

Creative Ohio



*A Newsletter
for the
members of
the Ohio Arts
and Crafts Guild*

VOLUME 5 - NUMBER 8

AUGUST 2005

President's Corner

Everyone seems to be asking, "What has happened to our sales at shows?" There can be no doubt that most people are experiencing a significant decline in sales, especially in the last few years.

What has happened? Are there too many shows? Has the excitement worn off? Has something changed?

I think the answer is yes to all of the above.

However, I do think that one aspect stands out above all the others. To understand how much shows have changed, let's think back to what it was like in the beginning. Who were the exhibitors? What was the make-up of the typical exhibitor back in the 60's?

I doubt very much it was someone that thought they would make a significant amount of money selling their creations. For the most part, they tried it because it looked more like fun - and it was! Most of my memories of exhibitors from that era, were that they were amazed at just how successful they were. The money was a big surprise! They enjoyed talking with people. They enjoyed the atmosphere. And, their egos were fed by the oh's and ah's they heard about their work. And many made more money than they ever dreamed they could.

After a few years of this, others noticed what was going on and were attracted by

the money they saw these early exhibitors taking in. "Attracted by the money" I think is the key here. These new exhibitors set forth in motion a new set of "standards & ethics." Quality became secondary. They often don't have the pride of "creation ownership." Inventory pressures tempt them to participate in the buy/sell practice, or even worse, lack of creative talent. They buy it because they don't have the talent to create their own. They often lack the "artistic personality," so attractive to the buying public. And soon, after a number of years, sadly they have become the majority.

In other words, we are being destroyed by our earlier successes. Is there anything we can do about it?

First and foremost, don't succumb to the understandable temptation "If you can't beat them, then join them."

Recently, we even had one of our own members defending her buy/sell philosophy. "I sell more of my buy/sell items than I do my own work." I know of several of our members that supplement their own work with buy/sell. When we confronted a basket maker at our show with the suspicion that they didn't make their baskets her response was, "No, we buy them, but aren't they nice baskets?" as she proudly held one up for us to see. She too was a guild member.

I am afraid the big money has spoiled us. Let's get back to what attracted us to this in the beginning. The fun of selling something we created.

John Croft

*Croft_John@email.msn.com
740.432.3847*

Responses from the BOD to the August President's Corner.

Please note that the BOD has the opportunity to preview the President's Corner before it goes to press each month. Members are encouraged to respond too. Please send your comments to CreativeOhio@aol.com, or they can be mailed to the guild's P.O. Box address listed on the back of the last page of the newsletter. Anonymous emails/letters will not be published.

Although I agree with the comments that we do what we do because we are passionate about it, I'm also in it for the money. <G> I know I'm not going to get rich doing this; I just want to pay my bills!

John, I think the main reason sales at shows are down is the economy. If you have to decide between putting a meal on the table or buying artwork, you want to eat.

I do agree shows aren't what they used to be. There are more of them, the "oldsters" are retiring and the "youngsters" aren't taking it up, buy/sell has really hurt. I think people still do appreciate hand-crafted items. They usually come out the first day or first weekend of a show, but you do get lots of people who are just there for something to do.

But for me, at least for now, I'll stick to my passion and hope to make others passionate about it too.

I probably fit both categories John mentioned--being passionate about my art/craft and also needing to make money doing it. I take several classes/seminars a year, have booths at at least one convention, need to purchase surfaces for new designs, etc., etc., so the money has to come in. As I said before, I'm also trying to pay bills with this money.

Until I become well-known and people beat a path to my door, I will continue doing what I love and sell it for an amount I can live with--usually not enough to totally compensate me for the time, trouble, and talent that goes into it, but something I'm comfortable with charging.

I have done some kind of "craft" all my life and stumbled on decorative painting, and found my niche! Although most of my work is more in keeping with today's tastes and trends, my first

love is reproduction work, the kind Marcia talked about. The kind my foremothers and -sisters did to brighten their world. The kind that touches my heart and soul. Not that ALL my painting doesn't do that in some way; I just love doing the reproduction work more. And that's what keeps me plugging on.

It would be easier to chuck all this and get a "real" job, but my creativity would be stifled and I wouldn't be as satisfied with my work. I've always taken pride in accomplishing something with my own hands, and my art allows me to do that. Yes, the oohs and aahs are very comforting and fulfilling, but they don't put food in my mouth.

Barbara Franzreb

John, you have put into words my very thoughts. So many times I have said that I truly love doing a certain show, because of the people (promoters, customers, fellow artists and even the location) and many times I have been laughed at for being so "naive." I have said that as long as I make my booth fee and expenses, I am happy. There have been many times, I have not made my booth fee and I was still very happy to be there. For me it has never been all about the money. I love people. I love hearing their comments about my work. I love hearing their stories that something in my paintings made them think of. Sometimes they are happy memories, sometimes sad memories. But either way it was my painting that provoked the thought.

When I have had really good sales it was a gift from heaven, and if I didn't have really good sales, it was still a gift of learning. I have never been to a show, that I did not learn something. Either something about my art work, or just simply meeting new people.

Continued on page 4

Classified Ads

CLASSIFIED AD RATES: Deadline is the 24th of the month. PLEASE NOTE we are on a **2 MONTH LAG**. For example - ads submitted on June 24th will be printed in the August newsletter. 1x rate - \$7.50 for 25 words or less plus .40 per word over 25. 6x rate - \$5.00 plus .30. Copy must be typed or printed. OACG members are entitled to one free classified ad per year (MAXIMUM OF 25 WORDS). Email free ads to Creativeohio@aol.com Over 25 words subject to above rates. Name and address count as four (4) words, telephone as two (2) words. PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ALL CLASSIFIED AD ORDERS. Mail copy and payment to classified ads, Creative Ohio, P O Box 3080, Lexington, OH 44904 or fax to 419-884-9641 and charge to your Visa/Mastercard.

THE 2005 CLEVELAND/AKRON ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOWS BOOKLET. Over 450 shows. \$9.00. 440-891-9085 or CraftShowBooklet@aol.com for details on how to order.

SEPTEMBER 3 - 4. Andover Arts & Crafts Fair, 27th year! Antique Engine Club Grounds Williamsfield, OH. Call Eileen Croce: 440/293-5904 evenings.

OCTOBER 21 - 23. Cincinnati's "Fall into Christmas" Market. Sharonville Convention Center. Great location, FREE PARKING! Call Janice: 513/451-2467 for an application, or send an Email request to info@cincinnatiholidaypromotions.com

NOVEMBER 4 - 5. An Art at the Crossroads Christmas, Ehrnfelt Recreation Center, Strongsville, Ohio 44136. For info. call Candy 440-572-5789.

NOVEMBER 20. 3rd Annual "Gifts from the Heart" Holiday Boutique. Executive Caterers LANDERHAVEN. 6111 Landerhaven Dr., Mayfield Hts., Ohio. 10-5. 85 fine artisans. 440/ 357-6978
www.webspawner.com/users/giftsfromthe/index.html

CRAFTER GOING OUT OF BUSINESS. Various items for sale: 10 dozen denim dresses, mixed sizes. Handpainted porcelain buttons, jewelry. Forms, patterns, kiln, etc. 419-999-6383 or email clsron@woh.rr.com

FOR SALE - Wood Booth, canvas top. Easy to assemble panels. Open to offers. Call Laura 440-937-2283.



Buccaneer Festival

September 10 & 11, 2005 10 - 6 pm

An Outdoor Early American Arts & Crafts Festival
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50.	45.	40.	35. each issue

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MEMBERS ONLY

SUBMIT A SHOW REVIEW - sign on to our web site, <http://www.ohioartsandcraftsguild.org>. Click on "Submit Show Review," fill out the form, click "submit show review." It's really that simple. Reviews are posted without names, but membership is verified.

READ A SHOW REVIEW - sign on to our web site, <http://www.ohioartsandcraftsguild.org>, click on "Read Show Reviews," Enter UserId: showreviews, Password:readnow (both are lower case, no spaces) UserId and Password will change periodically, and will be posted in this (Members Only) monthly newsletter.

JOIN US ONLINE - A FREE private Internet discussion group for OACG members only. Ask questions, compare notes, share sources, show information, etc., all with the convenience and speed of email. Send your name and email address to monkoria@yahoo.com and tell us you would like to join the OACG-L

I have always felt fortunate when my work has been accepted into a show and if I am fortunate enough to win an award or acknowledgment from customers or fellow artists, I thank God for giving me the talent and allowing me the opportunity to be there. So many times I have heard someone say, if I don't make a \$1000. at a show I won't go back. When I hear this I feel sad, because this person's passion has become a job. Financially I am broke, but I honestly hope and pray that my passion never becomes a job.

Juanita Martin

I agree that at many of the shows there is too much buy/sell, but I think the money people have to spend is a larger part of the problem. The economy is much tighter than it was a few years ago. A while back there were all sorts of jobs available, now they are hard to come by and many of those that are employed are not secure in the fact that they will have a job 6 months or a year from now. As others have mentioned the DIY is a big thing right now. Because of our global economy there are many things made in countries with lower labor costs and shipped here to be sold. I think any one of the things we could overcome without much loss in revenue but all together it is making our sales fall drastically.

I really hate to say this but I think we will have to think smarter to stay in the business of selling our art work. Yes, I am one of those that want to make a little profit. Glass and kilns are way too expensive for me to buy just for a hobby. I would love to be able to make my art just for arts sake and to give it away to friends and family.

I love going to shows listening to what other people think of my art - good or bad. I have gotten some wonderful suggestions over the years, and some good criticism, both which have been good for me.

Nancy Juhasz

For me it is the passion. I get compliments, ooh's and ahh's and most of you know how that makes you feel. When someone truly appreciates what you have done you do a trade and they walk away with your heart no matter what it is. For all the others it's not the passion and they sell.

I am new to this business, 3 years, and what I have observed that a few people go to art festivals because someone they like is there, or they have something in mind they are looking for. The rest of the people are killing time and have no intention of buying a piece of art.

Most of the festivals have been around a while and it is the same people with the same things on display. We, on the other hand, make new and different things every day, but most people can't tell the difference. I heard a guy tell his friend at the Ice Cream Festival, "that guy was here last year, and I saw all his stuff," he never even stopped to look. I think I will rent a gorilla to drag people in and say LOOK at all the new stuff. I would probably get into trouble, but that is what I would like to do.

Folks we need to be more creative, exciting, visible and ready to show what we have done. We are not boring and everything we do is new.

How do we change it? We can't, but the promoters can. Advertising with a personal touch about a few of the artists and crafts people.

Two years ago the Jeffersonian Newspaper in Cambridge, OH, covered the Salt Fork Festival. On the front page was an artist that did tie-dye T-shirts. Was that a true reflection of what the festival was all about? If the local news paper can't tell the difference in art, how will the general public ever know? Everyone has their own opinion of what art is, and to me tie-dye doesn't take much imagination or skill, I did it back in the 60's.

Lots to think and talk about.

Loren Roper

Yankee Peddler Foundation Annual Awards

On June 25th. the Yankee Peddler Foundation held its annual awards dinner. This year our own Carl & Marcia Giordano were chosen as the Crafter/Artist of the year. An honor well deserved.

In addition, our own Sue Hahn was among those nominated, and received an Honorable Mention award.

This was the tenth annual awards dinner held by the Yankee Peddler Foundation, significant to the guild for its strong support to our scholarship fund. Once again they donated \$500. for this effort.

The OACG sends heartfelt thanks to the Yankee Peddler Foundation for their continued support.

OACG Board Meeting

On July 6, 2005 the BOD met at our office in Lexington, Ohio.

The purpose was to choose two Vice Presidents to embark on an orientation period in preparation for the President's retirement.

Happily, two of the new board members agreed to take on this responsibility. Vicki Boatright and Loren Roper. In addition, Nancy Juhasz has agreed to take the Treasurer's position.

I look forward to working with these three people, and making this transition as smooth as possible. I am sure they will welcome any ideas you may have to enable the guild to serve you better.

John Croft, President, OACG

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Re: President's Corner, June & July 2005, "The Jurying Process"

Hi John,
I have been following your comments on the jurying process with interest. It closely matches my opinion of the whole "game" of jurying into shows. I have only been a member for less than a year and am closely watching the organization unfold. I'm not yet sure if it will be a viable vehicle for supporting all artists. My previous impression was that the OACG was more for the "weekend crafter" not the serious artist/craftsman. I have discovered that the ODC has become pretty exclusive and not the support network it should be. For both however I find that if you pay your membership dues, you're a member regardless of skill in craft, quality of work, etc. I don't mean to criticize, these are just my observations. Anyway I'll be interested in your next comments and wish they came more frequently!

The new web site looks pretty good and I am asking for a link to mine, which I will reciprocate.

Many thanks, Linda Stiles Smith
naturescapes studio
www.naturescapesstudio.com

Creative Ohio

P.O. BOX 3080, LEXINGTON, OH 44904
www.ohioartsandcraftsguild.org
Linda Rebman, Office Manager
OHIOACG@aol.com
Guild Office Hours: M-W-F 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
419-884-9622 FAX: 419-884-9641

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

John Croft, President,
740-432-3847, Croft_John@email.msn.com
Diane Elliott Bruckner, Advisor
661-252-8416, dianebruckner@aol.com
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CreativeOhio@aol.com

SCHOLARSHIPS

Don Earnest, 937-667-2871, EarnieDoandRo@aol.com
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Barbara Franzreb, 330-467-7402, bfranzreb@calicogoose.com
Carl L. Giordano, Standards, 330-336-7270, tinsnip@cg-tinsmith.com
Marcia Giordano, 330-336-7270, tinsnip@cg-tinsmith.com
Nancy Juhasz, juhaszsn@sssnet.com
Juanita Martin, CVStudio@aol.com
Loren Roper, rmensche@columbus.rr.com
Marje Shook, 440-298-1428, mordiford@hotmail.com

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