting.

Regarding signature status and membership, Cait suggested that VWS consider an additional level of membership. Ric and Victoria addressed signature membership status. Victoria has emailed Mark and will be speaking with Jan Olmstead to get background on this. Victoria will also speak with Amanda Amend. Cait would like to postpone further addressing this matter until the September board meeting.

Cait suggested that there should be a reminder sent out to VWS members if they have not paid dues and their membership has lapsed. Michelle inquired if there could be an email as well as the reminder that is placed in Snippets. Cait will follow up with Mark as to past practice regarding letters and phone calls and Cait

will coordinate with Michelle regarding membership renewals. It was pointed out that every effort will continue to be made if a membership has lapsed and the person has their signature status in jeopardy.

Cait also made a suggestion that Judith have an idea box for renaming Snippets. Victoria stated that the suggestion box be at the Spring meeting.

CO-DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITIONS – VICTORIA JEFFERIES AND RIC FEENEY

Victoria submitted a written report regarding the Spring Show at the Festival Gallery in Waitsfield, to be held June 3 through July 23, 2017. See report attached. Victoria reported that they are not planning a people's choice award for this show.

Victoria confirmed that she is in contact with Kit Hawkins regarding a fall show at the Atrium Gallery located at the Claremont Opera House. Victoria noted a change in her written report, attached to minutes. She would like to consider changing Catamount's offer for a Fall 2018 show to be a Spring show. Victoria would like to accommodate Pam Dexter's offer of a show that would be a Fall/Winter Exhibit Fundraiser in 2018.

Cait inquired about the number of VWS signature members. Tony will find out.

Cait stated that there was confusion regarding Aqua, the title of the upcoming show, being a theme. Cait asked that Tony clarify to the membership that Aqua was not a theme but was the title. Cait suggested that this be mentioned at the meeting. Tony will clarify to the membership that VWS discourages our shows being given a theme. Loretta pointed out that in the past, some venues have suggested a theme. Tony said that he will make it clear that VWS is not holding a theme show this spring.

DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP – MICHELLE LEBOEUF

Michelle reported that currently 135 have paid their dues for 2017. This number is out of 251 VWS memberships in 2016. When members join for the first time, they receive two communications, a welcome letter and a hub welcome letter. The hub letters were created by Pam Dexter. Michelle reported that these letters are out of date. Also, passwords to get hub and board access are not working. Michelle retains the main database and she will update Cait and Judith. Cait recommended that members continue to receive Snippets even if their membership is lapsed. Michelle and Tony will work together regarding notifying members if their membership is lapsed. In the past members in jeopardy of losing signature membership were contacted.

COMMUNICATIONS – JUDITH SELIN

Vicky Hertzberg updates the web for VWS. This is a paid position. The website has problems. Tony reported that Don has been working on this. Judith and Tony will work together to solve password issues regarding Snippets and the web site. Cait asked Tony to talk about this at the Spring meeting.

Tony addressed the difficulties with Chrome and Google. Judith and Tony will coordinate with Vicky to get the web updated and timely. They will work on making improvements to make the website more friendly. Tony stated that he would like to see the newsletter contain more immediate information and the long-term information be provided through links. Tony stated his goal is to have a more comprehensive report and presentation for the July board meeting. The report will include cost estimates, time frame, identifying the person(s) responsible for keeping different aspects of the website current.

Judith reported that she took over Snippets with information being passed along via telephone. Lynne and Kate did not meet with her in person. Judith stated that she is interested in modifying and making changes to Snippets. Victoria and Joey congratulated Judith on the recent newsletters.

Constant Contact list has 490 active email recipients. Michelle will send Judith the latest e mail list of the membership.

Judith said that she is taking suggestions for a name change for Snippets. She had a positive response to her April (April fool) inquiry. She wants the newsletter to be effective and engaging. Judith reported that she already has a collection of names. The May and June newsletters will continue to ask for submissions. The membership can be asked to vote on the name change.

Judith will send one monthly reminder to the board asking for information for Snippets.

CO DIRECTORS OF PROGRAMS – MARTIN LALONDE AND JOEY BIBEAU

Martin and Joey reported that with membership renewals down, it is important to answer the question of what causes the decline in membership and attendance. Tony wants to get feedback on what motivates members to participate in VWS. Tony wants to identify the importance of programs, workshops and hub involvement.

Martin reported that he has lined up two guest speakers for the spring meeting. Martin is awaiting confirmation. The potential speakers are Matt Hopper with Holbein and Alex, recently retired from the Vermont Arts Council. Martin has had difficulty tracking Alex down. (Later in the board meeting, Tony asked to have something else in place on the agenda if the speakers are not available. This time

might be used for feedback with small group discussion or a social exercise to get the group interacting. If needed, Loretta will ask Jan Olmstead for suggestions regarding a group exercise.)

Martin will forward the agenda when finalized, as an attachment to the minutes. Charles Reed will be the speaker/demonstrator at the spring meeting. Charles wants to paint a person as part of his live demo. Charles has asked for someone young. Martin will identify the age range. Martin may bring one of his children or find someone local from the Landgrove area.

Martin and Joey asked that information regarding the spring meeting be highlighted in the next newsletter. They want to urge participation. To date, ten people have sent in registration forms.

Joey and Martin have worked on the gift bags. Joey has a selection of raffle items and is in contact with Holbein, Cheap Joes, etc. Black Horse may be added to the list. Ric Feeney is working on awards for the spring show at the same time. A list of the raffle items and gift bags will be attached to the minutes, when complete.

Martin will look into whether he needs to provide a power point and a screen. Swag Bags, name tags, registration sign in sheets, raffle, dvd library and agenda are being handled by Martin and Joey. Tony was asked to supply any financial documents needed.

Discussion then returned to the spring meeting agenda and it was realized that there would be no real time for small group meetings. This may be relooked at if the speakers are not available. Tony said that he would keep Alex or his replacement on the agenda so that our membership can hear about the state of art in Vermont. Chris liked the idea of feedback by breaking into small groups. Some discussions could take place during the lunch break. Cait suggested that the board members divide to meet the membership. She said she was encouraged by the new direction and new focus of the board. If there is a feedback time, guiding questions should be compiled so that board members would be able to facilitate talk.

Tony stated that he wants to focus on the opportunities VWS offers that are of value. VWS meetings, hubs and workshops stand out as being valuable. Tony wants the board to obtain feedback on why members join VWS. For example, "This is a valuable organization because.....I joined VWS for" " The board needs to know what we can do to improve VWS. Victoria suggested we provide a positive list if we are seeking written feedback. Boxes can be checked off from a list. Tony said that we might offer a paper questionnaire that attendees can fill out at lunch. Tony wants to find out the x, y, and z areas VWS is not currently meeting. As mentioned earlier in the minutes, Tony stated the meeting should keep the speakers being confirmed by Martin and Joey as a first priority but be ready to break into small groups for feedback if there is an open slot of time.

Martin addressed the need to update the web so that the current board is listed. Tony said that he would take the responsibility to make the board member changes. Vicky Hertzberg needs information from different people in order to update the content. The co-directors of exhibits will need to get info to Vicky by e mail. Joey will get workshop info to Vicky and Cait will get hub info to Vicky.

Tony wants to explore whether the membership feels that two meetings each year are valuable or one is more valuable. Feedback is needed regarding why people hesitate joining and some hesitate entering group shows. What draws membership renewal? Joey pointed out that we have a large drop off in membership and we need to know why.

Tony talked about necessity to log in to see hub info. A close look needs to be given to work out what is considered sensitive information and the reason. Tony will consult with Vicky to have her help ascertain, as webmaster, how we can make some changes and improve the format. Joey pointed out that some websites are limited on what you can do.

Tony asked for presenter talks to be confirmed by Martin this week. Table talk will be used to fill time, if necessary or a social exercise will be set in place.

Martin will correct the deadline for registration for the spring meeting on the web and send out the agenda.

Cait suggested that the board consider some of the following changes re membership renewal: Consider changing the time of year for renewal, possibly offer a five year membership and opportunity for lifetime memberships.

Joey asked whether it was his or a board decision re selection of the artist to give the artist workshops. Tony said that Joey is welcome to ask for feedback but the decision is being left for him to select the artist. For 2018, Joey would like to have Gloria Miller Allen, an Idaho artist. She is a teaching artist, well organized, with a philosophy and mission statement. Joey will contact Landgrove about possible dates within May and June next year. Other potential artists are Alexis Lavine from Florida; Thomas W. Schaller (not available in 2018 but future) and Paul Jackson. Bill Versak gracefully declined as he is winding down regarding travel. Cait suggested Mary White but it was pointed out that Mary White's price is out of our range. Joey will send the artist list of names to the board.

Tony asked if the board had any objections to VWS promoting outside artists by placing details about workshops on the bulletin board page. Tony has received letters asking whether VWS would be willing to advertise. The web currently provides information about VWS artist workshops. Because of conflict of interest, we do not hire VWS members to give workshops. If a VWS member is holding a workshop, we make this info available. VWS may want to state a disclaimer when

advertising for outside artists. VWS currently partners with Landgrove Inn and advertises Holbein on the web.

Tony said that we might want to consider Mailchimp for communications.

A motion was made by Victoria, seconded by Michelle, and passed to adjourn at 11:40 a.m. The July meeting of the board will be held in Randolph. Tony will send the board the meeting schedule. Please see meeting schedule attached to minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta Weitzel