

## **President's Report**

### **KSOA AGM June 17, 2021**

What a chaotic year this has been! Our financial year starts on April 1<sup>st</sup>, and of course on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 we were shut down completely, with our spring term and the scheduled gallery exhibitions cancelled. During that time however, Office Manager Ilga Weiss and I researched, selected and started up a new school management program, Amilia, thanks to support from a grant from the Community Foundation. We started up the new system towards the end of May 2020, and used it first for the children's art camps, prior to going live for all our courses for the fall term.

Also on the technology front, the Board and committees have been meeting since last March via Zoom or Google Meet, and have found these to be a very efficient way to conduct our business.

We were able to run a short June term in 2020, followed by the summer art camps at full enrolment but limited in numbers, with the required COVID restrictions in place. In addition for the first time we ran adult morning classes in the back studio in July and August, and these were popular as well. We were lucky that our rather haphazard physical layout allowed us to separate off the children's area from the adult area, with separate entrances and washrooms for each group.

We had much-appreciated rent support arranged for by our landlord Mike Scrannage, and we were able to receive salary support as well from the federal government program.

Also in the summer, the amazing Juried Exhibition team was able to go ahead with the 2020 show, and I know this was much appreciated by local artists. A virtual "reception" was presented on our new YouTube channel, and all the art was made available on our website for viewing and purchase.

In early September, we were able to hold a slightly shortened version of *Paint the Town*, based at The Spire in the Old Sydenham ward area of downtown Kingston. The event, with all the attendant COVID restrictions, was expertly organized by Christianne Wojcik. Again, local artists were very happy to have this event go ahead while abiding by COVID restrictions.

For the fall term, we were able to run an increased number of classes, but with reduced enrolment in order to achieve the required physical distancing. Despite the pandemic, it was a very successful fall term, with most classes running with full registrations.

The winter and spring terms in 2021 were shortened or cancelled because of COVID shut-downs, and several exhibitions in the WAG were cancelled or moved to virtual exhibitions. It has been a challenging several months.

However, various projects rolled ahead. We were the happy recipients of a Trillium Foundation grant under their Resilient Communities program, and were thus able to hire Christianne Wojcik as Recovery Leader. Christianne's full report is presented at this meeting, and it shows the significant progress that the KSOA and Gallery have made over these closed months in keeping our spaces safe and developing our online programming. Many thanks, Christianne!

We were very lucky to receive a donation of office furniture and computers from Don Smallman, and so were able to transform the office into a space with three usable workstations. Many thanks again to Christianne and her family and Ilga for taking care of this transformation, and to Don for the donation. Ilga also recently

arranged for the switch-over of our telephone and internet services from WTC to Bell, and this has provided greatly improved internet capacity.

Several things that have been on the back burner for many years were tackled and taken care of this year, specifically updating our constitution and by-laws, and making sure of our compliance in regards to workplace health and safety. Many thanks to Nancy Ball and Jacqueline Prenevost for taking on those projects! Jacqueline also worked on the KSOA's set-up with Google for Non-Profits, thus establishing dedicated email addresses for Board members and staff and enabling the KSOA to use Google Meet and Google Classrooms.

With the increasing development of the Williamsville area, the KSOA is likely looking at moving to a new location within the next few years, and that represents some exciting possibilities. We have had a long and very happy relationship with our landlord, Mike Scrannage, and I hope that any future rental arrangements will be as amicable and supportive. Our current lease extends to mid-January 2023.

This month and this AGM see significant turn-over of the staff and volunteers at the KSOA. In terms of staff, we are very sorry to say good-bye to Ilga Weiss who has been our Office Manager for the last 2.5 years, and who has made a huge contribution to the success of the KSOA. At the same time, we are happy to welcome Maddison Andrews as our new Office Manager as of June 14. We have also hired our first Executive Director, Moira Demorest, who started on June 7<sup>th</sup> and who is a very welcome addition to our team.

This year we are welcoming two new Board members: incoming Board President, Christianne Wojcik, and incoming Treasurer, Mae Whalen. Also two members joined the Board part way through the year and will be continuing into the coming year: Zenko Takei as Special Events Coordinator and Rob Hosier as Communications Coordinator. The election of the full Board will be done at this meeting, and I'm confident that the new Board along with our new employees will be a strong and energetic team!

Two non-Board volunteers who have recently joined the KSOA team are Dan Cirne as Facilities Manager, and Yiming Jia as Volunteers Coordinator. Welcome!

At the same time, we are saying good-bye to some of our volunteers and Board members. Celine Brassard has been our Treasurer for several years and is stepping down, but will however be available to assist our new Treasurer. Alexis Dishaw is stepping down as secretary, but will hopefully be back on the Board next year. Volunteer Raphael MacDonald is leaving us, after working diligently on video resources for the gallery and the school, but we hope he might return to us in the future. Andreea Nita, our Sunday afternoon volunteer, is no longer able to help out with office coverage. Thank you to all of them for their contributions to the success of the KSOA. I'll be stepping off the Board after twelve years, but will still be around to volunteer and assist where needed.

It has been an amazing twelve years for me! I've learned a great deal, and have had the privilege of working with wonderful, dedicated arts people. I've seen the KSOA grow in terms of physical space, in terms of the programming that we provide, and in terms of our capacity to operate a complex organization. I've seen the creation of the Window Art Gallery and the wonderful exhibitions for which it has provided the space over the years. I've seen the growth and development of the KSOA team of volunteers, on and off the Board, and I leave my position knowing that the KSOA and the WAG are in great hands!

Barb Carr